

Populism, Gender and Feminist Politics. Between Backlash and Resistance

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, 10-11th December 2020

Faculty of Political and Social Science, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence

Organizers: Manuela Caiani and Francesca Feo (Scuola Normale Superiore)

DAY 1 – DECEMBER 10 TH	
9:00-10:30 INTRODUCTION AND KEYNOTE Link: Eva Anduiza (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona). <i>Sexism and far right vote</i>	
10:30-13:15 Panel 1: ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENTS AND FEMONATIONALISM Link: Chair & discussant: Lorenza Perini (University of Padova) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eva Svatoňová (Aarhus University): Fighting for Mothers' Rights! Women's activism in Czech anti-feminist organizations• Alica Rétiová (Masaryk University): Two narratives about the 2015 'Referendum on Family': Symbols, images and moral registers of the anti-gender mobilization and its resistance in Slovakia• Charlène Calderaro (University of Lausanne): Femonationalism and feminism: between convergence and resistance. The example of the French case on the Muslim veil ban• Olga Selin Hünler (Free University Berlin): Angry Fathers: Populist and Masculinist Twitter Campaigns in Turkey• Francesca Scrinzi (University of Glasgow): The nationalization of feminism in the populist radical right: The case of the Front National (France)	10:30-13:15 Panel 2: STRATEGY AND MOBILIZATION I: (FEMINIST) RESISTANCE AGAINST POPULISM Link: Chair & discussant: Elena Pavan (University of Trento) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexandra Ana (Sciences Po Reims): Queer feminist resistance to anti-gender campaigns: potential alliances in populist times• Arianna Mainardi (University of Milano-Bicocca): Resistances to gender stereotypes and Islamophobia in populist time: the online and offline political experience of girls of Muslim culture• Aleksandra Reczuch (Södertörn University): Feminist subjectivity and mainstream political discourse in Poland. An impossible mix or a possibility for a new program for the Left?• Tayrine Dias (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya): Spain's feminist strikes: resisting and (re)configuring feminisms towards social change• Sabina García Peter and Heike Pantelmann (Free University Berlin): #4GenderStudies: (Online) Strategies to Overcome Attacks against Gender Studies in Germany
13:15-14:30 LUNCH BREAK	

14:30-17:15 | Panel 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULISM AND ANTI-GENDER MOBILIZATION_ | Link:

Chair & discussant: Manuela Caiani (Scuola Normale Superiore)

- **Ivan Tranfic** (Scuola Normale Superiore): The Catholic Church as a Populist Actor? Articulations of Religious Populism in Croatia's Anti-Gender Movement
- **Elżbieta Korolczuk** (Södertörn University & University of Warsaw): Conceptualizing the relation between right-wing populism and (anti)gender: an opportunistic synergy
- **Viola Dombrowski** (University of Koblenz and Landau): Between Femonationalism and Anti-Genderism. Right-Wing Populist Gender Politics in Germany
- **Katja Kahlina** (University of Helsinki): Anti-gender mobilization and strategic deployment of populism: The case of Croatia

14:30-17:15 | Panel 4: THEORIZING THE LINK BETWEEN POPULISM, GENDER AND FEMINISM | Link:

Chair & discussant: Anna Loretoni (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna)

- **Birte Siim** (Aalborg University): Populism, Gender and Feminist Politics
- **Julia Roth** (Bielefeld University): Can Intersectional Feminism Trump Populism? Right-Wing Patterns of En-Gendering and Feminist Contestations
- **Francesca Feo** (Scuola Normale Superiore): The populist metapolitics of gender
- **Paloma Caravantes Gonzales** (Rutgers University New Jersey): Feminist uses of "populism" and their implications for feminist debates

17:15 – 18:00 | COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION/GET TOGETHER | Link:

DAY 2 – DECEMBER 11TH

9:15-10:30 | KEYNOTE | Link:

Andrea Krizsán (Central European University): *The changing politics of gender violence in times of contesting the Istanbul Convention*

10:30- 13:15 | Panel 5: POPULISM AND THE POLITICIZATION OF GENDER ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM I | Link:

Chair & discussant: Enrico Padoan (Scuola Normale Superiore)

- **Anna Lavizzari** and **Andrea Pirro** (Scuola Normale Superiore): The Gender Politics of Populist Parties in Southern Europe

10:30- 13:15 | Panel 6: HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES AND POPULISM | Link:

Chair & discussant: Alberta Giorgi (University of Bergamo)

- **Susanne Reinhardt** (Free University Berlin): Germany Discourse Coalitions in Opposition to Feminism and Gender Equity – Does Far-Right Antifeminism Converge with the Political Mainstream

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Magdalena Breyer, Tarik Abou-Chadi and Theresa Gessler (University of Zurich): #MeToo and the Political Mobilization of Gender ● Susanne Lettow (Free University Berlin): Gender, Race and the <i>Abendland</i>. The construction of the Occident in German Right-Wing Political Discourse ● Canan Aslan Akman (Middle East Technical University, Ankara): Gender Politics Under Authoritarian Populism in Turkey: From the Equal Rights Agenda To An Anti-Gender Strategy? ● Heike Kahlert (Ruhr University Bochum): Right-wing populism, gender change and the 'demographic crisis': an intersectional analysis of the AfD's political agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frederic Heine (Johannes Kepler Universität Linz): The bad boys of Brexit? Masculinity, populism, and the cultural political economy of Brexit ● Stacey Hunt (Auburn University): Masculinity and Populist Leaders: Lessons from Latin America ● Anne Burkhardt (University of Tübingen): The conflict surrounding diesel driving bans in Stuttgart as an arena of the right-wing populist struggle for traditional gender roles
<p>13:15-14:30 LUNCH BREAK</p>	
<p>14:30-17:15 Panel 7: STRATEGY AND MOBILIZATION II: WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM LINK:</p> <p><i>Chair & discussant: Anna Lavizzari (Scuola Normale Superiore)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proma Ray Choudhury (Dublin City University): The Political Asceticism of Mamata Banerjee: Female Populist Leadership in Contemporary India ● Agnieszka Pasioka (University of Vienna): Far-right movements and centerwomen ● Franziska Wagner (Central European University): Becoming member: female participation in the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in East Germany ● Lakshita Bhagat (Jawaharlal Nehru University): Dynamics between the Women's Movement and the Hindu-Right in India 	<p>14:30-17:15 Panel 8: GENDER AND POPULIST DISCOURSES Link:</p> <p><i>Chair & discussant: Francesca Feo (Scuola Normale Superiore)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eszter Kováts (ELTE University Budapest): An import from the West? The 'gender ideology' accusation in the discourse of the Hungarian government ● Cristina Chiva (University of Salford Manchester): The construction of gender in the discourses of the populist radical right in the European Parliament ● Vered Porzycki (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): European Women, Immigrant Women: Women's Representation in Populist and Mainstream Parties' Discourse in the European Parliament ● Ivana Lorenzetti (University of Verona): A contrastive analysis of gender inequality in right-populist discourse

- **Zorica Siročić** (Graz University): On the steady way to mainstream? Anti-gender campaigns and their opposition during the right-wing rule in comparison

- **Hande Eslen-Ziya** (University of Stavanger): The construction of gender in populist discourses: Right-wing populism and anti-science discourses.

