

# DR FRANKENSTEIN'S HYDRA

## Contours, meanings and effects of anti-gender politics

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Over the course of the last decade, a new term has made its way into the everyday language of academics, practitioners and policymakers working in the field of gender, sexuality and human rights: 'anti-gender'. This term was suggested by various scholars to make sense of what they considered to be a new wave of conservative backlash against gender and LGBTI equalities (see, for example, Kováts and Põim 2015; Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). While this reaction first became evident within the context of Catholicism, and still involves many Roman Catholic actors, most observers agreed they were not facing business as usual but a new kind of enterprise, specifically designed to challenge what was portrayed as the 'ideology of gender'. Transnational from its inception, this wave started in Europe in the mid-2000s, blossomed in the 2010s in Europe and Latin America, and grew increasingly into other world regions from the mid-2010s (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017; Corrêa 2020; House 2022). Crucially, it targets feminisms and the rights of women and LGBTI people, with trans rights becoming an increasingly important target in recent years.

The novelty of these campaigns is attested to by the heterogeneity of actors involved; the transformed discursive framing of the response; its political strategies and modes of action, as well as a generational shift among participants; and enhanced investment in training and increased transnationalisation. The latter is confirmed by the cross-border circulation of a common repertoire of frames, strategies and modes of action, and the gradual creation of a dense transnational infrastructure of response (Datta and Paternotte 2023). From the beginning, many scholars have preferred the terms 'campaigns' and 'politics' to describe these mobilisations because the term 'movements', often used to describe these formations, mistakenly conveys the impression that anti-gender politics is restricted to social movements and civil society actors. Instead, the ongoing current response includes a wide variety of institutional actors, including politicians, state officials and religious authorities.

In line with an emic approach (Avanza 2018), scholars labelled these conservative actors 'anti-gender' because, despite a diversity of targets, they regard 'gender ideology' as the intellectual matrix of the ethical, legal and policy claims they fiercely oppose. Importantly,

these actors do not present themselves as anti-gender, but rather self-define as ‘pro-life’, ‘pro-family’, ‘pro-religious freedom’, ‘good citizens’, ‘patriots’, ‘concerned parents’ or, increasingly, ‘gender critical’. Hence, ‘anti-gender’ is a descriptive label that does not take a singular political or ideological stance on the ideas or the positionality of the actors concerned but aims to be as close as possible to their categories of understanding. This helps scholars and activists to read what moves them without judging their normative position or locating them in relation to more progressive social movements.

It is crucial to distinguish anti-gender politics from what they are not. Indeed, in the last decade, this expression has been increasingly used to designate any form of opposition to gender equality or LGBTI rights. As a result, it covers extremely diverse situations, at different periods in time and in very different parts of the world. This challenge will be further discussed in this chapter, but it is important to avoid concept-stretching if we want to keep this concept meaningful. As discussed above, the term ‘anti-gender’ aims to describe a specific wave of conservative activism, and is therefore not a synonym for anti-feminism, misogyny or male supremacy, anti-LGBTI rights, or the global right-wing. The articulations of anti-gender formations with broader or other projects and political undercurrents should not be assumed or taken for granted, but rather scrutinised and discussed.

This chapter begins by providing a retrospective look at the history of this phenomenon and discusses its main characteristics. It then engages with current theoretical debates about the definition and the functioning of these campaigns, discussing their constitutive diversity and their metamorphic nature through the metaphors of Frankenstein and the hydra. We then address debates surrounding anti-gender politics and concepts of backlash. The chapter will close with a discussion of the role played by gender in these mobilisations.

## **A closer look at anti-gender politics**

### *Four waves of anti-gender politics*

Historical analysis often dates the emergence of rhetoric about ‘gender ideology’ to developments in the early 1990s at the United Nations (UN). During the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, the concept of ‘gender’ was introduced at the intergovernmental policy level in association with the recognition of various forms of families, sexual and reproductive rights, and the definition of abortion as a major public health problem. In Cairo, while many of the other issues were subject to harsh debate, the term ‘gender’ did not cause any controversy. Six months later, in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, The Holy See, in collaboration with allied states and North American Christian Right NGOs, began fiercely to contest the term ‘gender’ (Girard 2007; Corrêa 2022a).

