



RESIST

Fostering Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistances against Transnational Anti-Gender Politics

The RESIST Project: National and transnational reports on the formation of anti-gender politics



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
List of Tables & Figures	9
Chapter 1 - Transnational Findings	14
Introduction	14
What emerges as anti-gender politics in our study and what is their focus?	14
Who are those promoting and perpetuating anti-gender politics?	18
How is anti-gender politics retaining its momentum? How are the visions of the problem, risks and threats sustained?	19
Chapter 2 - National Case Study Findings	20
Hungarian Case Study Findings	21
Introduction	21
Hungarian Parliament Findings	21
Hungarian Media Findings	25
Hungarian Controversy Mapping Findings	27
Polish Case Study Findings	30
Introduction	30
Polish Parliament Findings	30
Polish Media Findings	32
Polish Controversy Mapping Findings	33
Swiss Case Study Findings	36
Swiss Parliament Findings	36
Introduction	36
Swiss Media Findings	41
Swiss Controversy Mapping Findings	46
Swiss Controversy 1: Junge Tat disrupting “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich	47
Swiss Controversy 2: Protests over controversial anti-trans talks at UNIGE	49
UK Case Study Findings	53
UK Parliament Findings	54
UK Media Findings	60
UK Controversy Mapping Findings	63
Chapter 3 - Methodology	65
Introduction	65
Data search frameworks: Issue clusters	65
Data gathering and analytical approach	67
Quantitative approach to debate data	68
Methodology: Parliament per Case Study	69
UK Parliament Methodology	69
Data sources	69
Hansard debate corpus	69
Keyword corpus using computational methods	72
	1

Data coding	72
Switzerland Parliament Methodology	75
Data sources and sampling selection	75
Hungary Parliament Methodology	77
Poland Parliament Methodology	80
Data sources and sampling selection	80
Methodology: Media per Case Study	81
Overall approach to media methodology	81
UK Media Methodology	82
Data selection	82
Data coding	83
Switzerland Media Methodology	84
Hungary Media Methodology	85
Data coding	86
Poland Media Methodology	86
Methodology: Controversy Mapping per Case Study	87
Controversy mapping methods	87
UK Controversy Mapping Methodology	89
Switzerland Controversy Mapping Methodology	91
Controversy 1: Drag Story Time	91
Controversy 2: Protests over controversial talks at UNIGE	91
Hungary Controversy Mapping Methodology	91
Poland Controversy Mapping Methodology	92
Chapter 4 - Hungary	93
Hungarian Parliament	93
Introduction	93
Data sampling and selection	94
Data presentation	95
Data coding	97
TC1 Family and adoption	98
TC2 Attacking Gender Studies as a discipline and the theoretical work on gender	99
TC3 Children at risk	99
TC4 Biology and sex	100
TC5 On the role of the EU and foreign-funded organisations in Hungary	100
TC6 Anti-immigration/Islamophobia:	100
TC7 Trans issues/activism	101
Hungarian Media	101
Introduction	101
Data sampling and selection	103
Data presentation	104
Trigger issues across all three newspapers and all search terms	104
Presentation of trigger issues in relation to 'gender ideology'	104

Distribution of articles by newspapers	105
Genres in which the phrase 'gender ideology' is used	106
Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term 'gender ideology'	106
Position of 'gender ideology as a keyword	107
Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not	107
Is a definition of 'gender ideology' offered, if yes, whose definition.	108
Actors mentioned in all three newspapers	110
Hungarian Controversy Mapping	111
Introduction	111
Methodology	111
Actor mapping	117
Tactics	118
Hungarian Case Study Findings	120
Introduction	120
Hungarian Parliament Findings	120
Hungarian Media Findings	124
Hungarian Controversy Mapping Findings	126
Chapter 5 - Poland	130
Introduction	130
Polish Parliament	130
Introduction	130
Methodology	131
Data sources & sampling selection	131
Data coding	131
Data Presentation	133
Polish Media	142
Introduction	142
Methodology	142
Data selection and coding	142
Data presentation	143
(a) Trigger issues	144
(b) Position of 'gender ideology' as a keyword	144
(c) News genre in which the term 'gender ideology' features	145
(d) Journalists and writers who employed the term 'gender ideology'	146
(e) Actors quoted or mentioned in articles	146
(f) Organisations mentioned	147
(g) Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not, definition or not	148
Polish Controversy Mapping	152
Introduction	152
Background to the case study controversy	152
Methodology	153
Data presentation	153

Actors (individuals & organisations) and writers	153
Discursive media tactics	155
Campaign tactics & strategies	156
Polish Case Study Findings	161
Introduction	161
Polish Parliament Findings	161
Polish Media Findings	163
Polish Controversy Mapping Findings	164
Chapter 6 - Switzerland	167
Swiss Parliament	167
Introduction	167
Methodology	168
Data sources & sampling selection	168
Data coding	172
TC1 Biology and sex	174
TC2 Debating concepts	174
TC3 Anti-Immigration, Islamophobia	175
TC4 Threat to children/protecting children	175
TC5 Gender inclusive language	175
TC6 Swiss national context	176
TC7 Trans issues/activism	176
TC8 Bureaucratic empathy	176
Swiss Media	178
Comparative newspaper analysis	178
Data collection	178
Data coding	180
Data presentation	180
Trigger issues across all newspaper articles containing the term 'gender ideology'	180
Trigger issues by newspaper	181
Trigger issues in the Swiss French-language press	182
Position of 'gender ideology' as a keyword	182
News genres in which the term 'gender ideology' features	183
Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term 'gender ideology'	184
Actors quoted or mentioned in articles	184
Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not, definition or not	185
Definitions of gender ideology by newspapers	188
Swiss Controversy Mapping	189
Controversy 1: Drag Story-Time	189
Who is Junge Tat?	190
Methodology	191
Actor mapping	191
Controversy 2: Protests over controversial talks at UNIGE	193

Story outline & timeline	193
Network mapping	196
Swiss Case Study Findings	198
Swiss Parliament Findings	198
Introduction	198
Swiss Media Findings	203
Swiss Controversy Mapping Findings	208
Swiss Controversy 1: Junge Tat disrupting “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich	209
Swiss Controversy 2: Protests over controversial anti-trans talks at UNIGE	211
Chapter 7 - UK	216
UK Parliament	216
Introduction	216
Data presentation	217
‘What if’ scenarios	219
UK as a ‘tolerant nation’	220
Public incidents	221
Constituent voices	221
Bureaucratic empathy	222
Sex as biological fact	224
Transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend	225
Claims of silencing/cancel culture	226
Transness as erasure	227
Activism as the problem	228
Further insights from keyword analysis	228
Gender ideology	229
Shift in parliamentary discourse on transgender issues over time	229
UK Media	231
Introduction	231
Approach to media analysis	232
Data presentation	234
(a) Trigger issues across the three papers	234
The Daily Telegraph	236
The Guardian	236
The Scotsman	237
(b) Position of ‘gender ideology’ as a keyword	237
Keyword in The Telegraph	238
Keyword in The Guardian	238
Keyword in The Scotsman	239
(c) News genres in which the term ‘gender ideology’ features	239
Discussion	239
(d) Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term ‘gender ideology’	240
The Telegraph writers	240

The Guardian writers	241
The Scotsman writers	243
(e) Actors quoted or mentioned in articles	244
Actors mentioned in The Telegraph	244
Actors mentioned in The Guardian	246
Actors mentioned in The Scotsman	247
(f) Organisations mentioned	248
Organisations mentioned in The Scotsman	249
Organisations mentioned in The Telegraph	249
(g) Presentation of 'gender ideology' – quotation marks or not, definition or not	250
Data presentation: Activist right-wing media	251
Trigger issues	252
Trigger issues in the overall sample	252
Trigger issues: GB News (YouTube)	253
Trigger issues: GB News (Facebook)	253
Trigger issues: The Free Speech Union (Facebook)	254
Other media mentioned, as story source or subject	254
The Free Speech Union on Facebook	255
GB News on YouTube	256
Coda: 'gender ideology' on GB News	256
UK Controversy Mapping	258
Introduction	258
Background to the case study controversy	258
Gender Recognition Reform Bill Background	259
Gender Recognition Reform Bill Timeline	259
Data presentation	262
What's the controversy about? Opinion piece analysis	262
Actor networks in news coverage	267
The Telegraph 'transgender' network mapping	267
Campaign organisations and tactics	273
Campaign tactics	274
UK Case Study Findings	282
UK Parliament Findings	282
UK Media Findings	288
UK Controversy Mapping Findings	292
Chapter 8 - European Parliament	294
Introduction	294
Context: The Radical Right in the European Parliament	295
Methodology	297
Plenary debates study	298
Plenary debates on the Istanbul Convention	302
Introduction	302

Opposition to the Istanbul Convention (IC): an initial overview	303
EP debates on the Istanbul Convention	305
Data presentation	306
Definition of 'gender' as a problem	306
Consequences of 'gender' as a problem	312
Actors held responsible for this problem	315
Proposed responses or solutions to the problem	315
The 'real' problem(s) gender distracts from	316
The 'real' threats to women and feminism in Europe	318
Anti anti-gender arguments	321
Findings	324
Plenary Debates on Gender Mainstreaming	325
Debate Coding for Gender Mainstreaming	326
Definition of gender as a problem	327
Consequences of gender as a problem	340
Actors held responsible	341
Proposed responses and solutions	341
The real problem gender distracts from	341
The real threats to women and feminism	344
Anti anti-gender arguments	346
Findings	350
Plenary Debates on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	351
Debate Coding for SRHR	352
Definition of gender as a problem	353
Consequences of gender as a problem	361
Actors held responsible	361
Proposed responses and solutions	362
The real problem gender distracts from	363
The real threats to women and feminism	364
Anti anti-gender arguments	365
LGBTIQ and Hate Speech Debates in the European Parliament	369
Definition of gender as a problem	369
Consequences of gender as a problem	373
Actors held responsible	375
The real problem gender distracts from	375
The real threats to women and feminism	379
Anti anti-gender arguments	380
Written parliamentary questions from RRP actors	382
Findings	383
Questions pertaining to surrogacy, reproductive technologies and adoption of children by the same-sex couples	383
Questions pertaining to the sovereignty of nation-state's legal systems and the infringement	

of the EU upon the national value systems	383
Questions pertaining to specific ‘disputed concepts’	383
Questions pertaining to freedom of expression and freedom of religion	384
Questions pertaining to transgender people	384
Questions involving children	385
Questions combining anti-gender and anti-immigration politics	385
Appendices	402
Appendix A – Parliamentary Data	402
European Case Study – Parliamentary Debate Data	402
UK Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data	408
Switzerland Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data	413
Poland Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data	421
Hungary Case Study - Parliamentary Data	430
Appendix B – Media Data	435
Switzerland Media Data	435
Poland Media Data	440
Hungary Media Data	449
Appendix C – Controversy Mapping Data	451
UK Controversy Mapping Data	451
Gephi Visualisation Process	454
Pre-filtering in Gephi	456
Switzerland Controversy Mapping Data	458
Poland Controversy Mapping Data	461
Hungary Controversy Mapping Data	463
Bibliography	465
UK Case Study	465
Polish Case Study	470
Swiss Case Study	472
Hungarian Case Study	473
European Parliament Case Study	474