17:15- 18 | **FINAL DISCUSSION & WRAP-UP** | Link:

Abstracts – Alphabetical order

KEYNOTES

Eva Anduiza, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, eva.anduiza@uab.cat

Sexism and far right vote

While the gender gap in populist radical right vote is widely acknowledged, the relationship between attitudes towards women and gender equality on the one hand, and vote choice on the other, is more contested and less frequently analyzed. There is a wealth of studies linking the far right to attitudes towards migration, but fewer empirical analysis assessing to what extent attitudes towards gender matter for this vote choice. Taking the case of Spain, this paper argues that sexism is one of the most important predictors of radical right vote choice. Modern sexism (Swim and Cohen 1997) seems particularly appropriate as it mirrors, at the attitudinal level, discourses prevalent among many far-right leaders: denial of women's discrimination and rejection protests and policies against such discrimination. Using panel data, we show that for the case of Vox in Spain modern sexism is only matched in relevance by ideological self-placement. The gender gap in vote choice for Vox disappears once controlling for modern sexism. The analysis also shows evidence of significant individual-level reductions in levels of modern sexism after the 8M feminist massive demonstrations of 2018, followed by a backlash effect that could at least partially explain the sudden increase in Vox's electoral support. Sexism appears a fundamental explanatory factor that should be taken into account when trying to understand the rise of the radical right.

Andrea Krizsán, Central European University, krizsana@ceu.edu

The changing politics of gender violence in times of contesting the Istanbul Convention

This talk will look at how contestation of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence changes the landscape of violence against women politics. It will look both into the nature and framing of the attacks as well as the strategies and framing used by women's rights advocates to respond to contestation. The discussion will focus on debates in 4 Central and Eastern European countries with high levels of controversy around the Convention: Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Poland. This wave of politicization of gender will be discussed both as an opportunity as well as a threat to improving VAW policies in these countries. The talk is based on research conducted with Conny Roggeband, University of Amsterdam

PARTICIPANTS

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Queer feminist resistance to anti-gender campaigns: potential alliances in populist times

Anti-gender mobilizations encompass, capture the stakes of redefining social justice politically, economically and socially, in a moment of critical juncture (Della Porta, 2018) – when the neoliberal model and consensus is challenged, questioned and alternative conceptions of social justice are in competition for hegemony. Feminist and queer resistance studies met a similar fate, echoing Fraser's (Fraser and Honneth 2003) urge to bring back redistribution in feminist politics, along with recognition claims. To fill in some of these gaps, the aim of this paper is threefold. First, I would like to disentangle and shed light on the relationship between the different movements and actors on the left, and potential alliances that constitute a queer feminist resistance in populist times, especially in relation to anti-gender mobilizations. I will map out the interplay between different kind of ties and associated network formations in the case of resistance to anti-gender mobilizations. Second, I will identify opportunities and challenges to activate latent or underlying ties (Diani and Mische, 2015) during

resistance mobilization against anti-gender campaigns. Third, I seek to unveil the role of class in queer feminist resistance mobilizations, in populist times, following Fraser's (Fraser and Honneth, 2003) arguments that recognition claims have effects on redistribution and vice-versa, showing how they are interrelated, but irreducible one to the other.

Canan Aslan Akman, Middle East Technical University Ankara, aslanc@metu.edu.tr

Gender Politics Under Authoritarian Populism In Turkey: From The Equal Rights Agenda To An Anti-Gender Strategy?

This paper has the objective of analyzing the gendered transformation of the conservative populist government of the JDP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey which has politicized gender equality issues through specific mobilization strategies over the past decade. Research on the JDP's gender policy has so far focused on its Islamic vision and the consolidation of a neoliberal patriarchal gender regime through the transformation of social policies. It is underlined in this paper that the new populist regime of polarizing and exclusionary discourses and institutional transformations have epitomized a (neo) -patrimonial mode of governance and mobilization with significant repercussions for reorienting gender policies. The promotion of a conservative gender order summed up in the motto of "strong families, empowered women" has recently been transformed into a conservative backlash with an anti-gender agenda. This paper analyzes both the discursive mobilization strategies and its major institutional pillars of the gendered populism of the government (specifically, the Directorate for Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Family and the government-affiliated NGOs). The analysis also reflects on the resistance strategies of women's and feminist groups to the new anti-gender agenda threatening women's rights. The research is based on the analysis of the primary and secondary documents on the government policy and discourses, published interviews and debates on controversial issues as well as the policy documents and projects and their coverage in both pro-government and critical/liberal media outlets.

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Dynamics between the Women's Movement and the Hindu-Right in India

The women's movement in India has traversed a lasting diverse path, commencing from the colonial period to post-independence. The first issue is the demand for implementation of the Uniform Civil Code by the Hindu-Right. The demand gathered steam with the overturning of the Shah Bano judgment of 1985 by the Supreme Court and the consequent calls for the implementation of UCC by the Hindu Right in the name of gender equality. Demands for gender equality are easily assumed as a sign of disloyalty or treason towards the community. The second issue, the Bill for 33 percent reservation for women in the Indian parliament, supported by the Indian feminists, has not been able to garner cross-party support since its first introduction in 1996. This paper examines contemporary women's movement in India, with a specific focus on the political discourse advanced by the nationalist party in power and some landmark judgments of the Indian Supreme Court. The attempt is to explore strategies that could safeguard women's rights and secure social justice and foster political empowerment within the bounds of India's complex social and political landscape. The methods of discourse analysis and critical assessment of primary and secondary literature are used to evaluate the position of Indian women and women's movement vis-à-vis the rise of the popular Hindu-Right in India.

Magdalena Breyer, University of Zurich (breyer@ipz.uzh.ch) (co-authored with Tarik Abou-Chadi and Theresa Gessler)

#MeToo and the Political Mobilization of Gender

While the hashtag #MeToo and the surrounding debate has received a lot of attention in the public sphere, academic research on its effects is still rare. This paper addresses the question of how the hashtag increased the political mobilization of gender issues and furthered the transformation of the conflict between new left and

populist radical right parties. Specifically, we ask to which extent parties have increased their mobilization of the issue and whether this translates into attitudinal and behavioural changes among voters. The literature on the transformation of the European political space has emphasized the role of the silent counter-revolution – an authoritarian-nationalist backlash against liberal and progressive value change – for increasing support of radical right parties. While attitudes toward immigration have been identified as the main driving force behind the electoral success of the radical right, anti-feminist positions are increasingly discussed as part of the radical right appeal. Empirical studies focusing on this question, however, remain scarce. We investigate how the #MeToo hashtag as a specific event has affected the politicization of gender issues within the transforming political space in Europe. For the supply side, we expect that especially radical right parties have increased their emphasis on gender related issues to increasingly mobilized anti-feminist sentiment. As the main proponents of gender equality, we similarly expect to see increased attention to the issue by Green and left-libertarian parties. Our results show that the effect of the hashtag – as well as the general mobilization of gender issues – was not restricted to political elites but also had consequences for voters' decision-making processes. Importantly, both opinion changes and the increased salience are most relevant for the populist radical right as well as the new left.