From the mid-1990s onwards, the Catholic hierarchy, led by Pope John-Paul II, Cardinal Ratzinger and various Catholic thinkers, tried to better understand what had happened at the UN. Building upon US right-wing scholar Christina Hoff Sommers’ ideas, the Catholic journalist Dale O’Leary started to blame ‘gender feminists’ for the Beijing disaster, claiming that the substitution of the word ‘sex’ by the word ‘gender’, surreptitiously introduced by so-called radical feminists, opened the way to deeply problematic social and political reforms related to women’s rights. Through this process, ‘gender ideology’ became an interpretative framework to explain the Holy See’s defeats at the UN. This frame is often symbolised as

a submarine, an iceberg or a Trojan horse: a policy agenda disguised as a commitment to equality between women and men but whose real aim is to destroy the social order. This discourse was rapidly taken over and re-elaborated by the Peruvian Conference of Catholic Bishops and various Catholic thinkers close to the Vatican (in particular, T. Anatrella, J. Burggraf, G. Kuby, A. Ordoñez, M. Peeters, J. Scala and M. Schooyans). These authors helped spread the discourse of ‘gender ideology’ across the world.

This discourse became more than an interpretative framework because it helped sustain a fierce counterstrategy. Inspired by a close reading of communist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, the creators of anti-gender campaigns voided the term ‘gender’ of its original meaning to fill this empty space with contents derived from Catholic social and sexual doctrine. In several such drastic reconfigurations, ‘gender ideology’ became regularly associated with Marxism or Neo-Marxism.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-2000s, both the interpretative frame and the discursive counterstrategy were ready for widespread circulation, as confirmed by the publication of several official documents by Vatican dicasteries.<sup>2</sup>

A second phase, which started in the mid-2000s, succeeded the period of invention of ‘gender ideology’ rhetoric. It involved, on the one hand, the global spread of these ideas via a myriad of publications, lectures and events that were initially held within the structures and networks of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, it also translated into early social mobilisations that took place in the second half of the 2000s in Europe: in Spain (2004–2005), Croatia (2006), Italy (2007) and Slovenia (2009). In Latin America, although there were no clear anti-gender mobilisations until 2013, the Episcopal Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) launched from 2007 a campaign against ‘gender ideology’ that facilitated the regional diffusion of the terminology. These efforts served as laboratory experiments: activists started to use elements of the anti-gender rhetoric, and mobilisations took forms that prefigured future campaigns. In many cases, these techniques and strategies were inspired by actions taken by the US Christian Right since the 1970s.

This explosion of anti-gender contention in Europe and Latin America inaugurated a third phase, and the year 2013 is often considered a turning point. In Europe, it marks both the height of mobilisations in France against same-sex marriage and a conservative victory in the Croatian referendum on the constitutional definition of marriage. At regional level, it coincides with the development of a many-headed infrastructure to influence European societies in the long term. The first meeting of the lobbying network Agenda Europe and the creation of the Madrid-based campaigning platform CitizenGo also took place in 2013. The draft European Parliament report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (known as the Estrela Report) was also defeated the same year. In the Russian Federation, a law banning ‘gay propaganda’ as part of an effort to defend ‘traditional values’ was adopted in 2013. In Latin America, various crucial events occurred during the same years. They encompassed a fierce campaign invoking ‘gender’ and ‘ideology’ against the Brazilian National Education Plan, attacks on gender in education in Paraguay, the first conservative assaults on the 2011 Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the Organisation of American States (OAS), and the Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa’s condemnation of ‘gender ideology’ in one of his weekly television addresses.

Two important shifts took place during this period. First, other Christian actors started to mobilise against ‘gender ideology’, opening an ecumenical front that included historical enemies of the Papacy. In Central and Eastern Europe, the Orthodox churches emerged as critical forces in this struggle, both in Russia and in other countries in the region (e.g. Bulgaria,

Georgia, Romania and Ukraine). In Latin America, fundamentalist Evangelical churches quickly became the key drivers of anti-gender mobilisations. Other Protestant denominations have also become increasingly involved in coalitions everywhere, from the various components of the Christian Right in the USA to traditionalist Protestants in the Netherlands.