List of Tables & Figures

Table M1: Issue Clusters for Parliamentary research	67
Figure M2: Screenshot of CLARIN interface for British Parliament	69
Table M3: Parliamentary Corpora for each Case Study	69
Table M4: UK Debate Corpus Summary	71
Table M5: UK Debates by Cluster	72
Table M6: UK Parliament Rhetorical Strategies	75
Table M7: UK Parliament Discursive Strategies	76
Table M8: Quantitative Overview of Debates	77
Figure M9: Word frequency in Swiss Debates	77
Table M10: Quantitative Overview and a Breakdown of the Sample	79
Table M11: Distribution of Debates across Thematic Clusters	81
Table M12: Media Databases Consulted	82
Table M13: UK 'gender ideology' Article Sample	83
Table M14: UK Sample of all Media Content related to Issue Clusters	84
Table M15: Generic Codes for Media Data Collection	84
Table M16: Analytical Codes for 'gender ideology' Media Content	84
Table M17: Quantitative Overview of Collected Media Data	85
Figure M18: Proportional distribution of Articles across Hungarian Newspapers for all Search Terms	86
Table M19: Number of Articles collected, total and by Newspaper	87
Figure M20: Screenshot of Issue Crawler interface with Sample Data	89
Figure M21: Media Sources of op-eds for Controversy Mapping	90
Table M22: Overview of Newspaper Corpus gathered through LexisNexis	91
Table HU1: Quantitative Overview and a Breakdown of the Sample	96
Table HU2: Distribution of Debates across Thematic Clusters	98
Table HU3: Hungary Case Study Thematic Codes	99
Table HU4: Proportional distribution of Articles across newspapers for all Search Terms	104
Table HU5: Number of Articles collected, total and by newspaper	105
Figure HU6: Distribution of Trigger Issues in relation to the Phrase 'gender ideology'	106
Table HU7: Reproduction of 'gender ideology' in News Coverage across all Sampled Newspapers	107
Table HU8: Position of 'gender ideology' in the Articles in all Sampled Newspapers	108
Figure HU10: Governmental Information Centre billboard campaign	116
Table HU11: Network Cluster for Hungarian Controversy	119
Table HU12: Representations of Tactics employed by all Actors in a given Controversy	119
Table PL1: Thematic Codes	133
Table PL2: Definitions of Thematic Codes	134
Table PL3: List of Keywords	135
Table PL4: Poland Case Study Data Set	135
Figure PL5: Actors grouped by political affiliation or role	135
Table PL6: Polish Media Study – Coding Categories	144
Table PL7: Polish Media Study – Additional Analytical Codes	144

Table PL8: Polish Media Study – Keywords	144
Table PL9: Polish Media Study – Number of Articles per Media Outlet	144
Table PL10: Polish Media Study – Selected Trigger Issues	145
Figure PL11: Position of ‘gender ideology’ in Articles	146
Figure PL12: Genre of Published Articles	147
Figure PL13: Actors who occur most frequently across the Article Sample	148
Figure PL15: Occurrences of ‘gender ideology’ in quotation marks, grouped by Media Outlet	150
Figure PL16: Occurrences of the definition of ‘gender ideology’, grouped by Media Outlet	151
Table PL17: Overview of the Discursive Media Tactics (DMT)	157
Figure PL18: Example counts of Campaigning Tactics & Strategies	158
Table PL19: Campaigning Tactics and Strategies (CTS) - Definitions	160
Table CH1: Quantitative Overview of Debates	170
Table CH2: Overview of the Distribution of the initial Corpus of Debates across Thematic Clusters	172
Figure CH3: NVivo word frequency query results visualisation	172
Figure CH4: Thematic distribution of Additional Debates	173
Figure CH5: Distribution of Actors by Party	174
Table CH6: Coding Categories, created via Inductive Coding Process	175
Table CH7: Quantitative Overview of collected Media Data	180
Table CH8: Distribution of all Articles across newspapers	180
Table CH9: Distribution of Articles obtained via search using ‘gender ideology’ Search Term	181
Table CH10: Trigger Issues across all newspapers containing the Search Term ‘gender ideology’	182
Figure CH11: Screenshot of a tweet reading "Activism works", in response to SVP’s proposal	191
Figure CH12: Screenshot from the website of Junge Tat	193
Figure CH13: Screenshot of the petition to stop the financing of the Drag Story-time, launched by CitizenGO	193
Figure CH14: Screenshot of RTS website, the public television service for Romandie	195
Figure CH15: Screenshot of RTS website, the public television service for Romandie	196
Table CH16: Tactics deployed by various Actors in Romand Controversy	196
Figure CH17: Actor Network produced with the help of Issue-crawler	197
Figure CH18: Photograph of banner unrolled on the premises of UNIGE Uni-Mail building, June 2023	215
Table UK1: Outline of the Debates collected from Hansard (N=31) in each cluster	219
Table UK2: Rhetorical Strategies	220
Table UK3: Discursive Strategies	224
Table UK4: Random Sample illustrating shift in tone on Parliamentary Contributions on Trans Issues	231
Table UK5: Bar chart of ‘gender ideology’ in relation to range of Issues	236
Table UK6: Trigger Issues in The Daily Telegraph sample	237
Table UK7: Trigger Issues in The Guardian sample	237
Table UK8: Trigger Issues in The Scotsman sample	238
Table UK9: Distribution of ‘gender ideology’ across Newspaper Sectors	240
Table UK10: Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term ‘gender ideology’ at The Telegraph	241

Table UK11: Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term 'gender ideology' at The Guardian	242
Table UK12: Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term 'gender ideology' at The Scotsman	244
Table UK 13: Actors mentioned at least twice in The Telegraph	246
Table UK14: Top Telegraph Actor Mentions	246
Table UK15: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Telegraph Actor Mentions	247
Table UK16: Actor Mentions in The Guardian	247
Table UK17: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Guardian Actor Mentions	248
Table UK18: Actor Mentions in The Scotsman	248
Table UK19: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Scotsman Actor Mentions	249
Table UK20: Organisation Mentions in The Guardian	249
Table UK21: Organisation Mentions in The Scotsman	250
Table UK22: Organisation Mentions in The Telegraph graphed by Occurrence Count	250
Table UK23: Telegraph Organisations by Sector	251
Table UK24: Trigger Issues coded from GB News (Facebook and YouTube) and the Free Speech Union (Facebook) Story Samples	253
Table UK25: Trigger Issues coded from GB News (YouTube) Story Samples	254
Table UK26: Trigger Issues coded from GB News (Facebook) Story Samples	254
Table UK27: Trigger Issues coded from Free Speech Union (Facebook) Story Samples	255
Table UK28: Media Mentions by Media	256
Table UK29: Free Speech Union Reposted Content Sources	256
Table UK30: Distribution of Codes in the overall Sample, sorted by increasing Occurrence	264
Table UK31: Percentage of Codes in the overall Sample	265
Table UK32: 'Mainstream centre-left and centre-right Media' Story Samples grouped by Cause	266
Table UK33: 'Left and progressive media' Story Samples grouped by Cause	267
Table UK34: 'Left and progressive media' Story Samples grouped by Cause	267
Table UK35: Counts of Organisation Mentions in 'transgender' articles in The Telegraph	269
Table UK36: Network Cluster Map of Actors identified in the Transgender Controversy in the UK	270
Table UK37: Network Cluster Map of Actors self identifying as gender critical, or who predominantly platform gender critical actors, in the UK	272
Figure UK38: Graph of top seven 'gender critical' communities in the UK Transgender Controversy	273
Table UK39: Table of top seven 'gender critical' communities in UK Transgender Controversy	274
Table UK40: Breakdown of Outreach Tactics employed by Organisations central to processes of information exchange and connection	275
Table UK41: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Sex Matters	276
Table UK42: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Transgender Trend	276
Table UK43: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Unherd	276
Figure UK44: Spatial representation of polling published in 2020 on the question "It is acceptable for adolescent children to make their own decisions about their gender identity."	277
Table UK45: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Policy Exchange	278
Figure UK46: Biology Matters Project	279
Table UK47: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Fair Play for Women	279

Figure UK48: Fair Play for Women's call to action copy	280
Table UK49: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by For Women Scotland	280
Figure UK50: For Women Scotland leaflet	281
Table UK51: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Safe Schools Alliance	282
Table UK52: Quantitative findings for LGBT Foundation, Stonewall and LGB Alliance	282
Table UK53: Prevalence of Debates on transgender issues in the House of Commons, 2018-2023	284
Figure EP1: Illustrating shrinkage of left parties (red) and proportionate shift to right and centre right MEPs 1989-2022.	297
Table EP2: Coding Categories for EP Debates	301
Table EP3: Coded Content in EP Debate Analysis	301
Table EP4: List of Debates on the Istanbul Convention	307
Table EP5: Istanbul Convention Debate Contributions	307
Table EP6: List of Plenary Debates pertaining to Gender Mainstreaming	327
Table EP7: Gender Mainstreaming Debate Contributions	328
Table EP8: Plenary Debates relating to SRHR and Sexual Education	353
Table EP9: Code Descriptions for Plenary Debates relating to SRHR and Sexual Education	354
Table EP10: Plenary Debates relating to LGBTIQ and Hate Speech	370
Table EP11: Actors held responsible for 'LGBT agenda'	376
Table EP12: European Parliamentary Questions articulating Anti-Gender Content	401
Table AA1: EP1 – RESIST European Parliament colour-coded legend indicating Coding Categories	403
Table AA2: EP2 – Istanbul Convention Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)	404
Table AA3: EP3 – Gender Mainstreaming Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)	405
Table AA4: EP4 – SRHR Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)	405
Table AA5: EP5 – LGBTIQ and Hate Speech Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)	406
Table AA6: EP6 – Quantitative Insights from Social Media Actor Mapping Nov-Dec 9 2022	408
Table AA7: UK1 – Cluster 2: 'Debating' Trans Lives	410
Table AA8: UK2 – Cluster 3: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education	410
Table AA9: UK3 – Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics	411
Table AA10: UK4 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminism and Gender Equalities	413
Table AA11: UK5 – Percentage Distribution of our Debates across the Clusters	413
Table AA12: UK6 – "Hits" for each search per subcorpora (N=11) searched	414
Table AA13: CH1 – Cluster 1: Targeting Gender	415
Table AA14: CH2 – Cluster 2: Debating Trans Lives	416
Table AA15: CH3 – Cluster 3: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education	417
Table AA16: CH4 – Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics	418
Table AA17: CH5 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminism and Gender Equality	419
Table AA18: CH6 – List of Additional Debates found via an Expanded Keyword Search	422
Table AA19: PL1 – Methodological Steps for the Polish Case Study in Parliamentary Debates	423
Table AA20: PL2 – List of Polish Sejm's Plenary Sessions selected for examination.	430
Table AA21: PL3 – List of thematic codes	430
Table AA22: HU1 – Cluster 1: Targeting Gender	432
Table AA23: HU2 – Cluster 2: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics	433

Table AA24: HU3 – Cluster 3: Debating Trans Lives	433
Table AA25: HU4 – Cluster 4: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education	434
Table AA26: HU5 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminisms and Gender Equalities	434
Table AA27: HU6 – Presentation of Actors by Party (whose Quotes were included in the Coded Material)	435
Figure AB1: CH7 – Trigger Issues in the German- language press, containing the phrase ‘gender ideology’	436
Figure AB2: CH8 – Trigger Issues in the French-language press, containing the phrase ‘gender ideology’	437
Figure AB3: CH9 – Top (by writer) Mentions of ‘gender-ideology’	438
Figure AB4: CH10 – Top (by newspaper) Actors Mentions in Articles (for all Search Terms)	439
Figure AB5: CH11 – Quotation Mark usage by newspaper	440
Figure AB6: CH12 – Overview of the frequency of ‘gender ideology’ definitions in texts	441
Table AB7: PL4 – Methodological Steps for Polish case in the Media Study	442
Table AB8: PL5 – Trigger Issues for Article Topics	443
Table AB9: PL6 – Overview of the Article Authors in the Dataset	444
Table AB10: PL7 – List of identified Actors	445
Table AB11: PL8 – Overview of pro-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations	446
Table AB12: PL9 – Overview of anti-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations	447
Table AB13: PL10 – Overview of all other identified Organisations	449
Figure AB14: HU7 – Presentation (by newspaper) of Quotation Mark Usage for ‘gender ideology’	450
Figure AB15: HU8 – Position of Keyword by newspaper	451
Table AC1: UK7 – Telegraph ‘gender ideology’ Seed URLs	452
Table AC2: UK8 – Guardian ‘gender ideology’ Seed URLs	453
Table AC3: UK9 – ‘Gender critical’ Organisations	454
Figure AC4: UK10 – Gephi Visualisation subsequent to Force Atlas	456
Figure AC5: UK11 – Gephi Visualisation subsequent to running Betweenness Centrality and applying colour	457
Figure AC6: UK12 – Screenshot of Communities grouped by colour and surrounded by a halo of disconnected nodes, from Gephi pre-filtering process	458
Table AC7: CH13 – Swiss German Case Study Seed URLs	459
Figure AC8: CH14 – Network Mapping	460
Table AC9: CH15 – Romandie Case Study Seed URLs	461
Table AC10: PL11 – Methodological Steps for Polish Case Study in Controversy Mapping	462
Table AC11: PL12 – Actors andOrganisations (pro-LGBTIQ/feminist)	463
Table AC12: PL13 – Actors and Organisations (anti-LGBTIQ/feminist)	463
Table AC13: PL14 – Actors and Organisations mentioned	463
Table AC14: HU9 – Seed URLs of Organisations and Actors that contributed to or commented on the Controversy: located on the anti-gender side of the issue	465

Chapter 1 - Transnational Findings

Introduction

The RESIST project studied anti-gender mobilisations across 5 case studies: the European Parliament, UK, Poland, Switzerland and Hungary. Data was collected from parliamentary records, media outlets and by tracking key controversies predominantly in the period of 2017-2022.