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The conflict surrounding diesel driving bans in Stuttgart as an arena of the right-wing populist struggle for traditional gender roles

The interdisciplinary research project PODESTA (Populism and Democracy in the City) investigates at the Universities of Tübingen and Jena how right-wing actors in the German cities of Stuttgart and Leipzig take up urban conflicts e.g. concerning housing, construction, mobility or integration and reinterpret them for their own purposes. One of these conflicts currently being researched is that surrounding inner-city driving bans for diesel vehicles in Stuttgart. Since driving bans came into force in January 2019, a broad wave of organized bourgeois protest was sparked, which is being co-opted by right-wing actors such as the populist party "Alternative for Germany" (AfD) or the right-wing trade union "Zentrum Automobil". The right-wing actors are staging themselves as advocates of the diesel drivers, whom they seek to defend against the "eco-dictatorship" of the Green Party and the injustice of "expropriation" by the political elite.

PODESTA conducted an extensive analysis of articles dealing with the diesel conflict (n>600) published in right-wing magazines such as Compact, Junge Freiheit or AfD-Kompakt as well as of AfD-fraction documents. The present contribution discusses these empirical findings against the background of current research on right-wing discourses, hegemonic masculinity and automotive subjectivity.

The discourse analysis revealed that right-wing discourse links the car - and in particular the loud and dirty diesel - with values such as freedom, autonomy, productivity and prosperity traditionally associated with masculinity ("[The diesel car] is a product [...] that stands like no other for freedom, prosperity and the superiority of Germany as an industrial and business location"), as well as with a certain, male-imagined attitude to life: "It [the car] means being able to invite your girlfriend for a spin or to drive with the boys into the sunset." Also, in an almost tender characterization of the vehicle as a "friend, as part of the family" and "Germany's dearest child", the "deep bond between man and machine, horse and rider" is evoked. According to this symbolic elevation of the car, the Right is vehemently opposed to the diesel driving bans not least because it perceives them as a threat to male

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Femonationalism and feminism: between convergence and resistance. The example of the French case on the Muslim face-veil ban

This paper intends to analyse the role of majority feminists in the making of femonationalism, drawing on the French example of the Muslim face-veil ban. To do so, I firstly intend to look into the concept of femonationalism coined by Sara Farris (2017), highlighting some dimensions that seem to have been overlooked in the increasing use of the term, not only in activist circles but also in academic work. Indeed, femonationalism is often defined or referred to as an instrumentalisation of women's rights by nationalist and far-right actors, political parties and movements. This paper thus aims at highlighting this convergence dimension of the concept, referring to the role of feminists in the making of femonationalist discourses and policies. Indeed, overlooking the role of feminists in the process of racialisation of sexism (Hamel 2005, Guénif-Souilamas and Macé 2004) amounts to neglecting the racial dimensions of Western white feminism history (and present) (Mohanty 1988). This paper draws on the French case of the Muslim face-veil ban, which, I contend, offers an illustration of how such a convergence can deploy in the making of anti-Muslim politics today, despite the resistance of some feminist and antiracist activists. To do so, I will explore the feminists' political interventions in the legislative and decision-making process leading up to the 2010 law banning the face veil in France, drawing on a critical document analysis.

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The Political Asceticism of Mamata Banerjee: Female Populist Leadership in Contemporary India.

In consonance with the ascendance of populist; non-elitist leadership in Indian politics that has been variously characterised as a 'second democratic upsurge' (Yadav, 2000) or as the 'vernacularisation' (Michelutti, 2007) of democratic politics since the 1990s, there has been a substantial surge in the participation of women in trade-unions, institutional apparatuses such as political parties, civil rights struggles, and militant movements among other spheres. This paper is grounded in the context of the gender discourses that frame leadership opportunities for women within the significant political parties in the Indian state of West Bengal- a region that has undergone a paradigmatic discursive shift from a longstanding leftist hegemony to centrist-Populism and has also witnessed the escalation of right-wing politics in the recent decades. For this, the paper conducts an interpretive analysis of a range of texts encompassing selected party documents, images, autobiographies, and semi-structured interviews of women party leaders and grassroots workers conducted among the AITC and among its rival political parties- the left-wing Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Through its analysis of Banerjee's gendered populist repertoire as well as the reception of her personalised political leadership (Rahat and Kenig, 2018) among her followers and detractors, the paper seeks to problematise (Maignashca, 2019) the conventional masculinist and leader-centric narratives on contemporary populist regimes.

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The construction of gender in the discourses of the populist radical right in the European Parliament

Is the rise of populist radical parties a threat for the promotion of gender equality? Recent scholarship on gender and populism has documented that this is indeed the case in a variety of national settings (for Europe, see, for example, Meret and Siim 2013, Spierings *et al.* 2015, Köttig *et al.* 2017). The broader context is one of increasing opposition to gender equality (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017, Verloo 2018, Kováts 2018), a process that is at least partly driven by the recent electoral success of new populist radical right parties seeking to question gender policy in Europe's established and new democracies alike. This fascinating and growing literature notwithstanding, there has been relatively little examination of the ways in which populist opposition to gender equality plays out at the European Union level (for an exception, see Krizsán and Siim 2018). In particular,

existing scholarship often notes that populist parties in Europe tend to be Eurosceptic. However, there have been very few analyses of the precise relationship between Eurosceptic populism and opposition to gender equality at the EU level. This paper analyses the construction of gender in the discourses of the populist radical parties in the European Parliament (EP) during its 2014-2019 term. It is divided into two main parts. First, I provide an overview of the voting record of the populist radical right on all 38 votes recorded by Votewatch as belonging to the policy area of gender equality between 2014 and 2019. Unsurprisingly, populist radical right parties across the EU are highly resistant to the notion of gender equality, which has otherwise been a long-established policy area at the EU level. Secondly, I analyse the construction of gender in the MEPs' publicly available explanations of their votes, focusing primarily on how MEPs in the EU's new and established democracies use different frames for justifying their opposition to gender equality. Within this context, gender is a key marker of national identity and belonging that, according to Eurosceptic populist parties, should therefore be left entirely to national-level decision-making. The paper also forms part of a larger project seeking to theorise the core elements and the impact of Eurosceptic populist parties' opposition to gender equality within the EU's system of multi-level governance.

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Spain's feminist strikes: resisting and (re)configuring feminisms towards social change

The 2018 and 2019 Feminist Strikes in Spain were multitudinous: at least hundreds of thousands took to the streets to protest on March 8th and around five millions of workers participated in partial or 24-hour strikes during those days. The strikes were conceived and performed by either reclaiming or reimagining the classic repertoire of contention, and were organized at local, regional and national levels. Under the motto 'if we stop the world stops', women's and feminists groups went on strike to denounce multiple oppressions, such as violence against women, to fight for reproductive rights, to challenge the political and economic status quo and to resist the growing populist far-right backlash in the country. The strikes in Spain are part of a transnational wave of feminist campaigns including *Ni Una Menos*, #MeToo and the *Paro Internacional de Mujeres/International Women's Strike*, examples of feminist mobilization struggling to bring up change.

This paper will analyze how the 2018 and 2019 feminist strikes unfolded in Spain and Barcelona, where mobilization were diverse and multitudinous. After following the organization process of the strikes in Spain and Barcelona from November 2017 to June 2019, I will conduct discourse analysis of participant observation notes, documents, interviews and social media data from Twitter, Telegram and Facebook to answer such research question.