Second, this period is characterised by the increased involvement of a range of political actors. Anti-gender discourses and mobilisations increasingly intersected with electoral politics in ways that paved the way for right-wing populist leaders or forces to reach state power, as happened in Brazil, Italy and Spain. At the same time, formal political and state actors (political parties and government officials) already in power also became interested in resistance to 'gender ideology' across a range of settings. Although most of these actors were associated with populist politics and the extreme right, members of left-wing and mainstream conservative parties in Europe and in Latin America have also embraced anti-gender positions. These actors did not only join because anti-gender actors sought to promote their ideas politically, or because of their religious beliefs, but also because they saw opportunities to differentiate themselves and their parties from their competitors, to diversify their discourse and to increase their electoral traction. For instance, some have used agendas crafted by conservative religious forces, especially on family issues, to reinvigorate appeals to tradition and to the nation.

Currently, we are in a fourth phase of response, where the globalisation of anti-gender campaigns has intensified, and the actors involved in the coalitions they sustain have diversified significantly. Nowadays, few countries are spared in Europe and Latin America, the two epicentres of the anti-gender wave, and new mobilisations have sprouted in Australia, Canada and the USA.<sup>3</sup> Campaigns have also begun to emerge, albeit in partially distinct forms, in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia), in the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, Turkey), and also in Asia and the Pacific (New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan). In Europe and the Americas, the political maze built up around anti-gender ideology often unites past religious competitors and has more recently favoured anti-trans alliances between 'gender-critical' feminists, social conservatives, right-wing populists and far-right forces.

As a result, these campaigns are today no longer limited to historically Christian countries, and we cannot assume that they are specific to certain countries because of their distinctive history or political culture. Similarly, the campaigns are not driven by a clear set of actors, who are consistent across settings. The actors involved are increasingly diverse and, in various contexts, they include State regimes themselves. Governments, such as those headed by Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Victor Orbán in Hungary and Vladimir Putin in Russia, have understood how anti-gender campaigns can reinforce their grip on power, turning the anti-gender project into a central pillar of 'illiberalism'.

### *A diversity of targets*

It is important to recognise, however, that anti-gender contestation does not follow a specific sequence. It does not happen everywhere in the same manner, and anti-gender actors engage with particular areas of contention with an eye to the cultural specificities of a country and the possibilities and openings for political activism. Specific targets are often selected because they are high on the political agenda or are otherwise easy to render contentious to a range of specific audiences, which vary across time and space. This helps explain why, for example, key arenas for contention might include the Istanbul Convention

(i.e. the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence) in several European countries from the mid-2010s, as compared to mobilisation against same-sex marriage in 2012 in France, or trans rights in the UK and USA from 2016.

Nevertheless, a growing comparative literature has allowed the identification of five sets of issues that anti-gender actors are likely to target: 1) sexual and reproductive rights (e.g. the right to divorce and to legal and safe abortion, access to contraception, and the right to use specific reproductive technologies such as assisted reproduction); 2) LGBTI rights (e.g. same-sex marriage and civil unions, access to adoption and family rights, trans rights); 3) children's rights (e.g. opposition to programmes against gender stereotypes and comprehensive sexuality education, or campaigns in favour of home schooling); 4) gender (e.g. laws and policies on gender-based violence and/or violence against women such as the Istanbul Convention, gender mainstreaming and gender equality tools and machineries, gender studies programmes and, in some cases, anything containing the word 'gender'), and 5) laws and policies against hate speech and discrimination, in the name of freedom of speech or expression, and religious freedom.

### *Discursive labyrinths*

As this brief history indicates, the inventors of gender ideology have sequestered the term gender – which has different meanings and interpretations in distinct fields of knowledge production – voided it of these contents, and filled the empty space with their own interpretation. Within this interpretation, 'ideology' is vilified, gender is equated with a vast range of threats, and gender theorists and practitioners are accused of being 'ideologues' (while those who invent this phantasm are cast as exempt from ideological biases). Accordingly, several scholars have described gender ideology as an empty or floating signifier (Mayer and Sauer 2017) or a symbolic vessel (Madrigal-Borloz 2021).

More broadly, anti-gender rhetoric is attractive to many because it means a lot and not much at the same time, and it can easily absorb pre-existing frames and narratives. Its internal coherence, which may appear weak to scholars and observers, operates as a strength because its rhetoric activates different fears and anxieties and can be adapted to suit various contexts. Different actors can shape it in different ways according to distinct political projects, without the burden of having to build a consistent and unified narrative.