RESIST started by approaching anti-gender politics as playing a key role in contemporary Europe and beyond. It is underpinned by a recognition that the category of anti-gender politics is contingent and complex, and risks suggesting a unity of understanding and purpose between actors, ideologies and desires that does not exist in practice. Consequently, the research has developed a robust empirical base to examine anti-gender politics producing data that demonstrates how gender is mobilised in political and media discourse and practices.

Overall, the research found an animated anti-gender political landscape characterised by ideological agitation and political opportunism, pronounced fixations and a fluid focus on often interchangeable targets and issues. There are clear continuities in the targeting of equality, and gender and sexual diversity, however these intersect with and are transformed by an emerging repertoire of discourses and practices. Our findings demonstrate that tracking the uses and understandings of anti-gender requires paying attention to the processes of transnational circulation, unconventional political alliance, strategies of controversy-generation and competition for media attention that create contemporary anti-gender politics.

This overview of key findings firstly outlines what emerges across case studies and media/political discourses as anti-gender politics and their focus. Developing these insights, it outlines who is mobilising and then examines how these anti-gender politics are gaining and sustaining momentum in political and media spheres.

What emerges as anti-gender politics in our study and what is their focus?

Analysing anti-gender mobilisations, their contradictions and contestations demonstrates how the idea of gender is appropriated and framed as a source of risk to children, the family, the nation and the given social order. In anti-gender politics, the idea of gender is often constructed as an external ideological threat, which is reproduced by foreign and domestic agents. Through anti-gender discourses, gender has become a powerful cipher that condenses a range of inequalitarian politics opposing abortion and reproductive rights,

same-sex marriage, transgender rights, Gender Studies in universities, and sex education in schools. At the same time, anti-gender politics continually seeks to advance through an appeal to projections of the common good, such as the defence of democracy, and sovereignty, and through claims of justice denied to 'silenced majorities', and by the neglect of politically loaded forms of rights (such as 'men's rights' and 'sex-based rights').

The following findings were uncovered across all case studies:

- **The idea of gender, feminism and LGBTIQ+ is presented as a threat to the privileged position of the heteronormative nuclear family, sex-based roles and identities, and, in multiple ways, the given order of the nation.** When people diverge from heteronormativity, they are open to being attacked as practising an array of sexual/gender 'deviances.' That is, gender diversity is not granted legitimacy as a different way of thinking and being within even a minimally pluralist arrangement, or even accepted as an antagonistic but legitimate point of difference. Instead, the very idea of gender is regarded as instigating a zero-sum game of gains and losses, where there can only be one 'winner'. For anti-gender actors across contexts and arenas, 'gender' is framed as an ideology foisted onto unwilling populations, and this framing of gender diversity and non-heterosexuality as an imposition is critical to legitimating the force and hostility of anti-gender politics. In contrast, anti-gender politics seeks the defence of rights, such sex-based rights, parents' rights, the right to have a father. These rights are rhetorically asserted rather than having a basis in legislation or legal thought.
- **A pronounced dimension of the imposition of gender and non-heterosexuality onto 'society' is the supposed *need to defend children against the excesses and deformations of 'gender ideology' and, under the guise of child protection, fomenting suspicion of LGBTIQ+ people*.** There is an image of the child as beset from all sides by attempts to 'sexualise' or convert them through ideological indoctrination, as part of what is often projected as a coherent and powerful ideological gender project. There is the cultivation of sex and gender panic to imply an intrinsic danger to children from aspects of the sex education curricula, and LGBTIQ+ people interactions with children. This includes implying or directly conflating paedophilia and child abuse with LGBTIQ+ existence and public visibility. This is a renewed fixation and is important in: (1) the accelerated production of a moral panic specifically about transgender identities; and (2) increased attempts to delegitimise civil society activism as a threat in schools and education, public spaces and institutions, and social and political organisation. Acting in defence of children makes it legitimate to assault the visibility and viability of LGBTIQ+ lives, and political activism and civil organisation that seeks to act for sexual and gender equalities, including trans inclusions.

- **Anti-gender politics is constituted as a defence of democracy against 'gender ideology' that threatens the nation and societies.** Anti-gender politics seeks to advance through creating divisions between presumptively homogeneous hetero/cis-normative nations and LGBTIQ+ people. Treating the LGBTIQ+ community as separate from and different to the nation and democracy is used to withdraw, mitigate and/or debate LGBTIQ+ rights. This provides a way of marginalising LGBTIQ+ people through discourses that frequently encompass conspiratorial elements and reconstitute 'democracy' as the modality through which the nation is reproduced. There is an instrumentalisation of LGBTIQ+ families as a threat to national sovereignty and democracy. Nationalist tropes work to frame LGBTIQ+ inclusive curriculum content as foreign and external to the national project. In the European Union context, LGBTIQ+ families are used by anti-gender parliamentarians to posit a threat to the right of individual member states to make rules for themselves. This is a particularly contentious issue threatening the cohesion of the European Union in a post-Brexit Europe.
- **Gender ideology is regularly held to be a foreign import smuggled into the nation. It is seen as illegitimately reproduced through domestic activism held to undermine otherwise coherent national values. Thus, the restoration of 'sovereignty' is advanced through the assertion of necessary correctives to projects of equality and liberation, which are held to have gone too far.** This defence of sovereignty is critical to securing the legitimacy of hostility to gender and sexuality-related activism. The voluntary and associative nature of civil society is delegitimated by being framed as elite and unrepresentative, pushing motivated agendas that have no popular support, and that refuse to accept the 'already achieved' status of equality, or the given tolerance of the nation. LGBTIQ+ activism is regarded as excessive in its ideological demands, and in excess of what can reasonably be expected of society and of the nation. Thus, it is framed as a threat to democracy.
- **Anti-gender mobilisations produce a hostile hypervisibility of transgender people. The nature of this hypervisibility varies in each of the contexts studied, yet throughout, transgender people have been made the focus of hostile hypervisibility and rendered the subject of a relentless 'debate' about the legitimacy of their lives and rights, while rarely, in our data, being invited to speak about their own existence.** Sometimes this hyper-focus is a consequence of fractious debates about legislative changes in different countries, but in this data it is, to a significant extent, a product of concerted political and media efforts to position transgender identities as an urgent problem requiring public scrutiny and political intervention. This has two dimensions. The first is a clearly articulated animus to transgender identities and their presumed disruption of the gendered and sexual status quo. The second is that the moral panic about transgender rights and identities is a generative prism through which wider forms of aversion to, amongst

other things queer identities, intersectional feminism, bodily autonomy, and freedom of movement can be refracted. This, in turn allows for multiple issues to be linked to each other and interchangeably mobilised in political rhetoric and media discourse.

- **There is an increased intensity and velocity in the marginalisation and mistreatment of transgender people**, which is an established form of social violence in each of the contexts studied. This sensationalist media and political focus has only taken shape over the last years. The relative newness of this mobilisation is important to underline, as it draws attention to the extent to which this has been produced by concerted and organised tactical action. This constructs trans people as problematic and trans populations as perpetrators of gendered violence, despite extensive evidence that show the inverse is far more accurate, that trans people are a primary target of gendered violence.
- **There is an extensive importance put on the ‘problem’ of *transgender identities and lives* which is directly related to an intensified de-legitimation of LGBTIQ+ ‘activism’**. Trans people’s decisions about their bodies are framed as not to be believed or trusted, regarded as a product of trends or indoctrination. A key mode of undermining the legitimacy of transgender identity involves asserting that it is a product of ideological influence or manipulation through forms of activism. Not only does this erase the agency of transgender people, but it also anchors the transnationally pronounced attack on activism as a source of ideological corruption. For example, education on gender identity is accused of advancing ‘transgender ideology’ as a dimension of ‘gender ideology’, which has the aim of ‘sexualising’ children and young people. This mutual reinforcement, in turn, is important to understanding how activism becomes framed, in many contexts, as a threat to democracy. Activism, in the anti-gender framework, is a loosely attributed accusation and includes areas such as the provision of health services, educational resources, community support, human rights protection, policy initiatives, and support services.
- **Anti-gender politics can deny women’s rights and autonomy**. They seek to ensure that heteronormativity is reproduced in contextually specific ways to ensure the social and gendered reproduction of the nation. They appropriate women’s bodily autonomy as a site of political and ideological contestation and patriarchal control. Abortion was identified as a site to challenge women’s rights in the name of Christian and national values in the Polish, Hungarian, and European Parliaments. In these debates, cis-women’s bodies are framed as having too much agency in terms of choice to terminate a pregnancy or as needing paternalistic protection.
- **There is a widespread framing and justifying of oppressive ideas and actions through an appeal to liberal ideas and practices. These are mobilised through repeated declarations and campaign mobilisation, such that they are legitimised as existent categories of rights**. In both the UK and Hungary, for example, parliament and media actors justify anti-trans measures with reference to the established

tolerance of the nation that is challenged by a lack of freedom of speech. Purported rights' infringements also include 'parental rights' around controlling what sex education their children receive in schools; cisgender women's 'sex-based rights' used to justify anti-trans mobilisations; and the ascribed 'rights' of children to heterosexual parents. There is also a widespread practice of anchoring anti-gender discourse through appeals to freedom of speech as anti-gender actors consistently represent themselves and their viewpoints as being silenced by opponents who cannot legitimately refute their opinions.

Who are those promoting and perpetuating anti-gender politics?

The research in this mapping project tracked key actors while avoiding being reductively actor-led in examining the reproduction of discourse and practices of anti-gender politics. RESIST's approach has emphasised the way that the media create and shape anti-gender politics is critical. Across all five case studies the focus on politicians, media and actor mapping reveals broader patterns as to who is propagating anti-gender politics:

- **Hostility to gender, feminism and LGBTIQ+ rights and identities is primarily associated with men in the conservative and radical/extreme right in Europe.** In every national parliament studied, cis-men are overwhelmingly responsible for the articulation of anti-gender discourse. Predominantly, but not exclusively, these men are members of radical right parties, and right-wing conservative parties that have increasingly converged 'rightward' with their counterparts. The exception to this cis-male dominance of anti-gender discourse is in the European Parliament, where a revitalised repertoire of anti-gender arguments is equally mobilised by male and female MEPs from both radical right party groups, Identity and Democracy (ID), and European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR).
- **When viewed from beyond parliaments to wider media discourse and anti-gender activism, the political 'centre' is also active in the creation of anti-gender politics and does not conform to a straightforward left/right divide.** For example: in Hungary coverage of transgender issues crossed the left/right divide, in contrast to an otherwise pronounced left/right antagonism on anti-gender politics; in Switzerland, centre-right mainstream news outlets condemn the violent methods of far-right anti-gender activists while nevertheless framing their anti-gender concerns as legitimate; in the UK, where most parliamentary discourse opposing transgender rights emanates from the right-wing Conservative Party, the wider opposition to these rights is actively maintained by activist networks that are often as left-wing on other issues, including other forms of gendered inequalities.
- **There is a consistent use of 'gender ideology' as a key and often naturalised term in right-wing media discourse.** In contrast, the contested and controversial nature of

the idea is widely recognised in liberal and left journalism. This contemporary media ubiquity contrasts with prior dominant usage of the term as a motivated political discourse by anti-gender actors. It is present in opinion and editorial material, and a point of reference in news stories, and this demonstrates the extent to which it has become partially normalised through circulation.