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Between Femonationalism and Anti-Genderism. Right-Wing Populist Gender Politics in Germany

The *Demo fuer Alle* as well as the massive wave of online-activism following the so called 'Silvesternacht' in Cologne in 2015/2016 have undoubtedly been two of the most focal moments of mobilization for the growing right-wing(-populism) in Germany – and maybe even Europe – over the last years. In this paper I ask what unites these, at first glance, contradictory discourses, without losing sight of the differences in their argumentation. What kind of problem do they identify and what kind of goals regarding gender politics do they share? I conduct a discourse analysis of these two right-wing populist discourses. My material on the one hand consists of *Twitter* campaigns following the New Year's Eve of 2015 by members of the German right-wing party *Alternative fuer Deutschland* and other right-wing-activists. On the other hand, I analyze the speeches held at the *Demo fuer Alle*. The analysis shows that right-wing gender policies not only serve as 'symbolic glue' (Kovats/Poim 2015) between right-wing conservatives, Christian fundamentalists and other conservative actors, to unite them. It furthermore reveals how gender is utilized as a 'hinge' (Lang 2015) by these actors, to link to broader discourses on gender and family, which subsequently shifts public discourse to the right.

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The construction of gender in populist discourses: Right-wing populism and anti-science discourses

After years of progress in terms of gender and sexual rights, since 2012 Europe has been facing a gender backlash with growing opposition to gender theory and the notion of gender equality (Kuhar and Zobec 2017, Grzebalska and Soós 2016). Such opposition is mostly directed to issues related to reproductive policies and abortion, violence against women, LGBTIQ rights and gay marriages, gender mainstreaming and sex education at schools as well as antidiscrimination policies. In line with this assumption the main interest in this paper is to understand right-wing populism and troll-science discourses on gender under public normative order of AKP government. For this I will study articles published in KADEM Kadın Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal of Women's Studies). KADEM Journal of Women's Studies is the official, academic periodical of the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM). It is a peer-reviewed academic journal that publishes research on gender and women's studies. The assumption here is that with right-wing populist ideologies introduced under the New Turkey has created alternative troll-science discourses within academia, leading the Turkish Ministry of Education to cancelling gender equality programs for instance (2019).

Sabina García Peter and **Heike Pantelmann**, Free University Berlin, sabina.garcia.peter@fu-berlin.de, heike.pantelmann@fu-berlin.de

#4GenderStudies: (Online) Strategies to Overcome Attacks against Gender Studies in Germany

Since 2017, the action day #4GenderStudies on 18 of December has been an initiative of the German-speaking gender research/gender studies community. The action day aims to make the diversity of research in the field visible, to demonstrate its social relevance and to advocate freedom of science and teaching.

For some time now, gender studies have been coming under increasing pressure across Europe. The attacks are coming from right-wing populists, among others, but also from various religious leaders and from conservative politicians and journalists. Against the background of increasing pressure on the field, gender studies researchers and institutions drew attention to the high relevance, diversity and scientific quality of research on this day of action. Under the hashtag "4GenderStudies" different activities took place for the last three years both online and offline. The community (centers for gender studies and individual researchers) posted on social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with a high level of participation under the hashtag. They were partly supported by university stakeholders, such as the press offices or the executive committees of the universities. The online activities were accompanied by offline activities, such as barcamps, workshops or lectures which took place at many university locations. These actions had a wide reach – unfortunately they also gave opponents of gender studies a high (and new) visibility.

This contribution aims to provide an overarching view of the social resistance that gender studies (in the social media) is confronted with and thus to refer to the context in which the campaign #4GenderStudies was created. The starting point for this discussion is the interplay between increasing anti-feminist hostility and the electoral success of right-wing parties. Gender studies as well as equality policies and demands for sexual self-determination are discredited, and the scientific nature of inequality and gender studies as a field of research are questioned. At the same time, there is a linkage with folk-racist discourses, which often leads to personalized threats against individual researchers. Print and especially digital media are the form of public sphere in which these hostilities are primarily articulated.

Furthermore, results of our analysis of the twitter activities will be presented and strategies for dealing with the resistances will be examined - including a discussion of whether campaigns in the social media are a good way of dealing with these resistances, whether they should be supplemented or adapted in order to have a lasting effect. The question will also be raised as to whether gender research/gender studies has moved too far away from its "movement-historical tradition" and "sits in an ivory tower". This aims at the self-reflection

of gender studies as an academic field, which in view of the resistance should take place in the field itself - parallel to dealing with the resistance from outside.

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The bad boys of Brexit? Masculinity, populism, and the cultural political economy of Brexit

On the morning of June 24 2016, Nigel Farage announced triumphantly that “dawn is breaking on an independent United Kingdom”. Multi-millionaire Arron Banks, one of the triumphantly grinning suited white men standing next to Farage during this announcement, recounted later in his memoirs: “We were undoubtedly the ‘bad boys’ of the referendum campaign. Our belligerent approach to politicians and other people (...) upset the establishment and we fell out with everyone from NASA to Posh Spice. (...) Ours became the guerrilla war.” (Banks 2017, p. xxvii). Arguably one of the central aspects of the much-debated turn to right wing populism in advanced capitalist countries in North America and Western Europe, and perhaps particularly in the Anglo-Saxon societies, is the ability of elite white men to successfully represent the “will of the people”. This hypothesis is approached through a case study of the success of right wing populism in the United Kingdom, with a particular focus on the EU referendum and the 2019 General Election, as well as an exploration of the transnational links of these events with the wider “right wing populist complex” (Dietze and Roth 2020, p. 8). The paper seeks to establish how affective politics of Brexit are used to mobilise aggrieved power and lost entitlement of (certain) white masculinities (Kimmel 2017, p. 18, Brown 2020, p. 55); however emphasises that a progressive response to the (exclusionary and manipulative) affective politics of populism requires not a return to “rational” politics but a more explicit articulation of emotions in politics.

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Angry Fathers: Populist and Masculinist Twitter Campaigns in Turkey

As Fuchs argued, “fascism and right-wing extremism on social media are to a significant degree public forms of communication. They constitute a reactionary public sphere that is mediated by the internet, social media, mobile communication, etc.” (p.83), whether we like it or not. The rise of right-wing discourses, including anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, and sexism on online spheres, is not an arbitrary rise but the resonation of the same rise in the society(ies). By visualization (memes, gifs, emojis) and tabloidization (simplification, polarization, manipulation, etc.), online populism fits the populist, emotional, and simplistic user-generated ideologies of everyday life (Fuchs, 2018). Online and offline forms of far-right ideologies not only embosom each other but act like the echo chambers of each other to resonate with their demands and discourses. The social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, are two of the echo-chambers of the right-wing/authoritarian populist Justice and Development Party of Turkey (JDP). Several “fathers’ rights groups,” which has established as a collection of small and informal groups, focused on the divorced fathers and represented them as the victims of feminism, and they blamed İstanbul Convention as a source of their aggrievement. The purpose of this research is to explore the twitter campaigns of the fathers’ rights groups in Turkey. By following certain popular hashtags (such as #kademkapatılsın (close KADEM¹) #aileherşeyimiz (Family is Everything) #istanbulsözleşmesifeshedilsin (Abolish the İstanbul Convention) #istanbulsözleşmesinasdeğildir (İstanbul Convention is not Certainty) #6284sayılıkanunkaldırılınsın (Abolish Law No 6284) #toplumsalciinsiyeteşitliğinehayır (No to Gender Equality) it is aimed to clarify the reverberation of JDP’s populist anti-gender politics on the social media.