Indeed, the original anti-gender rhetoric, as designed by Catholic thinkers, has been amended in various way in recent years to fit into different projects. Its recent elision with the so-called 'Great Replacement' thesis offers a clear example, as it serves to stress the dangers of gender ideology as a vehicle for the promotion of abortion, contraception and same-sex relationships (especially by the UN) because they all contribute to declining birth rates. Great Replacement, as invented by the French far-right writer and conspiracy theorist Renaud Camus articulates 'anxieties' that allegedly powerful actors have joined forces to destroy Western civilisation. Some politicians such as Matteo Salvini and Victor Orbán, have understood the benefits that arise from bridging these two theories, with gender ideology, understood as the root cause of demographic decline, being seen as contributing to the so-called Islamisation of Europe (Datta 2020).

Similar discursive articulations have happened in other fields such as ecology. During the course of their papacies, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis developed a Catholic discourse on environmental challenges, called 'human ecology' and later 'integral ecology'. Within

this, both abortion and trans people's access to medical transition are seen as problematic human interventions in God's design, that Benedict put on the same level as the destruction of tropical forests. For the late Pope, defending the environment implied the defence of the human against itself. Pope Francis also revived a postcolonial rejection of gender ideology, that he frames 'ideological colonisation'. This rhetoric resonates with critiques of birth control and family planning in the Global South, ideas that LGBTI rights are being imposed by the Global North, and that powerful actors have united to abolish local traditions. It also intersects with debates on aid conditionality, now framed as a foreign intervention by wealthy Western funders, donor countries and international institutions.

Such discourse may also be read as an attack on supranational institutions in the name of national sovereignty. Whilst the UN has been a prime target, so too have the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, and the Inter-American system. As noted by Agnieszka Graff and Elżbieta Korolczuk (2018) in Eastern Europe, gender is frequently presented by anti-gender actors as 'Ebola from Brussels' and becomes a key trope in opposition to European interventionism, often framed as a new colonialism, within the region. Through the idea of 'traditional values', Russia similarly uses reference to gender and LGBTI rights to distinguish itself from Europe and to symbolise its alternative civilisational project. In Latin America, since 2013, the phantasm of gender as a foreign imposition by the OAS has also been mobilised as a persistent threat.

Anti-gender actors have been using for some time the language and the arguments of human rights discourse, along with appeals to secularism, science and choice. Human rights-based frames, in particular, are crucial for these actors to engage in high level public litigation with Supreme Courts as well as regional and international human systems. It also opens many paths for coalitions with 'grass roots' voices and actors acquainted with human rights language and advocacy in various domains, including women's rights.

Finally, as anti-gender constellations of forces and actors become increasingly diverse and exert greater influence over state and society, anti-gender struggles have entered new areas of contestation. The content and function of gender ideology has thus been transported to many other symbolic vessels, such as 'transgender ideology', 'queer theory', 'wokeness', 'critical race theory', 'identity politics' and 'intersectionality' (House 2022). The transmutation of gender ideology into 'transgender ideology', in particular, has favoured the expanding presence of anti-gender feminists and anti-gender lesbian, gay and bisexual groups in the shifting landscapes created by anti-gender forces. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-gender formations collaborated with anti-vaccine and anti-lockdown coalitions. Meanwhile the pandemic was used by increasingly authoritarian regimes in Hungary or Poland to push forward new anti-gender policy measures. Finally, struggles for so-called 'freedom of expression' in university settings are frequently aligned with assaults on 'cultural Marxism', gender studies, critical race theory (CRT) and decolonial studies.

### **The hydra of Dr Frankenstein**

Elsewhere, David Paternotte (2023) has used the novel of *Frankenstein* to describe the current state of anti-gender campaigns. Through this metaphor, he does not seek to analyse the monstrosity of anti-gender campaigns but rather to explore their constitutive diversity. This metaphor advances three ideas. First, popular accounts of Mary Shelley's novel often confuse the creator with its creation, and assume that Frankenstein is the name of the monster, which in reality has no name. Similarly, anti-gender campaigns – that is, the