- **Media activity creates a consistent platform for anti-gender actors, where their talking points are represented and circulated in public culture. This positions the targets of these politics as subject to continuous debate and controversy contributing to hypervisibility of those targeted.** The systemic requirement for attention-grabbing and sensational content in highly competitive and fast-moving media environments gives a significant advantage to anti-gender politics. This is because it benefits from and intensifies political antagonism between the people it purports to speak for, and the 'divisive' ideologies and 'unrepresentative' groups it targets. Therefore, there is a strong connection between anti-gender 'news' for media actors in competitive news environments, and political actors seeking to stoke controversies that allow them to command public space and attention, and appeal to particular constituencies. The contested status of gender-related issues in the societies in question means that gender-related controversies have commodity value. This can be seen, in several of the media contexts, in the importance of foreign controversies and controversial figures to news coverage that in turn facilitates anti-gender focused comment and opinion.
- **The interest of key media and political players in anti-gender content has been beneficial to a range of highly mobilised campaign and activist groups. There are clear interactional dynamics between political party agendas, the media coverage of anti-gender debates and anti-gender activists.** Networks of established and new campaign groups, think tanks, political activists and social media-enabled entrepreneurs can be identified through the sources used in news stories. This alignment is presented as 'good activism' in part because of its close formal and informal relationships with governing parties and supportive media. 'Good activism' is the preserve of 'concerned' citizens, parents and spokespersons who are often presented as reluctantly political, despite frequently being well-organised groups that campaign regardless of the issues they say they are responding to.

How is anti-gender politics retaining its momentum? How are the visions of the problem, risks and threats sustained?

- **What '*gender ideology*' is or means is adaptable and it changes by context and over time. These mutations are key to advancing anti-gender politics, and interchanging issues that can be dismissed or diminished through their association with the term.** In some contexts 'gender ideology' is used with relative consistency, for example, in

the UK data it is almost always associated with anti-trans discourse. In others, the use of 'gender ideology' conflates, and rapidly changes focus between, different issues. For example in Poland and Hungary, this conflation can involve shifting attacks between reproductive rights, sexual orientation and gender identities, and LGBTIQ+ visibility and advocacy, gender and sexuality education.

- **The 'imposition' of 'gender ideology' is portrayed as emanating from outside the nation and imported through a variety of *non-representative* agencies.** These presumptive relations of imposition bring together geopolitical rationales with frequently conspiratorial constructions. In Hungarian parliamentary and media discourse, specific formulations and more general invocations can be found. In a trope also popular in the European Parliament, the Istanbul Convention is described as a "Trojan horse" for 'gender ideology', a specific accusation which is part of a wider charge, that 'the West' threatens Hungary's status as a "bastion of conservatism". In one Hungarian publication, for example, 'gender ideology' has been compared to immigration to Hungary as an expression of "globalist world power", thus also drawing a comparison with "great replacement theory" imaginaries. Comparable rhetoric is common in Polish media and parliamentary discourse, where Brussels/the European Union act as specific reference and as a more general imaginary, interchangeable with 'the West'. Despite the prevalence of gender identity discourse in UK media discourse, the imposition of 'gender ideology' from elsewhere is absent in RESIST data, other than parallels and links drawn with supposed 'wokeness' in the United States.
- **Anti-gender politics presents LGBTIQ+ movements as dogmatic – and at times authoritarian – and involved in imposing gender ideology on unwilling populations.** This produces an image of powerful and doctrinal movements of, for example, 'queer ideology' in Hungary, and 'LGBT ideology' in Poland. Across contexts and regardless of the secular or religious basis of anti-gender activism, it sets up the activities, inclusion and work of those it opposes as non-scientific and as 'activist'. There are frequently vague gestures in the data towards a 'trans lobby' or comparable formulations, but specific organisations are also intensively targeted.
- **Anti-gender claims that silencing of anti-gender actors is key to driving the production of those they oppose as unrepresentative, ideological and excessive 'activism'.** This claim relies on the assertion that those who oppose them cannot win the argument democratically and so must silence anti-gender actors. Being silenced, or unable to speak what is claimed as the truth is then understood as driving a compulsion to 'speak out' for democracy/the nation/children. In turn, this can be used to assert that anti-gender activists are 'reluctantly political'.

Chapter 2 - National Case Study Findings

Hungarian Case Study Findings

Introduction

The Hungarian government's anti-gender politics has attracted significant political and academic attention in recent years. Although the right-wing conservative Fidesz party has been in power since 2010, the intensification of anti-gender politics is frequently dated to the party and government's opposition to the Istanbul Convention, and the de-accreditation of Gender Studies MA programs, in 2017 (Kováts 2019). This intensification of anti-gender discourse was a conscious and strategic instrumentalization of the topic by Fidesz, aimed at strengthening its political position (Kováts/Pető 2017). Most recently, the Hungarian government passed several restrictive laws in the realm of gender equality. In December 2020, it banned the adoption of children by same-sex couples, and in March 2020 it sought to limit transgender rights by banning legal gender reassignment. In June 2021, the controversial Child Protection Law came into force, prohibiting the "exposure of minors" to LGBTIQ-related content. Government-organised and far-right media regularly publish content on anti-gender topics in an attempt to shape public perception of gender-related issues and manufacture moral panic. This data mapping report contributes to expanding the existing knowledge on anti-gender mobilisation in Hungary by mapping the current state of anti-gender discourses in Hungarian parliamentary, media and public discourses.

Hungarian Parliament Findings

The first segment of the Hungarian case-study focused on the analysis of 25 debates obtained from the records of the Hungarian Parliamentary library (2017-2023). The debates were chosen based on the presence of diverse gender and sexuality related topics. Following are the key findings which emerged from this analysis.

- Given the established importance of anti-gender discourses in Hungarian politics over the last six to seven years, the presence and importance of anti-gender mobilisation in parliament is surprisingly limited. For example, despite the importance of anti-trans and homophobic messaging to the Orbán government (Patakfalvi, 2022) – which is also continuously reproduced in pro-government media - only one debate advanced the anti-trans debate, and a further two featured data relevant to the category 'debating trans lives'. This finding is even more striking in light of the significant legislative changes which were enacted during this period, including the bill prohibiting the legal recognition of transgender people in Hungary, and the legislation preventing adoption by unmarried or non-heterosexual couples and single people. The prevailing balance of power in Hungarian politics offers an explanation to this finding. Since Fidesz-KDNP has a two-thirds majority in

parliament, there is a lack of lengthy and engaged debates on the issues at stake, such that parliamentary debate with the opposition is merely formal. (Wilkin 2018, Szelényi 2023).

- The data reveals rhetorical strategies that combine established forms of anti-gender propaganda with novel, opportunist and sensationalist arguments advanced by anti-gender actors in the Hungarian parliament. Whereas their well-established arguments are based on conservative ideas about gender and family, and their relation to the nation (Fodor 2022), the novel or sensationalist arguments tend to capitalise on newly emerging anti-gender narratives circulating in transnational discourse. These include fear mongering about “transgender kids in the West”, sex education and the “perversion” of kids, or the threat of paedophilia. For example, the independent MP János Volner, previously of the far-right party Jobbik, stated, in the context of the debate on tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children, that: “In the United States, for example, a Democratic senator has proposed to the US Congress that paedophilia should be considered a disease and not a crime, because these are people who are attracted to children and their activities should not in fact be criminalised”.
- It is a consistent feature of anti-gender discourse in this corpus that those advocating for LGBTIQ+ rights are cast by the government as ‘a danger to society’ because they promote particular policies and discourses. They are regularly held to threaten children, heteronormative families and the values of the nation through indoctrination. This is particularly evident in considerations of the Child Protection Law, which came into force in 2022, thereby introducing measures aimed at protecting children from content that authorities deemed to be promoting homosexuality or gender reassignment. This law stirred up significant public debate both nationally and transnationally. Given the importance of civic activism in opposing the law, the data shows a significant effort to delegitimise civil society in parliamentary debates. János Volner, for instance, stated that: “Prime Minister! Do you not find it absurd that social organisations which help liberal politics to gain ground by any means possible receive more foreign support than all the parties in Hungary which receive the most state support?” (Debate title: Do organisations influence public life in Hungary, Prime Minister?, 2020)
- LGBTIQ+ and transgender individuals and activists are delegitimised through a purposeful conflation of issues and arguments. Hungarian conservative MPs frequently conflate LGBTIQ+ issues with the topic of paedophilia. This is both a general conflation aimed at denigrating LGBTIQ+ people, and also a key way of attacking activism. This same conflation is reproduced by different political parties. For example, László Horváth of Fidesz stated the following in the context of the general debate on the draft on Hungary's 2024 central budget: “Here in the context of violence we continue to take a zero-tolerance position, violence of any kind,

physical, psychological, emotional or whether it's paedophilia, whether it's transgenderism, whether it's gender or even LGBTQ propaganda." Similarly, the independent MP János Volner, previously of the far-right party Jobbik, argued that "If there is a political tendency that can protect paedophilia, it is undoubtedly on the left". The same MP also added: "I would like to remind you that the LGBTQ movement has been embroiled in similar scandals on more than one occasion, and that it has been the case that people have been allowed to speak and make demands in public who have not only made demands on behalf of homosexuals, transgender people and other minorities [...] but have also started to advocate lowering the so-called age of consent". Evident in such narratives is a tactic of seeking to manufacture 'moral panic', an approach that according to a recent report *Manufacturing Moral Panic: Weaponizing Children to Undermine Gender Justice and Human Rights* is a particularly useful tool, because by presenting themselves as "adults, concerned with children's wellbeing and safety", politicians can appeal to people's moral duty to protect children (2021: 10).

- It is a regular feature of parliamentary discourse that MPs from Fidesz seek to present their arguments through the language of "rights and freedoms". The significance of this is that it presents the exclusion of civil society as a question of protecting rights and democracy. The exclusion of NGOs, including LGBTIQ+ groups, from collaborating with schools on educational programs, and the prohibition of sex education in schools, is framed as a parental right. This is held to mean the parents' right to educate their children on sexuality the way they want, and is related to a particular idea of children's rights, where the child has the right to his/her gender identity based on birth sex. For instance, Lőrinc Nacsá from KDNP argued: "it must be said that the mother is a woman and the father is a man, and that the child has the right to an upbringing that is in keeping with his or her gender identity and that is based on Hungary's constitutional identity and Christian culture." (2021 Fall term). In a similar vein, Róbert Répássi (state secretary) argued: "The Fundamental Rights Charter clearly states that the decision on how to bring up children is the parents' right. It is on this basis that we protect and defend the best interests of our children, and any sexual propaganda should only be carried out with the permission of the parent, in accordance with the parental consent in educational establishments." (2023 spring term)
- Fidesz MPs regularly stress their support for the right of individuals to live as they wish in Hungary provided that they leave children alone. This "guarantee" of liberal freedom often presented itself in the corpus in statements responding to the criticism of the opposition or international criticism. Such rhetoric goes further than what Nash and Browne (2020) have described as heteroactivism – strategic attempts "to reassert the superiority and centrality of hetero- and gender-normative individuals" – by extending the protection argument to imagined, conspiratorial

threats. This rhetoric of ‘live and let live’ was also instrumentalised in the spring 2020 debate on the Gender Recognition Ban. Government MPs argued that the change solely concerned gender identity on the official registry, allowing people otherwise to live as they wish and identify with the gender they want. Thus, the government attempted to deflect criticism of the law by diminishing the significance of the legal change.