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KADEM: Women and Democracy Association: Pro-government organization which endorses “women’s human dignity” (<https://kadem.org.tr/en/about-us/about-kadem/>).

Masculinity and Populist Leaders: Lessons from Latin America

This comparative case study of populist presidents Álvaro Uribe and Hugo Chavez in Colombia and Venezuela, respectively, indicates that performances of hypermasculinity are central to the construction of populist power, and that those performances – and relevant policy outcomes – differ depending on the ideological orientation of the populist leader. With the recent rise of populism in Western nations, the world is now fixated on the phenomenon, its causes, and consequences. Yet populism has long existed in Latin America where it has been called the most common form of government. Nevertheless, few studies explore Latin American cases for insights into how, why, and to what effect populist leaders or movements take and maintain power. Similarly, although statistics regarding gender and populist leadership indicate very clearly that women are excluded almost without exception from taking the reins of power as a populist leader, scholars continue to insist that populism is not gendered. In this paper, I argue that studying gendered populism in Latin America is essential to understanding the global diffusion and current manifestations of populism. I conduct a comparative case study of the rise, rule, and legacy of populist homologues Colombian President Álvaro Uribe and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. This study also suggests that national populists on the Right are much more likely to emerge in a context of acute crisis in which traditional gender norms provide a familiar and reassuring script for public performance and citizenship to get through the crisis. National populists on the Left, on the other hand, are much more likely to emerge after periods of inequitable growth and corruption. Finally, this paper demonstrates these performances of masculinity not only shape the contours of national identity and domestic policy, but international relations and boundaries as well. This comparative case study employs comparative historical and semiotic analyses to identify the causal mechanisms by which performances of hyper-masculinity allow nationalistic populist leaders to emerge, establish powerful political coalitions, and consolidate power in such a way to as to permanently transform political institutions and national identity.

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Right-wing populism, gender change and the 'demographic crisis': an intersectional analysis of the AfD's political agenda

In my paper I will focus on the German situation and the political party AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) which is represented in the Federal Parliament and in all parliaments of all 16 federal states in Germany. Based on an intersectional qualitative analysis of political documents, for example party programmes and websites, I will have a closer look at this right-wing populist party's views on different aspects of the so-called demographic crisis such as low or even lowest-low fertility and a high immigration imbalance in Germany which are on the political and social political agenda as such. I am especially interested in how the AfD analyses the so-called demographic crisis in Germany and how this party wants to solve this so-called crisis. In doing so, I will discuss in what manner and to what extent the AfD's diagnosis of social and demographic change and the political solutions suggested are influenced by pronatalist, nationalistic, anti-gender and racist thinking. Additionally, I will show how this party uses 'gender' for populist mobilisations against an ongoing societal and gender change in Germany.

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Anti-gender mobilization and strategic deployment of populism: The case of Croatia

Following the rise of right-wing populisms in Europe, a growing number of studies examine the ways in which gender figures as one of the central themes in the political discourses of right-wing populist parties in Europe. However, much less attention is paid to the ways in which populist discourse has been constructed and employed in the context of recent anti-gender/anti-LGBTQ discourses and grassroots campaigns in Europe. This has left the interplay between the two seemingly complementing, yet different phenomena – surge of right-

wing populism and anti-gender mobilization – insufficiently explored and theorized. It will do so by exploring the ways in which an appeal to “the people” is used by Croatian movement On Behalf of the Family (OBF) in its heterosexual marriage referendum action and its subsequent referendum initiatives. Combining a qualitative discourse analysis and Rogers Brubaker’s account of inherent semantic ambiguity of “the people”, the paper will show how “the people” have been simultaneously constructed both as demos (i.e. as citizens and voters) and as a bounded community (based on shared culture, morality, and ethnic origin) in OBF’s mobilizing discourses. The paper will further reveal how this ambiguity brings the horizontal antagonism against the sexual and ethnic minorities in a productive interplay with the vertical antagonism against the political elites, who are placed both “on top” and “outside” of the bounded community precisely for supporting the rights and non-discrimination of these vilified minorities. The paper will argue that the semantic ambiguity of “the people” as well as close interweaving of the vertical and horizontal antagonisms OBF’s mobilization discourse allow OBF to utilize inclusionary populism in its exclusionary campaigns.

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Conceptualizing the relation between right-wing populism and (anti)gender: an opportunistic synergy

Scholars are increasingly aware that populism is gendered, thus pioneering analyses have begun to appear (e.g. Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, Scrinzi 2017, Spierings and Zaslove 2017, Dietze and Roth 2020). This paper aims to further the debates on populism and gender, based on the analysis of anti-gender campaigns in Europe, with specific focus on the Polish case. Opposition against feminism, women’s rights and sexual democracy is not a new phenomenon. What sets contemporary anti-gender campaigns (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017) apart from older forms of backlash is their relationship to right-wing populism. Rather than looking for specific gendered aspects of populism as an ideology, however, I examine an *opportunistic synergy* between the right-wing parties and ultraconservative groups opposing “gender ideology.” *Opportunistic synergy* is a dynamic, which includes political alliances, ideological affinities and organizational ties, and plays out on two distinct levels: ideological/discursive and strategic/organizational. Since populism is not a robust ideological project, it readily feeds on ideas, affects and narrative structures promoted by the anti-gender movement, albeit often in an opportunistic and selective fashion. The movement presents itself as a necessary and courageous defense of “the people” (often in their private roles as parents) against powerful and foreign “liberal elites,” with “gender ideology” emphatically identified as a modern version of western colonialism. In recent years religious fundamentalists and other ultraconservative actors have strengthened the economic aspect of their argumentation: they view themselves as defenders of ordinary people against the corporate greed and global moneymen (Grzebalska and Peto 2018, Korolczuk and Graff 2018). Hence, populist right-wing parties in many locations have embraced anti-gender rhetoric not only because they are socially conservative, but to enhance their popular appeal as defenders of common people against immoral, corrupt elites and to foster wide-scale elite change.

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An import from the West? The ‘gender ideology’ accusation in the discourse of the Hungarian government

A defining feature of Orbán’s right-wing populist regime, in place since 2010, is the use of ongoing, publicly funded fear-mongering and hate campaigns, targeting alleged enemies (migrants, liberals, George Soros or the so-called ‘gender ideologists’) who are presented as committed to destroying the nation. This communication is designed to polarize society and to generate a feeling of being under constant threat. They maintain a wartime narrative, so that the government can present itself as the only true defender and representative of the people against external threats. The contents attributed to the so-called ‘gender ideology’ are, at this stage, imported threats in the Hungarian context, a copy-paste alt-right: Very few Hungarian feminist and LGBT activists have so far publicly exhibited the views that they are accused of, however, to a certain extent these are indeed being imported to an activist scene that presents these issues and their corresponding social justice language as

universal. In this paper I suggest looking behind these accusations and contrast them with actually existing power relations of the global and European gender architecture, in order to better understand why these tropes resonate with large segments of ECE societies and whether they are – at least to some extent – based on social realities. Taking Hungary as a case study, this paper attempts to demonstrate the specific ECE drivers of the anti-gender mobilization in this region and argues that this is a right-wing language of resistance against existing material and symbolic East-West inequalities in Europe.