creature – are often misidentified with their creator, the Catholic Church, even though the Vatican is no longer the main engineer behind them. Second, Dr Frankenstein's creature is not an ancient animal that has escaped from a remote area, but a modern (indeed, quite unnatural) creation born from the science of its creator. Similarly, anti-gender campaigns should be read not as the result of ignorance but the consequence of coordinated intellectual efforts and well-thought-out advocacy. Third, despite many attempts, Victor Frankenstein does not manage to bring his creature back under control. Similarly, anti-gender campaigns are no longer exclusively in the hands of the Catholic Church. Today, diverse actors have adopted this rhetoric, including those who oppose elements of the original anti-gender Catholic message, or with whom the Church has conflictual relationships. As a result, the unprecedented development of anti-gender campaigns is a paradoxical success for the Catholic Church. Just like Victor Frankenstein's creature, these campaigns have now assumed their own autonomous life; escaped, running wild and evolving, away from the laboratory from which they first emerged.

In another piece of writing, Sonia Corrêa has suggested the metaphor of the hydra to understand the current state of anti-gender campaigns. According to Corrêa, the hydra is 'a creature with many movable heads that go in very different directions, operating independently from each other and quite often feeding in contradictory ideological sources' (2021, p. 3247). The contours of this creature are blurred, and 'its origins, forms and intentions are difficult to grasp and to interpret' (Corrêa 2022a, p. 108). Corrêa (2022b, p. 3247) explains that 'sometimes one head is bigger, the other is screaming more than the other, and other heads are silent or even sleeping.' However, 'whether they are competing for attention or temporarily dormant, they are part of the same animal that, as a whole, moves in the same direction and is highly adaptable to context and circumstance' (Corrêa 2022b, p. 3247).

These two metaphors invite us to move beyond approaches that assume a common ideological and political agenda in favour of an analysis of anti-gender campaigns as multifaceted phenomena, and they insist on the constitutive diversity of anti-gender campaigns. Indeed, as the brief historical overview has shown, these campaigns bring together a large and diverse set of actors, from members of the Catholic hierarchy to politicians and state officials, who are currently active on different fields. Based on similar observations, these metaphors suggest that anti-gender politics are a complex phenomenon that challenges monocausal explanation and claims to theoretical universality.

Both metaphors also insist on the plasticity and the adaptability of anti-gender politics. These are two characteristics that are crucial to understanding its spread and success. Like Frankenstein's creature, mobilisations live and develop independently of their creators, interacting with, and evolving in response to, diverse actors and environments, which they – in turn – also influence, inform and transform. Seen this way, anti-gender mobilisations are not strictly bounded off from the ecologies with which they interact. Together with their different environments, they comprise an increasingly fluid and complex set of ecosystems supporting the transport of repertoires of contention, learning and frames from one environment to another at scale and speed in a myriad of environments, in countless ways. These complicated sets of dynamics are well captured by Cesarino (2023) in analysing the politics of the ultra-right in Brazil after the 2022 presidential election. Her argument is that in key moments the movements of these forces are not easily traceable to relations amongst discrete political actors and institutions, but rather follow the rhythm of the co-emergent system or the ecology that together these actors form.

### **Beyond backlash**

Anti-gender politics today is very different from past attacks on legal and policy frames related to gender and sexuality. Facing something new, scholars and observers have quickly made assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon and the way it functions. Two readings of anti-gender campaigns coexist in the literature, insisting either on the reactive or on the productive nature of this phenomenon. The first reading presents anti-gender campaigns as an attempt to counter the advance of women's and LGBTI rights, seeking to turn the clock backwards by pushing women back into the kitchen and LGBTI people into the closet. Often captured by the notion of backlash, this perspective relies on the assumption that the heteropatriarchal empire always strikes back. Defining anti-gender campaigns by their oppositional character, it reads these attacks as a response to activist claims, legal progress, and policy development in the fields of gender and sexuality. This approach has sometimes led authors to construe any form of conservative opposition to gender and sexual equalities as anti-gender and to insist on a convergence between sexist, homophobic, nationalist and racist attacks under the banner of right-wing agendas.

This approach has been criticised for several reasons. Conceptually, it relies on a rather mechanical understanding of history and an understanding of feminist and LGBTI politics as necessarily threatening privileges. It often echoes teleological and linear understandings of the notion of progress, which place opponents in the darkness of the past and overlooks the internal diversity of both camps, reinforcing a binary opposition between 'us' and 'them'. Empirically, it runs against the diversity of anti-gender campaigns on the ground. It relies excessively on causal mechanisms that take for granted the idea that progressive action necessarily precedes and sparks conservative reaction, overlooking the potentially pre-emptive nature of conservative attacks. Finally, it may prevent actors from seeing the wider picture and building wider alliances, and it can lead to forms of self-censorship. For instance, some feminist actors have suggested abandoning the term 'gender' to decrease opposition, for example in relation to attacks on the Istanbul Convention.