- Attacking Gender Studies as a discipline no longer emerges as a central tactic in Hungarian politics. Given that the two Gender Studies departments that existed in Hungary were shut down in 2018 (Peto 2016, Helms, Krizsan 2017) discrediting Gender Studies departments is less relevant. The critique of theoretical work on gender remains, however, a viable tactic, where it is routinely discredited as ‘ideologically-based pseudo-science’ or as serving political agendas.
- Mentions of trans people in the sample of parliamentary debates occur only after 2020. This could be explained by the fact that prior to 2020 there was never an official ruling on gender recognition in Hungary. In 2020, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law that eliminated the possibility for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals to undergo legal gender reassignment. The new law requires individuals to be identified according to the “sex assigned at birth”. After 2021, transgender people – aside from occasional solidarity expressed by the opposition – appear in parliamentary discourse in association with the dangers of “sex education” wanting to “corrupt Hungarian children”. The intensification of this narrative in 2021 coincided with the introduction of the Child Protection Law which prompted resistance from the EU and in Hungarian civil society.
- The threat from George Soros and foreign-funded NGOs is a common narrative, relating to a wider presentation of the EU and the West as “cultural colonisers” (Korolczuk and Graff 2018). There are multiple instances in the data where politicians express critical views of George Soros and his organisations, which are accused of meddling in Hungary's internal affairs and using financial resources to influence Hungarian politics. The government has criticised Soros for his support of civil society organisations and NGOs promoting democracy and human rights, including LGBTIQ+ rights. The EU/West is manifested in anti-gender parliamentary rhetoric as a threat, mostly in response to the EU’s criticism of Hungary’s approach to democratic values. So, Lőrinc Nacsá of KDNP appealed to the parliament: “Dear Parliament! A quite astonishing and concerted series of attacks has been launched against our country because of the law on the fight against paedophiles and child protection adopted in the spring session. [...] Brussels is vainly trying to get us to allow LGBTQ activists into kindergartens and schools, but we are not willing to do that.” (2021 Fall term)

Hungarian Media Findings

The Hungarian media sample consisted of three news outlets positioned differently on the political spectrum. Magyar Hírlap was chosen as a right-wing outlet, strongly attached to Fidesz. Válasz Online was selected as a reliably centrist media outlet, which publishes limited but lengthy feature articles, interviews and opinion pieces. Telex.hu was included as a liberal-progressive media source, being one of the most-read opposition-aligned outlets. The media corpus comprised 292 articles and revealed the following findings:

- There is a significant alignment between discourses in the parliament and the government media. That is to say, while the presence of anti-gender discourse in parliament is relatively limited given the political coordinates described, the same frameworks and discourses are reproduced in the media, and are in fact amplified and heightened. This is due to the fact that the media in Hungary is heavily politicised. Magyar Hírlap is a pro-government media channel and amplifies the views of the government (European Press Roundup, 2022), for example by allocating front pages to politicians campaigning on anti-gender issues, or denigrating oppositional politicians.
- Magyar Hírlap, regarded as the mouthpiece of the conservative ruling party Fidesz, is openly hostile on many gender and sexuality-related issues, including LGBTQ rights, gender quotas, sex education, feminist or LGBTQ+ inclusive childrens' books or film adaptations, and progressive (LGBTQ+ inclusive) Christian congregations. Further, both the quality of discourse and quantity of coverage suggest that the outlet is campaigning on anti-gender issues. The newspaper deploys the term 'gender ideology' most often in the sample.
- The coverage of gender issues in the centrist media outlet Válasz Online aligns with the newspaper's political positioning by presenting a non-aligned conservatism that also points out the hypocrisy of the government's conservatism. In its coverage of gender and sexuality-related topics, the newspaper assumes the position of a "rational middle ground" in what they have termed "gender wars". This is most clearly seen in treating LGBTQ+ rights as subjects for balanced debate, such as in a debate on homosexuality and the church, with one side arguing that the inferiority of homosexuality can be justified by the Bible, the other arguing that stability and love is more important to a child than the sexual or gender identity of the parents, and that being a proud gay adoptive dad can be reconciled with being Christian: "Is a family a family? The Historical debate between András Hodász Catholic priest and the LGBT campaigner György Mészáros." (Válasz Online, 2021)
- A similar middle-ground positioning on gender issues in Válasz Online is articulated in the discussion of the Istanbul Convention, which is frequently framed as a "platform for identity wars", where neither left nor right is seen as clearly right or wrong.

- Telex.hu positions itself as a critical opponent of the government's anti-gender rhetoric. The newspaper frequently publishes comprehensive critical analyses of Orbán's anti-gender politics as well as lengthy investigative reports, for example on the expansion of the government-aligned Mathias Corvinus Collegium. They give voice to progressive NGOs like Budapest Pride or Political Capital. They frequently criticised Fidesz for vilifying LGBTIQ+ people and framing them as a target group similar to their approach to migrants, refugees and civil society organisations. They also criticise them for copying US right-wing republican arguments and tactics, such as hijacking the discussion of public education by stoking a confected moral panic about sex education.
- Although there are notable differences in the way gender- and sexuality-related issues are covered in Válasz Online and Telex.hu, when it comes to the coverage of trans issues, both outlets assume a closer positioning relative to each other. Válasz Online is cautious about recycling fake news, and there are occasional pieces debunking the misinformation and disinformation campaigns about transgender people, particularly transgender children. At the same time they provide positive coverage of actors that promote transphobic views, particularly some international figures. Telex.hu has a consistently critical position on conservative or right-wing interpretations of gender- and sexuality-related issues, while also displaying a hesitancy to openly criticise transphobic views.
- Magyar Hírlap, as a pro-government newspaper, is hostile towards transgender people, evident in their usage of transphobic language, the recycling of transphobic news, and the provision of platforms to trans-exclusionary campaigners. Occasionally, limited empathy is expressed concerning transgender people's experiences of discrimination. In one article from 2021, titled "We must return to normality" Keresztesi Tamás writes: "according to those surveyed, 26% of transgender people in Hungary reported experiencing violence, and 96% of them were verbally harassed". Despite the sympathy expressed in this sentence, the author asks "...is it worth it?". A similar pattern can be observed in relation to homosexuality, where 'the good homosexual' trope emerges when homosexuality is experienced as a "silent or invisible" experience, confined within the privacy of one's home (Magyar Hírlap, Benze, 12.10.2020).
- The use of demeaning language, such as "gender terror", or the Istanbul Convention being referred to as a "legal freak", is characteristic of Magyar Hírlap's coverage of gender issues. Explicit hate speech and personal insults also feature in some articles. The editor-in-chief, Pál Dippold, also a well-known novelist, has compared Soros to a "stinky polecat", and female opposition MEPs to "stinky polecat furies". A former MP László Tamás wrote in Magyar Hírlap that a lot of people would "give a huge slap" to the participants of the Budapest Pride march, and the few liberal or left-wing politicians that join them (Magyar Hírlap Tamás, 13.11.2020).

- Magyar Hírlap contains the majority of definitions of the phrase ‘gender ideology’ (in the entire corpus ‘gender ideology’ was defined once time in Telex.hu, and 20 times in Magyar Hírlap). This finding challenges the initial assumption that right-wing media reproduces the term as a matter of fact, given its continued circulation in media discourse since 2010. The consistent use of definitions feature in attempts to remind readers about the dangers and threats associated with the term. Some of those definitions compare ‘gender ideology’ to immigration as one of the most serious threats to European unity, whilst others present it as an “extremist ideology”, or a tool of “globalist world power”. In all cases, ‘gender ideology’ is invoked as a threat to national values.
- Across all three newspapers the actors most frequently mentioned in relation to issues of gender and sexuality in news coverage are politicians, including Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Judit Varga, who served as Minister of Justice during the time of the sampling, Eszter Párkányi, an analyst at the Alapjogokért Központ (Center for Fundamental Rights), Balázs Orbán, the Political Director of the Prime Minister’s office and Katalin Novák, the President of Hungary. Magyar Hírlap coverage tends to reinforce the anti-gender views and positions voiced by these actors, whereas Válasz Online and Telex.hu critically review their speeches, interviews and statements. Transnationally known anti-gender actors are also frequently mobilised in these discussions, such as the German writer and sociologist Gabriele Kuby, British author J. K. Rowling, or the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. Hungarian national political actors appear as the most influential figures in anti-gender politics, while at the same time transnational actors and ideas are featured and integrated.

Hungarian Controversy Mapping Findings

Examining media coverage of the events related to the Child Protection Law in Hungary exposes a range of political and media anti-gender tactics and reveals how they are being mobilised, often reinforcing each other in specific instances.

- This controversy further exposes how anti-gender narratives In Hungary and other post-socialist countries adapt to nationalistic frames, represented as a struggle of values and ideas. This is particularly visible when Hungary is depicted as defending its “national values” against communists, Brussels, EU, Liberal West, Soros, and “the elites”. A vivid example of this that emerges in this controversy is the call by the Batthyány Circle of Professors published on their website: “The Batthyány Circle of Professors is deeply concerned to see that expectations and practices that are fundamentally at odds with the conservative-civic values that underpin our lives and thinking are becoming widely accepted in European politics. We are concerned that neo-liberal and neo-Marxist principles are gaining a stronger voice in domestic

citizen's political circles and in the pro-neo-liberal, independent and civilian media and organisations in our country. We do not agree that the nation is an obsolete historical construct that needs to be replaced by supranational organisation. We express our dismay at the movements that claim to valorise the role of social gender to devalue birth sex, or to oppose the two". (Pbk.info.hu)

- The strategies of media and political actors involved in the controversy can largely be characterised as heteroactivism (Browne and Nash 2017). This involves anti-gender actors seeking to strengthen heteronormative patriarchy and legitimise undermining sexual and gender freedoms by framing it as the protection of families and children. The children and the family framework allows both political and media actors to argue that the goal of the law is not to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people, but to protect children from the harmful impact of (trans)gender-ideology (Rowlands 2023).
- A key example of this rhetoric is Viktor Orbán's speech in Brussels on 24.06.2021: "I am a fighter for their rights [in Orbán's words 'homosexual guys']. I was a freedom fighter in the communist regime. Homosexuality was punished and I fought for their freedom and their rights. So, I am defending the rights of homosexuals, but this law is not about that". [...] "It's not about homosexuals. The law is about letting parents decide what kind of sex education they want for their kids, [this] right should exclusively belong to the parents" (24.06.2021, reuters.com). By denying the discriminatory nature of their politics, these actors insist on other issues being at stake, such as children's wellbeing. The discursive strategies in both media and politics predominantly focus on creating moral panic and stigmatising and delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ activists, not least through conflating homosexuality and transgender identities with paedophilia.
- Discrediting those who support gender equality as "brainwashed by propaganda on the internet" and doing nothing more than virtue signalling emerges as a common tactic. As Jeszensky Zsolt argues "In Hungary, a law has been passed which seeks to protect normality from the ideology of conquest. The normality that twenty years ago would have been taken for granted even by those who now - in most cases out of good intentions, not malice, we must admit - are competing with each other to flaunt their virtues, display rainbow pictures and bid a final farewell to normality" (Jeszensky, 29.06.2021, pestisracok.hu).
- Drawing on the language of rights and social protection is a key element in anti-gender actors' attempts to strengthen the legitimacy of their arguments. For example, when LGBTQ-inclusive sex education and affirmative care of trans children is described as "experimenting on children" (or even child abuse), the language of rights is mobilised to protect the children and emphasize the responsibility of adults

in protecting the children. As a Magyar Nemzet article argues: “What is more important: the basic human right of a child in the development of their biologically-given natural human gender and their right to be cared for by their parents, or a completely false, "commercial" purpose, a propaganda activity that wants to distort the natural gender development of children by NGOs that produce gender ideology, by drag queens, by transvestites?” The author goes on to speculate about what would happen “... should pedophiles also issue publications citing rights, that pedophilia is not a serious crime, but - according to the new story - ‘love of children’?” (Tamás, 29.05.2023, Magyar Nemzet).