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The Gender Politics of Populist Parties in Southern Europe

The struggle over cultural liberalism reached a tipping point across several European countries. Cultural issues represent a central battleground for new(er) political parties. As a case in point, a number of referendums have been held on issues falling under the umbrella of morality politics, while a fully-fledged culture war on liberalism and – more specifically – ‘genderist ideology’ is now waged by populist actors in power. Yet, the populist push-and-pull over cultural liberalisation cannot be reduced to the conservative stances of (radical) right-wing parties. Within the broader set of populist politics, stances on cultural liberalism are likely to match the ideological core of parties under consideration. Drawing on content analyses of externally oriented sources such as manifestos and websites, we examine the ideological stances of the populist left (the Spanish Podemos) and right (Lega and Fratelli d’Italia in Italy; VOX in Spain), while also accounting for populist parties that defy straightforward categorisations in terms of left and right (the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle). We expect parties of the populist right to converge towards a common denominator of opposition to gender politics, though based on a different set of argumentations. These differences, we argue, are to be attributed to the different genealogy of right-wing populist parties. In a similar vein, non-rightist populist parties are to display a positive commitment to gender politics, hence suggesting that even ambiguous populist cases might adopt culturally liberal positions in their political platforms.

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Gender, Race and the Abendland. The Construction of the Occident in German Right-Wing Political Discourse

In 2014, the PEGIDA movement that refers to itself as “Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (*Abendland*)” emerged and soon merged with the AfD, the far-right party that was founded in 2013. In my contribution, I will focus on a central semantic element of PEGIDA’s name that has played a central role in the political discourse of Germany’s far right since the 1920’ and 30’s, i.e. the concept of *Abendland*. Although it is usually translated as “occident”, the German concept that was coined as a political concept in the Romantic period has a much more specific meaning. In the context of the so called “conservative revolution”, it became a concept through which – among other things – Germany’s imperial aspirations within and beyond Europe have been articulated and re-articulated before and after 1945. I argue that the semantic matrix of the so-called “conservative revolution” is currently re-articulated. My main argument however is not that of a simple continuity between today’s far-right and earlier authoritarian projects in Germany. In contrast, present forms of neoliberal neo-authoritarianism, racism and antifeminism need to be understood with regard to their specificity, and the respective calls for a homogeneous *populus* build on what Wendy Brown (2015) has understood as neoliberal “undoing” of the *demos* of democracy. However, the analysis of the intellectual history in which present right-wing movements and parties situate themselves is helpful for understanding in how far they, nevertheless, build on previous authoritarian projects. In addition, an analysis of the intellectual history of the far-right political discourse helps to understand that today’s right-wing “populism” is certainly not an immediate eruption of the “people’s voice” but channeled through “elite” strategies and discourses.

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A contrastive analysis of gender inequality in right-populist discourse

Part of the success experienced by populist leaders globally gaining ground on both sides of the political spectrum is due to their skilful (and often social media-savvy) usage of communicative strategies, relying heavily on impactful messages through emotional and often aggressive overtones and sensory slogans rather than on the argumentation of one's policies, in a simple language mirroring the casual language of ordinary people. Starting from a critical discourse studies perspective, and relying on Van Dijk's sociocognitive framework (Van Dijk 2002; 2013), which investigates linguistic structures of texts as indexes of socially-shared beliefs or ideologies that can contribute to the (re)production and spread of inequality in society through mental models, this paper presents a qualitative contrastive study of the discriminatory language against women by two right-wing leaders, namely American president Donald Trump and Italian League leader Matteo Salvini. Drawing on a diversified data set, including speeches, tweets and multimodal posts, the negative depiction of women interlocutors, or political opponents as "others", and the indirect depiction of women through the appropriation of such topics as abortion and emancipation is analysed by considering the lexical level and the figurative language adopted by the two leaders.

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Resistances to gender stereotypes and Islamophobia in populist time: the online and offline political experience of girls of Muslim culture

In the context of growing Islamophobia and the instrumental use of women's bodies by populist discourses on religion, this paper analyses French Muslim girls' forms of resistance through a feminist perspective (Joly and Wadia 2017). Public discourse and analyses of its populist narrative rarely take into account responses and counter-narratives produced by marginalised subjects, thereby reinforcing the exclusion of their voices and subjectivities from the public space. This is particularly relevant in a context in which girls in general—and girls who belong to the Islamic religion in particular—are criticised for a lack of agency in public and media discourses (Benhadjoudja 2017). Based on online and offline observation and interviews carried out in Paris, this paper shows that in a context perceived by the girls as characterised by contemporary processes of racialisation and everyday discrimination against Muslim people, a number of individual and collective strategies were developed by girls to cope with racist and anti-Islamic rhetoric and practices. This paper explores how Muslim girls produce counter-narratives and new spaces of resistance at the intersection of age, gender, religion and racialization, thus embodying an intersectional understanding of feminist theories and practices today. In conclusion, the paper shows how the experiences and narratives of girls of Muslim culture may represent an element of major importance in the debate around the new configurations – political and theoretical– of feminisms in this ambivalent time characterised by both the co-optation of feminist issues (from market and institutions) and the emergence of new forms of resistance.

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Far-right movements and centerwomen

Drawing on ethnographic research with Italian, Polish and Hungarian youth far-right militants, conducted between 2016 and 2019, my paper aims at demonstrating the ways in which female activists negotiate their role within the movements they are active. Although the movements I have been studying are dominated by male members, (male) leaders have been increasingly vocal about the need to attract more female activists. In recognizing their importance for the movements, men move back and forth between asserting women's "traditional role," thereby reinforcing a hierarchical structure of the movements, and the emphasis placed on comradeship and (claimed) equity. Women, instead, appear to be more strategic about these contrasting ideas. As my research demonstrates, some of them use them to establish their position as "centerwomen", to borrow Karen Brodtkin's and Kathleen Blee's formulation, that is to perform leading roles and crucial tasks even if this is not openly acknowledged. My paper aims at contributing to a better understanding of current socio-political developments, highlighting both the importance of certain ideas of gender for the far-right movements' identity

as well as the importance of gender identity as a factor shaping membership in these movements. At the same time, the paper's objective is to highlight broader implications of the discussed issues, demonstrating the relevance of the arguments presented – such as those regarding negotiations of gender roles, mobilization strategies, and the relationship between ideas and practices - beyond the research on far right and right-wing populism.

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European Women, Immigrant Women: Women's Representation in Populist and Mainstream Parties' Discourse in the European Parliament

How does gender play out in the discourse of right-wing populist parties? Right-wing populist parties are known as men's parties (*Männerparteien*) either for their male charismatic leadership or because they draw their support mainly from male voters. Yet it remains unclear how women are represented and discussed by these parties. Who are the discussed women? what issues are being associated with women? and what is the scope of issues associated with the discourse on women? These questions are at the focus of this paper. My empirical case consists of 529 speeches given by members of the European Parliament (MEPs) between 2009 and 2019. Speeches by MEPs from three populist parties are juxtaposed with and compared to speeches by mainstream right parliamentarians. This analytical strategy allows me to systematically measure how populist parties construct the image of women and what are the ways by which women are being represented by parties that claim to represent the voice of the People. My findings show that RRP focus mainly on the issue of immigrant and refugee women, as persons who aim to seize the European culture and as persons who undermine the European economic market, while using liberal discourse to justify their claims, in contrast to mainstream parties. Additionally, it is revealed that RRPs construct European women as persons who are already equal to men, thus presenting a different and traditional voice about European women.