Against such understanding, several authors have insisted on the creative or productive dimension of anti-gender actions and campaigns. They think that the backlash narrative drives scholars, observers and practitioners into the study of what is under attack and does not allow them to see that the assaults on women's or LGBTI rights are part of a wider project, which strives to establish a new political – less liberal and less democratic – order. In other words, these attacks do not only or mainly aim to destroy or dismantle progressive laws and policies in the fields of gender and sexuality, they also aim to build something new. The project behind these mobilisations well exceeds gender relations, which are but one cornerstone of this new order. In brief, these ongoing battles turn 'gender' into both a crucial symbol and a battlefield.

### **The role of gender**

To conclude, the productive or creative nature of anti-gender campaigns requires further reflection on the place and meaning of gender in these political endeavours. One of the earliest answers was offered with the concept of 'symbolic glue' (Kováts and Põim 2015). This concept stresses that anti-gender discourse brings together under one term a variety of different issues attributed to the liberal agenda. Beyond this, it claims that anti-gender



rhetoric creates political antagonism for actors pursuing a counter-hegemonic project and constructs a new common sense. Third, the symbolic glue frame allows for the articulation of a large coalition of heterogeneous actors, in particular, by fuelling anti-liberal discourses and sentiments (Grzebalska and Petó 2018).

Other accounts have been offered by social scientists Fernando Serrano Amaya in Colombia and Eva Fodor in Hungary. Amaya (2017) uses the notion of ‘perfect storm’ to explain the accelerated growth and the unexpected success of anti-gender campaigns in his country. The idea here is that, taken alone, specific and conjunctural combination of phenomena would be manageable but that, when combined together in favourable conditions, they produce unexpected effects. Serrano Amaya applies this model to the 2016 Colombian peace agreement to show how the rhetoric of gender ideology has permitted specific actors to articulate distinct constituencies and to build a new public for conservative politics. More recently, in a study of the new Hungarian gender regime, Eva Fodor demonstrates that public discussion about gender in Hungary deals less with women’s policy or relations between men and women than with issues like migration, the European Union, sexuality or George Soros (Fodor 2022, pp. 17–19). This observation leads her to argue that gender has been turned ‘into a frenzied political rallying cry’ (Fodor 2022, p. 16) and that anti-gender rhetoric operates first as a strategy to construct an enemy and to mobilise against it, and then as a vehicle for the advancement of broader anti-liberal ideas.

All these examples show that anti-gender campaigns are not only a backlash against certain claims and policies, but also a deployment of the concept of gender to achieve other aims. Far from being only a glue, ‘gender’ can also be seen as a red flag to mobilise different constituencies and reach out towards new publics, and as a code word that lay people easily identify and understand and associate automatically with broader debates and issues. All this brings us back to the double nature of gender, as pointed out by Joan W. Scott more than 30 years ago. According to the feminist historian, gender is not only ‘a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes’ but also ‘a primary way of signifying relationships of power’ (Scott 1986, p. 1067), as well as ‘a primary field within or by means of which power is articulated’ (Scott 1986, p. 1069). This has led several authors, including Scott herself (2022) to postulate that a discourse about gender does not only refer to gender but also wider relations of power, including race, religion, class and nationality, as well as a discourse concerning authority and democracy (Viveros Vigoya 2017; Paternotte 2023).

## Notes

- 1 The use and impact of this link varies across contexts, but continues to be relevant, in different ways, in various Latin American countries, in Spain, in the USA and in several post-socialist states in Central and Eastern Europe.
- 2 For example, the *Considerations regarding Proposals to give legal Recognition to Unions between homosexual Persons* (2003) and *The Letter to the Bishops on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (2004) issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the *Lexicon: Ambiguous and Debatable Terms Regarding Family Life and Ethical Questions* (2003), published first in Italian by the Pontifical Council on the Family.
- 3 US actors have been exporting anti-gender warfare since the beginning, but this country, until very recently, had not experienced what has been seen in Europe and Latin America.

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