- ‘Amplifying specific voices’ emerged as the most frequent media tactic in the corpus of 53 articles/opinion pieces related to the controversy. Other frequent media tactics were ‘Positioning West as a threat’ and ‘Admiring Hungary as a bastion of conservative values’. A follow-up analysis of the tactics deployed by specific actors whose involvement in the controversy was mentioned in the media reveals ‘statements on the websites’ as a key tactic. It must be noted, however, that the controversy unfolded during the COVID-19 crisis, hence much activity took place online. Furthermore, anti-gender organisations, although many are publicly funded, do not need to make a significant effort to spread their views, as their press releases and online communications are regularly circulated through the vast system of government-aligned media, including full ownership of the regional daily newspaper sector, print and online news sources, and television channels, which regularly refer to government propaganda websites as authentic sources (Szelényi 2023).
- The Issue Network building - based on 41 seed URLs of anti-gender actors featured in the controversy - produced a dispersed network with the official website of the Hungarian Government as the large central node.
- Overall, the period of the controversy was characterised by significant, high-level tactical investment. The referendum on the Child Protection Law was organised around a list of misleading questions whereby legal actions were taken against the targets of anti-gender actors, such as the imposition of fines on bookstores or NGOs. There was a great deal of investment in publicity, such as the billboard and poster campaign by the far-right students’ group Egyetemi Ellenállás, calling to protect children.
- The only tactic that failed was the referendum itself. The campaign by Háttér society and LGBTIQ+ and human rights NGOs called on people to invalidate their votes by putting a double ‘X’ in response to the meaningless questions. Whereas the activists opposing the Child Protection Law emphasised the discriminatory and hateful way in

which the referendum questions were formulated, Orbán justified the need for the referendum as a necessary response to Brussels' "attack on Hungary".

Polish Case Study Findings

Introduction

Poland is often presented in public discourses as an example of a conservative and populist political regime that makes intensive use of gender and sexuality-related topics to instigate a range of 'moral panics' discourses, often for political gain (Žuk and Žuk, 2020). It is also frequently discussed in the context of the anti-gender mobilisations in Central and Eastern Europe (among others: Kováts and Pöim, 2015; Žuk and Žuk, 2019; Graff and Korolczuk, 2021; Norocel and Paternotte, 2023).

This report not only highlights similarities and re-confirms the existing scholarship, but goes beyond the state-of-the-art by offering a consolidated set of data that illustrates how anti-gender politics are produced and circulated, using a corpus of parliamentary, media and civil society sources. It evidences synergies between actors and strategies, and builds a complex understanding of the social, economic, and political entanglements of bodies, genders, and sexualities in Poland. There is some evidence of cooperation between global anti-gender actors and Polish ones, and the strong symbolic presence of the geopolitical referents in anti-gender narratives. The report is enmeshed in the dynamics of locality and globality, as the international thread reappears across all three segments of the Polish study, in both anti-gender and liberal counterparts.

Polish Parliament Findings

The first segment of the Polish case study focused on the Polish Sejm (Lower Chamber of the Parliament), its last two Terms of Office (VIII: 2015-2019; IX: 2019-2023), and examined the parliamentary debates which prominently featured topics of genders and sexualities.

- The parliamentary data is drawn from a relatively wide spread of actors who have engaged in various thematic debates in the Sejm. While Law and Justice, the largest party in Sejm, dominate the data, politicians from across all political groups on the centre to right spectrum have exhibited attitudes and produced narratives from which a notable range of discursive anti-gender strategies emerged. This may indicate that one available strategy is to use parliamentary time - which is assigned proportionally according to the number of votes held by political groups - to create a profusion effect and maximise the exposure of ideas through frequent repetitions by numerous actors.
- The preponderance of anti-gender interventions in parliament that are repeated engagements beyond one-off contributions are produced by a relatively small

number of actors. This indicates a complementary strategy whereby a narrower number of key actors drive anti-gender political rhetoric and emerge as spokespersons for their political parties, consistently claiming that they speak for broader groups of people that they assert identify with them.

- The distribution of actors by gender shows the predominance of (cis-)men and the majority (68%) of parliamentary actors deploying discursive anti-gender strategies were (cis-)men ([Cis-]women provided 32% with no actors self-declaring other gender/sex identities). This observation is not surprising, as the political sphere in Poland is dominated by (cis-)men, thus this ratio reflects the broader composition of the socio-political scene in Poland. The Sejm is also dominated by (cis-)men: Sejm's VIII & IX gender breakdown for MPs shows an almost identical gendered distribution to that observed in this breakdown of contributing actors (2/3 to 1/3). This not only reconfirms predictable gender patterns, but also highlights that in the debates on gender and sexuality, Polish parliamentary space is not one that is welcoming to a diversity of voices, especially those belonging to social groups whose fate is being discussed. This was observed across a range of examined debates, from women's right to safe abortion and inclusive healthcare, to young adults' rights to reliable and informed (sexual) education based on scientific knowledge (rather than religious morality), to non-heterosexual peoples' right to not be discriminated or prosecuted on the basis of their sexual orientation.
- Nevertheless, anti-gender tactics and strategies are not the exclusive preserve of the most notorious political actors. They exist on a spectrum of political views and attitudes that goes beyond the typical dichotomy of "conservative vs. liberal" or "authoritarian vs. democratic". For example, political actors representing the opposition parties (Civil Coalition, Polska 2050, and Polish People's Party) and self-identifying as liberal/centre-liberal were also identified in our dataset (albeit to a significantly lesser extent).
- The scale and frequency of contributions creates a volatile and highly charged atmosphere in the Sejm, when issues of gender and sexuality are of concern. This is exemplified by e.g. personal attacks on, or accusations between MPs – tactics that were gathered under one of the most popular thematic codes: Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours. While this is not atypical for Polish Sejm and can be observed in debates on a range of topics, it may also be interpreted as another anti-gender strategy. Such a charged atmosphere helps to (over)dominate the debate and set the tone at affective registers that compel or even force more liberal actors to defend and correct the often malicious and misinformed anti-gender claims. Therefore, less time is potentially dedicated to presenting arguments, which go beyond firefighting the inflammatory anti-gender narratives, but strive to build a more positive and welcoming space of public debate, one that reliably informs, educates, and builds respectful democratic mechanisms of viewpoint exchange.

- There is an extensive interoperability that characterises the anti-gender approaches in Poland. Both sampling and thematic coding of the gathered parliamentary debates (and also to a notable extent, in the Media, and Controversy Mapping segments) quickly showed a high permeability of topics and keywords, whereby one selected keyword yielded debates on diverse topics, and whereby the debates on one given topic were arrived at through different keywords. For instance, ‘sexualisation’ brought forth debates about trans people’s rights to bodily-autonomy and self-determination; feminist critiques of gendered social roles in education; LGBTIQ+ activism; sexual education; parents’ movements & rights; women’s rights.
- The extensive plasticity of the anti-gender strategy is a notable finding linked with the above one, whereby maintaining high flexibility of what, how, when, and in response to what is being said remains as unconstrained as possible, therefore allowing a manoeuvring field for anti-gender actors to espouse anti-gender narratives where and when needed.

Polish Media Findings

This segment of the Polish case offers a quantitatively-oriented content analysis from the four popular media outlets: *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, and supplemented with *Super Express* and *Do Rzeczy*. The first two titles are country-wide broadsheets, the third is a tabloid, and the last one a far-right magazine. Examination focused on the descriptions of uses, and the identification of popular anti-gender actors.

- *Do Rzeczy* (DR) has positioned itself as an explicitly politicised ‘campaigning media’ through active anti-gender discourse and content production. The prevalence of *Do Rzeczy* also in the next segment (Controversy Mapping) allows a certain level of confidence to state that *Do Rzeczy* is one of main anti-gender actors, a keen platform voicing and creating outspokenly anti-gender media narratives. Additionally, it is also an active contributor of other, non-discursive tactics, which is discussed below in the next section.
- Two main Polish ‘broadsheet’ newspapers *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW) and *Rzeczpospolita* (RZ), have well-established, country-wide profiles as (respectively) left-liberal oriented, and more conservative and centre-right leaning. The differences in their coverage of anti-gender topics are not, however, strongly pronounced despite different profiles. While it is very clear that *Gazeta Wyborcza* takes much more supportive and advocacy positions in support of various queer-feminist issues and *Rzeczpospolita* remains more restrained in this respect, *Rzeczpospolita* also offers a critique of outspoken anti-gender strategies and tactics used by key civil society and political actors. Thus, in the contexts of anti-gender mobilisations and mainstream, broadsheet titles, arises a need for a more nuanced and complex understanding of

the media ecosystem, one that does not polarise as easily and densely around the dialectical 'liberal vs conservative' stances.

- The longstanding presence of 'gender ideology' debates in Poland creates the 'taken for granted' effect around some of the key phrases and words, when gender and sexuality are focal. Following the examination of different uses of 'gender ideology' (and 'LGBT ideology', both of which are oftentimes used interchangeably in Polish context by anti-gender actors) it is clear that its uses suggest socially settled, presumed familiarity that results in a lack of either definition or other demarcation with quotation marks.
- There is a concentration effect among Polish anti-gender actors, both organisational and individuals. Across Media and other segments of this study, a limited number of repeatedly engaging actors were observed, cutting across activism, politics, media, and popular culture. This shows the pervasiveness of anti-gender mobilisations that penetrate across different spheres of influence with a relatively small set of actors (and tools, as the next point suggests).
- The international dimension of Polish anti-gender strategies is clearly pronounced in this media study. Frequent mentions of the foreign politicians were observed, and who are presented as figures of authority and admiration due to their outspoken position on gender, sexuality, migration, the EU, and minorities. The list consists of countries such as Russia, Hungary, France, USA, Italy, and persons such as Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orbán, Marine Le Pen, Donald Trump and Giorgia Meloni). On the other hand, these also serve as objects of condemnation and warning used in the liberal anti anti-gender discourses. This finding on Polish anti-gender politics, while definitely expounding its own, national(istic) flavours, thus neatly links to broader global dynamics of anti-gender mobilisations.
- The EU stands as an important reference point to both anti-gender and pro-LGBTIQ+/feminist actors alike. Frequent mentions recall the observations made in the Parliamentary Debates segment, where the thematic code 'West and/or the EU as threats' proved to be popular discursive theme among the Polish conservative and (far)right-wing politicians (and for the liberal actors as a positive symbol of change and pro-LGBTIQ+/feminist initiatives). The embeddedness of the EU (and more broadly of the idea of 'Europe' and the idea of 'the West') in the Polish imaginary, when issues of gender and sexuality emerge in media (vide: Kulpa, 2020), shows the consistent importance of real and idealised geospatial imaginary that guides Polish anti-gender mobilisations (as well as the liberal 'anti anti-gender' counter politics).

Polish Controversy Mapping Findings

The third segment of the Polish study focused on actors and tactics implicated in the events of summer 2020 around the arrest of Margot, a non-binary activist, of the Stop Bzdurom!

Collective, and other queer-feminist activists. The analysis of sources in the 'Margot Controversy' segment led to the identification of a range of anti-gender actors and strategies. The analysis demonstrates persisting levels of transphobia in Poland, and tokenistic use of trans and non-binary peoples in public discourse, who are (too) easily fetishised in public discussion as symbols for debates about Polish democracy and society. The intensive media and political coverage of the 'controversy' around Margot stands as another example of fluctuating discourse and representations - from scarcity to over-abundance of interest - of trans and non-binary people in Poland (Dębińska 2020, pp. 75-83). As Dębińska (2020) shows, too often the lives of trans and non-binary peoples are instrumentalized for diverse purposes, while at the same time their lived experiences are obscured.

- There was an intensification of involvement among the state institutions (and by implication, political parties and groups), such as ministries or police forces. For instance, at a number of occasions, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, or the Office of General Prosecutor were actively engaged in spinning the anti-gender agenda into their political competences, drawing from or using the 'Margot Controversy' events as pretexts and rationale for the proposed solutions. These ranged from considerations of restricting certain freedoms (most notably of assembly) at the pretext of preventing 'social order', to infusing the national pedagogical curriculum with disinformation about gender and sexual minorities or medical state-of-arts about pregnancy termination.
- The most active and present anti-gender organisations in our dataset (Ordo Iuris, Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia) were the key actors in leading charges and providing evidence for the prosecution of Margot and the Stop Bzdurom! Collective. This shows that anti-gender mobilisations in Poland are actively driven by politics and politicians who seem to work 'hand in glove' with the anti-gender and heteroactivist actors of the civil society. One of the consequences of this is the polarisation and division of civil society along 'good vs. bad' lines, according to political affinity with the governing actors. Additionally, his strategy of formal and informal cooperation between the above mentioned groups of actors contributes to the development of highly discriminatory media-political ambiance, and in consequence facilitates the rise of transphobic and homophobic discrimination and hate crimes (Makuchowska, 2021, pp. 32–46).
- A significant number of organisational actors in the orbit of politics, media and queer-feminist issues were mapped during the analysis of anti-gender strategies. The pattern that emerged shows that the density is concentrated around a distinctly smaller number of organisations under each of the three groupings. Consequently, it was observed that anti-gender strategies for building actor-base resources operate similarly across different, but closely related, fields of influence (politics, media, civil society organising).