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Feminist subjectivity and mainstream political discourse in Poland. An impossible mix or a possibility for a new program for the Left?

In the recent elections in Poland, after 4 years of absence, a conglomerate of different left parties entered the parliament. Though it was not an equal coalition of 3 different parties – the electoral lists were registered with the biggest of them, the post-communist party – they were able to construction of quite discursively coherent political program. The 2019 elections proved that there is [indeed] a space in the mainstream politics for MP's who openly refer to woman as political subject - some of the 21 Left MP's in the current Polish parliament were (or are) involved in activities related to supporting women's rights, lobbying for more feminist approaches or working in NGO's dealing with women's issues. Against this background, this paper examines the possibilities of a broad representation of different struggles in the political program of the Left especially focusing on the role of "female" and feminist topics and actors. By looking closer at the cases of female MP's from the Left answers the question of the possibility of new political subjectivities in the mainstream party politics in Poland. By analysing the speeches and interviews with those left MP's who have had an experience with the nongovernmental activism, feminist actions or organizing the black protest (2016-2018) the question of the conscious female subjectivity in its role in the last parliamentary elections in Poland will be examined.

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Germany Discourse Coalitions in Opposition to Feminism and Gender Equity – Does Far-Right Antifeminism Converge with the Political Mainstream?

While mainstream political forces are quick to condemn the far-right for its racist and nationalist agenda, with regard to feminist issues they have a record of holding positions similar to the far-right, e.g. concerning abortion

and gay rights (Kemper, 2014). I hypothesize that the commonalities in far-right and mainstream antifeminism share at least one of the following access points: They rely on gender stereotypes and patriarchal gender relations, as well as on heteronormativity and latent homophobia. This study aims to contribute to fill this gap by analysing the framing of feminism and gender equity between a variety of actors ranging from the far-right to the alternative left. It asks: Which commonalities in the framing of feminism and gender equity can be observed between the far-right and the political mainstream, and can these be described as discourse coalitions between actors with otherwise adversarial agendas? My findings rest on a quantitative content analysis of actor-frame-sequences in news coverage over a one-year period from a diverse set of 18 German online media. The random sample of 1.000 articles includes genuine online media such as right-wing and left-wing, religious and religious-fundamentalist, masculinist and feminist news sites, but also the digital outlets of mainstream legacy media. Preliminary findings aim to analyze the framing of feminism and gender equity in terms of the general legitimacy given to these issues, as well as the suggested treatment recommendations and causal effects. These are expected to bridge their ideological gaps with socially shared knowledge about gender roles, male supremacy and heteronormativity.

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Two narratives about the 2015 'Referendum on Family': Symbols, images and moral registers of the anti-gender mobilization and its resistance in Slovakia

Since the early 2010s, EU policies on the recognition of LGBTIQ rights and gender equality have suffered a tide of transnational, and increasingly global, conservative backlash. The reactionary anti-gender movement driven by civil society actors and enjoying the support of the Catholic Church has escalated in several post-communist EU member states, resulting in national referenda on legal status of same-sex partnerships. Focusing on the case of Slovakia, I examine the public controversy about the 'Referendum on Family' in 2015 that proposed ban on gay and lesbian marriages, adoptions, and compulsory sex education at schools. How was the referendum narrated as a significant event by both its proponents and opponents? What kind of symbols, images, morals, emotions and genres constitute their meaning-making practices and with what implications for social action? My research is based on the analysis of 24 qualitative interviews with the engaged civil society actors, the representatives of both sides of the dispute, and the corpus of 90 written documents, such as blogs, speeches, declarations and open letters related to the referendum. The analysis shows two antithetical master narratives in which the engaged groups enwrap their campaigns: The referendum initiative articulated the narrative about social decline and depicted the referendum as an emergency brake necessary to deflect a civilizational thread. My contribution aims to show how the public controversies over the concept of gender and LGBTIQ rights are not only legal but also symbolic struggles, in which cultural meanings play an important role for their capacity to legitimate or delegitimize particular ideas and mobilize or demobilize for particular action.

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Can Intersectional Feminism Trump Populism? Right-Wing Patterns of En-Gendering and Feminist Contestations

In tune with the outline of the conference, the talk is grounded on the conviction and observation that gender is no side effect in right-wing populist and extremist discourse, but that gender aspects are crucial for the inner logics of right-wing politics. In order to counter the current right-wing and extremist trend that can be observed in many places, the talk thus argues that it does no longer suffice to reduce right-wing gender politics to a mere "backlash" seeking to reestablish traditional gender orders. Rather, it is required to take the "dynamic paradoxes" into account that are at work in right-wing discourse. The first part of the talk presents the new research field 'right-wing populism and gender' which elaborates on how gender increasingly works in conservative and right-wing extremist discourse as a sort of arena, meta language, and "affective bridge" (Dietze) to address fears and topics related to demography, immigration politics, and the redistribution of

resources and positions in a neoliberal context. Among the five “Right-Wing Populist Patterns of En-Gendering” the talk carves out are ethno-sexist dynamics (projecting sexism and homophobia onto a “foreign” other) or anti-genderism (rejecting feminism, gender studies and LGBTQI activism as ideology and a threat to the traditional family and the (reproduction of) the nation). In a second part, the talk emphasizes in particular how an intersectional approach attentive to the interrelations between sexism, racism and other axes of oppression could broaden current discourses on right-wing extremism. It scrutinizes the potential of the intersectional feminisms that are currently gaining strength (particularly in Latin America, but also in many other places) to mobilize new and alternative forms of cohabitation, of conviviality and the social.

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On the steady way to mainstream? Anti-gender campaigns and their opposition during the right-wing rule in comparison

The global uniformity of contemporary anti-gender campaigns, their radical agenda, undisclosed finances, connections with far-right networks and finally policy successes stirred the academic and political attention. The intuitive assumption is that the rule of the right-wing parties provides a favorable setting for the flourishing of anti-gender groups and implementation of their agenda. But do all right-wing parties give the space to the anti-gender protagonists and their cause in their programs; and how does the opposition (feminist, LGBTQ+ movements and their allies) react in an unfavorable opportunity structure? To address this research gap, this talk proposes a framework to question and compare (a range of ideological and institutional) responses to anti-gender campaigns among different countries during the right-wing parties in power. Austria, Croatia and Hungary could be suitable for the case selection for sharing the shift towards right-wing parties that used the authoritarian and exclusionary biopolitical narrative in their campaigns (2015-2018). However, the ruling parties utilized and institutionalized the anti-gender discourse differently as did the formal and informal opposition mobilize to a different degree and around different issues. The dynamic, comparative and interactionist focus of this project would shift our perspective beyond the recognized obstacles that the right-wing setting presents for emancipatory gender politics. The comparison of European anti-gender campaigns and responses to them is an academic contribution to the sociology of transnational movements, but it is also a political contribution to our understanding of success/failure of contemporary populist right-wing ideas.