- There is evidence of resource preservation and boosting, enhanced by intra-group cooperations and exchanges. This shows the mobilised nature of anti-gender politics in Poland. Information gathered in our research about Ordo Iuris, one of the most notorious anti-gender actors on the Polish scene, well exemplifies the synergies among organisations (for example, that the same people sit on the boards of allied, but distinct organisations) that can work as a catalyst for creating a resourceful network among anti-gender actors.
- Do Rzeczy (DR) is a proactive media platform that constructs and shapes anti-gender tactics and plays a significant role in the Polish media-political-activist landscape. The outlet recycles a plethora of transphobic, homophobic, and anti-feminist discourses and activities that build the core of anti-gender tactics in Polish context. These include: various forms of discourse circulation, (thematic diversity, frequency and a range of skewed arguments); the deployment of misinformation (arising through a lack of factual checks, journalistic carelessness that allows for incorrect information to slip in and leads to misunderstanding arising among audiences); disinformation (active and purposeful deployment of the incorrect information to influence the readership); organisational involvement in 'knowledge creation' events (conferences, seminars).
- There are synergies and a saturation process happening across the political-media landscape. The scope and range of anti-gender tactics and strategies in the Controversy Mapping shows that they are similar to those identified across the Parliamentary Debates and Media segments in the Polish case. For instance, Positioning West as Threat (or its liberal reversal tactics Positioning East as Threat) corresponds to the West and the EU as Threats in Parliamentary analysis; Humour, Ridicule/Joke, and Scapegoating can also be found among the Parliamentary Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours. It is also clear that Dehumanising is a popular anti-gender tactic; it is clearly oppressive and erases a person's lived experiences, and disrespects individual self-understandings by denying bodily and identity autonomy. For instance, not recognising Margot's (and other people's) preferred gender identifications and referring to them by birth names and assigned at birth metrics, or calling LGBTIQ+ people 'an ideology', is a widely observed practice among actors who are unsupportive of LGBTIQ+ rights. These are often complemented with a tone of ridicule (also identified in the Parliamentary Debates segment) and oftentimes purposefully perplexing use of odd linguistic forms of address, exploiting a rigid system of Polish gendered grammar.
- Knowledge creation and public claims are important anti-gender tools. While in the Parliamentary data (ab)uses of knowledge in the emerging forms of ideological 'scientism' discourse were observed (use of 'scientific' arguments as supposedly irrefutable 'evidence', often calling upon 'biology', 'nature', and 'science') in the Controversy Mapping data, the focus on knowledge creation and the recognition of

its importance manifests through activities such as organising conferences, and inviting and hosting (national and international) anti-gender figures of authority.

Anti-gender narratives have the strategic effect of polarising the (broadly defined) liberal side of the spectrum within and against itself. The research unveiled examples of increased support for the (broad) inclusion of trans people, while at the same time also occasional refusal or limited agreement to use preferred gender forms of address. This shows there are multiple challenges to anti-gender mobilisations that offer polyvocal perspectives among the liberal actors about the role of gender and sexuality as the markers of contemporary democratic societies.

Swiss Case Study Findings

Swiss Parliament Findings

Introduction

It is important to note that the period included in this study is characterised by several important legislative changes in the realm of gender equality in Switzerland. In **December 2018**, the anti-racism article in the criminal code was extended to include a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation (Article 261 bis) after an optional referendum triggered a popular vote in 2020. In **December 2020**, the Swiss federal government and parliament approved the opening of civil marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. After an optional referendum triggered a popular vote in 2021, the Swiss electorate voted with a large margin (by a nearly two-thirds majority) in favour of amending the marriage laws.

Since **January 2021**, transgender persons or persons with a gender variance can change their official gender record and first name quickly and without bureaucratic complications. In **December 2022**, however, the Swiss government contested the introduction of a third gender option or no-gender option for official records. The statement on the government website, announced that “The social conditions for the introduction of a third gender or for a general waiver of the gender entry in the civil status register do not currently exist. A change to the binary gender model would also entail numerous amendments to the constitution and federal and cantonal laws” (portal of the Swiss government, 21.12.2022).

Political debates relating to these legal changes were therefore dominant in the data. Additionally, the report considers a range of other relevant debates focusing on or touching upon issues related to gender and sexuality. As mentioned previously, the majority of contributions that oppose or criticise gender and sexual equalities are made by MPs of SVP (66%), followed by the Centre (26%), and EDU (8%). The thematic clusters identified from the Swiss parliamentary debates revealed that the majority of contestations around gender

and sexual equalities emerge through technocratic and legalistic discourses. Openly hostile or inflammatory written and oral contributions exist but are the minority. This demonstrates that opposition against gender and sexual equalities does not have to come in the form of emotionally charged and pronounced ideological discourses. The main findings from the parliamentary data analysis (corpus spanning 2018-2023) are the following:

- **The reification of sex as a biological category is a consistent reference point in debates.** This was particularly evident in the use of evidence from medical sciences by MPs from across the political spectrum. Polemic statements that made reference to ‘gender ideology’, served as frequent asides in debates and sought to call-out an unscientific departure from naturalist understandings of gender and sexuality.
- **Medical discourses, especially psychiatric and psychological discourses, remain central to transgender discussions, and are drawn on by both proponents and opponents of trans rights.** In debates around gender recognition, the introduction of gender identity as a protected legal category, or the creation of an administrative third gender, biology and "medical facts" are claimed as a legitimate basis for jurisdiction and bureaucratic processes, while “ideology”, personal feeling or “fashionable ideas” are discounted as arbitrary and dangerous for the “natural” order. Verena Herzog (Swiss People’s Party) argued, for example, “To ensure legal certainty, the change of gender must be based as far as possible on biological and medical facts and realities. In order to prevent arbitrariness and bureaucracy, a change of gender in the civil status register must not only be made according to personal feeling.” (18.3696, 15.06.2018)
- **Legalistic and bureaucratic arguments operate as important vehicles to oppose LGBTIQ+ rights and policies.** For example, the creation of two posts that specialise in LGBTIQ+ politics within the government were flagged as too expensive. Moreover, the discourse of potential system abuse framed the debate surrounding the simplification of the process to change the assigned “sex”. Scenarios of potential system abuse are mentioned by some MPs in relation to pension age and military service, as Philipp Mathias Bregy (The Centre) notes: “We are of the opinion that abuse cannot be ruled out. We would like to emphasise that we do not believe that abuse will occur among those who are actually affected, but rather among those who use this regulation to abuse it” (19.081, 07.12.2020)
- **The figure of the vulnerable child** emerges through multiple recurring tropes in the Swiss parliament and is particularly linked to the discourse of **sexualisation** and the **promotion of non-normative gender and sexual identities**. Although the Swiss parliament does not deal with questions relating to school curricula as this falls under the responsibility of the cantons, sex education emerges as a theme in relation to publicly funded national sexual health and sex education campaigns. The government is called upon by Verena Herzog (Swiss People’s Party) to answer for the content of its funded campaigns that are seen to promote inappropriate and immoral sexual

practices and behaviours to children. In addition to this sexualization trope, the same campaign is problematised for promoting non-normative gender and sexual identities of children.

- **Gender-affirming care is positioned as a threat to minors and this furthers the focus on the figure of the vulnerable child.** This trope is advanced by MPs from the Centre and the SVP. These voices make reference to an “exponential increase” in young people seeking medical gender reassignment. It is postulated that young people are animated to transition by the medical establishment irrespective of the “proven” dangers of gender affirming care for minors. The Swiss government is framed as lagging behind other countries that have already recognized “the dangers” of gender affirming care and that have reacted appropriately with bans and mandatory psychotherapy in lieu of affirming services. It is suggested that the medical establishment and intellectual circles are actively promoting trans-identities and treatments to young people while it is asserted that “even” trans organisations call for more caution, as the following interpellation submitted by Benjamin Roduit (The Centre) illustrates:

“In view of the sharp increase in the number of young patients in recent years and the negative and irreversible consequences of the treatments (cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, infertility, higher risk of cancer and thrombosis), countries such as England, Sweden and Finland are in the process of adapting their guidelines. Even the World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH), which is also in the process of revising its recommendations, is calling for restraint.” (21.4506: 16.12.2021)

- Children’s rights are mobilised to justify opposition to lesbian couples’ access to assisted reproductive technologies (ART). Opponents use a rights-based discourse to suggest an inherent **contradiction between lesbian parents’ rights and their children’s rights**. In lieu of a child’s right to know its origins, it is insisted that children have a right to be raised by their biological parents. This argument suggests that (biological) filiation is necessary for desirable parenting and the wellbeing of children:

“(Y)ou always talk about equal rights, and only about equal rights for adult, homosexual couples. But you always forget the weakest in our society, namely the children, who can neither defend themselves nor say anything about it. Where are the equal rights and especially the rights of children to mother and father in this bill?” (Martina Geissbühler, SVP, 13.468, 13.06.2020)

- **Linking homosexuality with paedophilia** (although not explicitly conflating the two terms) has also been observed in various statements by two members of the Swiss People’s Party. Homosexuality in association with pedophilia particularly surfaced in the context of the debates devoted to the extension of the scope of anti-racism laws to include discrimination based on sexual orientation. Anxiety that protecting people

from homophobic statements might inadvertently provide protection to pedophilic offenders is based on the assumption that the scope of what sexual orientation includes can potentially be very broad. Some MPs expressed their concerns with regard to the extension of the anti-racism legislation in the following manner: "And do other socially ostracised sexual practices such as necrophilia or zoophilia or the consumption of pornography also qualify under the new offence?" (Barbara Steinemann, SVP, 19.5318). In a similar vein, another SVP politician anticipates the scenario where the European Court would condemn Switzerland because of the confusion that the introduction of the new term (sexual orientation) would cause in courts: "(courts) have to decide whether pedophilia, bisexuality, gerontophilia, necrophilia, fetishism, zoophilia, and so on – human creativity in this area being inexhaustible – are sexual orientations which must be protected or which must not be. We are facing new condemnations by once again using terms that are ideologically very trendy, but as trendy as they are undefined" (Nidegger Yves, SVP, 13.407, 25.09.2018). Placing of homosexuality in close proximity with the "socially ostracised practices" contributes to discursive reproduction of homosexuality as a "threatening" or "deviant" practice.

- A small number of debates also sought to place **natalist discourses** in the debate. They were exclusively put forward by members of the Swiss People's Party and failed to spark larger debates. They sought to make access to assisted reproductive technologies (18.4021, 28.09.2018) more accessible to women and to foreground information on the medical risks of abortions in abortion consultations (20.3301, 05.05.2020).
- Opposition to equalities was often mediated through the idea that they go "**too far**". Into this category fall political arguments that claimed that going "too far" with a proposition would either lead to a loss of support by political actors or the people or that they would torment the legal system, and lead to a multiplicity of problems. In relation to a potential introduction of the legal category of gender identity, Karl Vogler (The Centre) argues:

"An extension to include the concept of gender identity threatens a total collapse of the bill, a total collapse (...). However, the concerns – which incidentally coincide with those of the Federal Council – that interpretation problems could arise with the criterion of the concept of gender identity, which was previously unknown in Swiss law (...)" (13.407, 03.12.2018)
- Related to this idea of equalities going too far and tormenting the system was also the idea that **equalities are a top-down, undemocratic, "socialist" tool** that aims to reorganise society. Although this argument did not take centre stage in the debates, it served as a trope in the background:

“This understanding of steering and control is fundamentally presumptuous and completely illiberal. My understanding of democracy is different. Society shapes, directs and legitimises the state and not the other way round. This postulate makes radical socio-political demands, and these demands are to be imposed on society in an almost socialist manner. Just as we should be cautious about the state influencing language, we must not open up the law to extreme socio-political demands. Instead, we and the Federal Council should concentrate more on the core tasks of the rule of law - the security, freedom and independence of our country - and address the main concerns of the population, such as constantly rising health insurance premiums or the safeguarding of social security systems. To this end, we should present concrete solutions.” (Verena Herzog, Swiss People’s Party, 18.3690, 13.06.2019)

Notable here is also the reference to “real” material problems, to point to the allegedly excessive character of what is framed as symbolic/immaterial debates.