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The nationalisation of feminism in the populist radical right: The case of the Front national (France)

A growing literature points to the complex relationship existing between PRR (populist radical right) parties (Mudde 2007) and gender (Farris 2017, Köttig et al. 2017, Scrinzi 2017). In Western Europe, the PRR attempts to ‘normalise’ its public image and attract women voters, by elaborating more pragmatic positions on gender. Moreover, these parties claim that Islam would be incompatible with liberal rights, including women’s rights, which are depicted as a legacy of the so-called ‘Western Judeo-Christian tradition’. By ambiguously embracing gender equality, PRR parties have thus adopted a strategy of ‘agenda-grabbing’ in order to attack the racialised Other (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007: 213), appropriating the arguments traditionally employed by feminists and the left wing. This article focuses on these paradoxical ideological developments by considering the *Front national* party (FN, now called *Rassemblement National*) in France. It retraces the genealogy of the ‘racialisation of sexism’ discourse in the FN, which has gained momentum under its leader Marine Le Pen. It shows that Le Pen’s discourse should be inscribed in a wider context and in a longer time-frame, marked by successive public debates on gender, on sexuality and on immigration, which have emerged in France in the late 1980s. More particularly, the article analyses how Marine Le Pen has co-opted themes, frames and arguments which were used by different strands of French feminism in debates on parity laws, on sexual harassment, on the Muslim headscarf and on violence against women, to serve an anti-immigration agenda.

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Populism, Gender and Feminist Politics

The paper aims to examine the intersections of populism, gender and feminist politics reflecting critically at the conceptual relations between gender, populism and ethno-nationalism. Scholars generally interpret the rise of populist radical right parties as a challenge to liberal democracy, freedom and equality. Yet, there is still a 'gender gap' in the extensive scholarly literature that, with a few exceptions, have neglected gender issues (Siim and Fiig fortc.). According to Cas Mudde's influential approach populism is a thin theory that can be attached to right-wing and left-wing ideologies but has no conceptual relationship to gender. Mudde understands Right wing populist parties as authoritarian 'Männerparteien' premised on male leadership and women's symbolic roles as 'mother' of the nation. The paper proposes to reframe intersections of populism and gender with insights from diverse feminist approaches. The intersectional approach to populism/nationalism aims to understand the inclusionary and exclusionary ways gender intersects with other categories of difference and axis of inequality, such as ethnicity/race, religion and nationality. Femo-nationalism emphasizes the racist underpinnings of the populist radical approach to nationalism, and critical masculinity studies explore leaders and members' homo-social identities and performance. It uses results from European research projects as an inspiration to reflect on the challenges that the diverse opposition to equality and anti-discrimination politics pose for feminist politics. Research finds that resistance strategies must overcome intersectional tensions between equality and diversity, between antiracism and feminism, masculinity and femininity that exist across Europe (Siim et. al. 2019). The conclusion reflects on how to reframe justice, build transversal strategies and create inclusive forms of solidarities locally, nationally and transnationally able to overcome conflicts of gender, race/ethnicity, and class (Sauer and Siim 2019).

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Fighting for Mothers' Rights! Women's activism in Czech anti-feminist organizations

The new wave of anti-feminist sentiment underpinning right-wing extremist, nationalist and far right populist projects does no longer represent a conventional patriarchal resistance. It is not a contentious relationship between two antagonistic camps represented by progressive women and conservative men anymore. Instead, the anti-gender campaigners use a populist discursive frame of "us – the normal people" against "them – the corrupted NGO employees sucking money from the state for their immoral, perverted projects" and "them – the deviant individuals" referring to LGBT minority and emancipated women who refuse to reproduce. This frame would be deeply unconvincing if only produced and re-produced by men. Therefore, there is a need for women to help to spread these discourses. Indeed, while the roots of this discursive frame lie in hands of male priests and politicians, the activists who get their "hands dirty" by doing street politics are very often women. In this paper, I will answer how the female activists make sense of their participation in such fundamentally patriarchal projects that are often associated with the obedient silent wife imagery. To do so, I use visual analysis informed by CDA (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) to analyse how these new anti-feminist organizations run by women visually construct gender in their social media activism as well as I interpret data from life-history interviews with the female activists. I argue that the new frame of fighting for mothers' rights allows women to be active and outspoken political actors in fundamentally patriarchal projects where they would have to remain silent otherwise.

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The Catholic Church as a Populist Actor? Articulations of Religious Populism in Croatia's Anti-Gender Movement

This paper explores the role of the Catholic church in the mobilization of a new radical right movement in Croatia, also known as the anti-gender movement. It does so by focusing on the discursive frames which generate meaning and motivate collective political action in the area of morality policies and issues of contention framed by conservative actors as “gender ideology”. By analyzing both the frames constructed in different papal encyclicals and doctrines as well as their adaptation and dissemination by the clergy in Croatia, I offer the following findings and conceptual propositions. Firstly, in contrast to research dealing with the populist radical right which argues for a populist manipulation of religion committed by non-confessional actors, I identify the Catholic church as an influential source and producer of the populist master frame. Secondly, I demonstrate how the bridging of the frame of “gender ideology” to the Eurosceptic, populist master frame allows the local Church to articulate its traditional stances on morality policies in an innovative way, one which is more conducive for strategic coalition building. While existing scholarship on anti-gender movements has meticulously demonstrated the importance of the Catholic church and the rise of populism for explaining the phenomenon, this article aims to offer a more fine-tuned understanding of the links between religion, populist radical right ideology and gender issues. Furthermore, focusing on religious actors and institutions as political actors articulating and disseminating the populist master frame and engaging in frame alignment allows us to go beyond the existing theories which neglect religious actors’ agency and focus on the non-confessional world of populist (party) politics.

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Becoming Member: Female Participation in the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in East Germany

With some exceptions, female activists have received little attention in research on political participation in European radical right parties. Radical right activism has always been perceived as being primarily masculine and following traditional gender roles. Studies have less focused on rational reasons of women to join right-wing organisations and instead, have underlined the role of socialisation or other factors that portray women activists as passive victims rather than as rational actors. With the rise of female leaders and prominent women activists of European right-wing parties during the last years, assumptions of women as passive followers of radical right ideology have been challenged. The study aims to uncover gendered patterns of populist radical right activism in the German party AfD. Focusing on the East German state Saxony, it underlines the importance of research on East Germany not as a deviant of its Western counterpart, but as a case study on its own. To examine women’s trajectories and activism in the AfD, I conducted life-history interviews with AfD members of different positions within the party (male and female) in the context of four connected fieldwork in 2019 and 2020, representing different parts of Saxony. The results suggest that, while socialisation works as a facilitating driver of far-right activism, it is anti-establishment sentiments and Euroscepticism in combination with trigger events such as the refugee crisis in 2015 that have led to the decision to join the AfD. While the principal incentives regarding the decision to join the party do not differ between men and women, it is the motivation behind those reasons as well as experiences of party activism itself that diverge. The results confirm the relevance of research on how gender can mediate social and political life. It also clearly shows the undeniable impact of the GDR regime as well as of the specific context of Saxony on individuals’ decision to join the AfD.