- Opposition to gender-inclusive language, which emerges as a site of mobilisation among both German- and French-speaking MPs, is one such example. Language, in this sense, exposes the persistence of heteronormative supremacy and the mechanisms of power and domination associated with it, hence it is opposed so fiercely. The excess, in this case, concerns the inclusion of non-binary gender identities in language. "Readability and comprehensibility are to be given higher weight than ideology. This is by no means to prevent the feminization of certain words in the sense of promoting more equality" (Benjamin Roduit, The Centre, 21.3143, 11.03.2021). This focus on language, pointing to excess in immaterial/symbolic debates, appears as a strategy to diminish the importance of the issue and actors advocating for gender justice. There were various attempts in the examined period where MPs tried to enforce a ban on gender inclusive language in order to halt the spread of ‘gender ideology’ through national institutions. While one parliamentary initiative aimed at banning inclusive language at the nationally funded, universities (22.475, 29.09.2022) with the argument that gender inclusive language confuses students, another motion sought to ban inclusive language in official documents of the Government (21.3143, 11.03.2021)
- Related to this was the idea that **publicly owned institutions are to remain politically neutral**. The Swiss post was problematized by one MP for issuing a stamp in celebration of the adoption of marriage equality (22.7763, 21.09.2022).
- An intersectional examination of the data illustrated that **gender inequalities were disproportionately associated with Muslim minorities**. MPs from the Swiss People’s Party and the Centre associated Muslim communities in Switzerland with increased

domestic violence. MPs from the Swiss People's Party and the Centre sought to table debates about the child headscarf (22.4559, 16.12.2022; 19.3049, 06.03.2019)

- Another trope that was put forward in relation to asylum seekers was the idea of asylum seeking women giving birth in order to **manipulate the asylum process** (17.3930, 29.09.2017) and asylum seekers transitioning in order to claim asylum based on their trans identity (18.4014, 28.09.2018). Both issues were tabled by an MP of the Swiss People's Party.

Swiss Media Findings

The second step of the Swiss case study focused on mapping the circulation of anti-gender discourses in the national media. For this purpose, five newspapers were chosen that cover the conventional political spectrum. For the Swiss German case study, Die Weltwoche (German for "The World Week") was selected as a right-wing oriented weekly magazine, Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) as an established centre-right daily, and WOZ (Die Wochenzeitung) as a left-wing Swiss German-language weekly newspaper. Papers covered in the French-language sample (Romandie) include Le Temps, a national mainstream newspaper published in Lausanne and Geneva and La Tribune de Genève, a regional daily usually considered centre-right and owned by private media group Tamedia. Additionally, 20 Minuten and 20 Minutes Romandie have been chosen for both French and German-language newspapers in Switzerland. They are free daily newspapers entirely funded by advertisement and mostly consisting of short articles.

The comparative newspaper analysis, comprising 162 articles, revealed the following insights:

- The German-language right-wing newspaper Die Weltwoche has the highest number of articles in our sample (almost 40% of the corpus). This illustrates that in the Swiss German right-wing media discourse, topics related to all used search terms, namely 'gender-ideology', 'transgender' and 'woke' are popular and constitute a significant area of coverage.
- The phrase 'gender-ideology' (in its German and French spelling variants, including "*théorie du genre*") appeared significantly more frequently in the selected German-language press (40 times) than in the French-language press (15 times) over the period. Given its fairly wide circulation in the German-language press, the phrase 'gender-ideology' appears to have established itself as a recognizable and legitimate concept in German-speaking Switzerland. In Swiss French media, the concept is used significantly less frequently and mostly as an explicitly polemical expression. "*Théorie du genre*" is used to convey a similar, however less controversial and more naturalised meaning.

- Right-wing extremism appears to be the dominant trigger issue in all German-language Swiss newspapers, except for the right-wing newspaper Die Weltwoche. A focused examination of the distribution of trigger issues in Die Weltwoche demonstrates that in our corpus 'gender ideology' is never featured in the articles addressing right-wing extremism: instead it is featured in the context of commenting topics such as 'woke' politics, 'cancelling/silencing' and 'sex-education at schools'. In contrast, 'gender ideology' in WOZ is mentioned in almost 60% of instances in the context of right-wing activism.
- The dominant trigger issues in the French-language press are 'woke', followed by 'trans issues/activism' and 'cancelling/silencing'. The convergence of two historical contexts can account for such dominance. First, the period of the sample was when the French word '*wokisme*' adapted from the English 'woke', came to replace previous expressions used to denigrate progressive politics, such as "*islamo-gauchisme*", "*intersectionnalité*" or "*néo-féminisme*" in the French media sphere and that of French-speaking regions of Switzerland and Belgium. The notion of a "*théorie du genre*" (gender theory) had been especially widespread in the early 2010s during protests against marriage equality in France (which eventually came into law in 2013) (Carnac 2014). However, it subsequently receded from a stand-alone issue to being gradually embedded within a broader denunciation of progressive politics encapsulated by the term '*wokisme*' and its derivatives. Since the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020, French and Swiss uses of the term alike also increasingly encompassed racial justice (Mahoudeau, 2022). Second, a significant proportion of 2022 newspaper articles in the sample about anti-gender politics in Romandie pertained to the controversy over anti-trans talks at the University of Geneva (see controversy findings, below). Protests over the talks were almost exclusively described by the French-language mainstream and conservative press as an importation of cancel culture into Switzerland, hence the common association of trans issues with cancelling and silencing in the media sample.
- Whenever more than one trigger issue is dominant in a newspaper article, it is a combination of 'cancelling/silencing', 'trans issues/activism' and 'woke' for both the Swiss German and the Swiss French media. In the French-language media, such associations of issues are mostly present in the context of covering protests against transphobic events in Romandie. 'Cancelling/silencing' in association with 'trans issues/activism' is mostly present in the articles of La Tribune de Genève, whereas in the Swiss German media, these issues are discussed together exclusively in coverage by Die Weltwoche. This clearly shows the newspapers' discursive strategies when constructing gender-ideology as a problem.
- The distribution of newspapers by genres, demonstrates that the discussions around 'gender ideology' in the German-language press prevail in Comment/Opinion (60%) pieces as well as news CH (17%). In the French-language press, the dominant genres

in which the phrase ‘gender ideology’ are mentioned are News CH, and Editorial (20%). Such a high percentage of opinion pieces and domestic news coverage indicates that the newspapers/journalists are trying to situate gender ideology as a relevant issue in Switzerland.

- Mobilising key celebrities, i.e. established figures advocating anti-gender positions, appears to be a feature of the Swiss right-wing and conservative press. Transnationally known anti-gender actors are frequently featured in the news or mentioned in the comments/opinion pieces. In our sample of German- and French-speaking media combined, such transnationally established figures in anti-gender politics as Éric Marty, JK Rowling, Céline Masson, Caroline Eliacheff, Abigail Shrier, and Viktor Orbán are mentioned across the sample. In contrast, the left-wing newspaper WOZ predominately mentions domestic actors, commonly in light of concern over the increasing right-wing activism.
- The examination of the term ‘gender ideology’ reveals that in two thirds of all articles in our entire sample, the term is used without quotation marks, implying its discursive deployment is chiefly naturalised. ‘Gender ideology’ in quotation marks presents itself mostly in WOZ (36%), NZZ (27%), and La Tribune de Genève (22%). In many instances, the use of quotation marks might be seen as a way of taking critical distance from a term (‘gender ideology’), however linguistic conventions might have a contributing role as to the usage of quotation marks, therefore this finding is qualified.
- The Swiss German language newspaper Die Weltwoche occasionally features the phrase ‘gender ideology’ in the titles of the articles. However, in all other newspapers in our sample it emerges predominantly in the article body. Here is one example of such a title: Die Weltwoche, 30.06.2022, “What is a woman? Gender ideologists claim that gender can be chosen. I can reassure you: Sexual biology is very clear on this issue”. The prevalence of ‘gender ideology’ in the titles of Die Weltwoche indicates that the term is well-understood by the newspaper’s readership.
- Definitions of ‘gender ideology’ are rarely provided in an explicit form. In some cases, periphrastic formulas can be considered definition-like, in others the meaning is diffused in the context. Such fluidity and lack of definition of the term allow it to move and morph. But mostly, ‘gender ideology’ is used within texts as a matter of fact, as if it has a status and coherence as an ‘ideology’ that should be readily legible for readers.

Some qualitative insights help illustrate the quantitative findings above by showing the key themes in which the phrase ‘gender ideology’ was problematized in different media outlets. The following narratives frequently emerged in Die Weltwoche.

- Gender ideology in Die Weltwoche is often reported as a threat to the legacy of women or to the advocacy for women’s rights:

“What is a woman? For Ulrich Kutschera, the author of our cover story, sexual biology provides an unambiguous answer: contrary to the claims of gender ideologues, the female ovaries define a woman. Everything that constitutes visible ‘womanhood’, right down to the fat-padded curves of the body, is controlled by these primary sexual organs. He is convinced that the rights of those women who feel their womanhood is something natural are threatened by the increasingly intrusive gender ideology.” (Weltwoche, 30.06.2022)

Grounded in biological essentialism, this article argues that the sex-based understanding of gender roles is necessary “for those women who feel their womanhood” in order to maintain it.

- Trans issues in general and, in the context of children in particular, are often discussed in hostile and sensationalist ways. For example, an article, with the catchy title “Gender-ideology confuses an entire generation” constructs gender ideology as a threat because children are regularly exposed to “transgenderism” in educational and medical institutions.

“The situation has changed dramatically in recent years. Girls in particular are subject to a transgender trend. Author Abigail Shrier speaks of “transgender madness.” A whole network of educators, psychiatrists, teachers and doctors pushes young people to consider transgender as a normal life option, with irreversible damages [...]. Anyone who asks critical questions is hushed up or pilloried, as Shrier has repeatedly experienced.” (Urs Gehriger, 26.11.2020)

A similar narrative, about educational and medical institutions encouraging gender reassignment, although as a separate incident, has also presented itself in our corpus of parliamentary debates.

- ‘Gender ideology’ is often discussed as a threat to freedom of speech. In an article from 13.10.2022 Anabel Schunke writes:

“As if the linguistic discrediting from the left-wing was not enough, the so-called ‘hate crime’ came into play. Anyone who contradicts the woke ideology is spreading ‘hate and incitement’ - and must be punished. [...] In the process, the corridor of what can be said is narrowed further and further, and the catalogue of what counts as ‘hate speech’ is expanded at will.”

According to the author, freedom of speech, which is already being restricted by “left-wing cancel culture”, is being further compromised by the expansion of the Article 261 bis (referring to the anti-racism legislation which was expanded to include protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation).

- Providing a platform for transnationally recognized anti-gender actors is another feature of Die Weltwoche coverage. They frequently feature the active actors of the categories mentioned above, inviting them as guests, publishing their articles and

interviews with them, promoting and reporting on their events, and picturing them as reliable experts. For example, Abigail Shrier is featured in the context of “transgender madness”.

- ‘Gender-ideology’ presentation in the centrist newspaper Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), reveals a mixed sample of opinions and discussions in which the term is used. A significant number of NZZ articles in our corpus discuss ‘gender ideology’ in the context of right-wing extremist tendencies, namely that they gain momentum by appropriating the topic of gender. At the same time, there is an equally significant number of articles, containing the phrase ‘gender ideology’, which to a large extent echo the narratives of Die Weltwoche. For example, in an article from 07.03.2023, Giuseppe Gracia talks about:

“gender extremists”: “who deny nature, ignore scientific findings and engage in ideological linguistic confusion”.

Gender extremists in the author's view are as dangerous to society as anti-racism and climate extremists:

“When it comes to racism, the future should also be about standing up for the values of liberalism as a majority society, for the equality of all before the law. But the problem should not be left to the radicals, who are proclaiming a new, woke racism with their doctrine of original sin for whites.”

Gender, anti-racism and climate activism are recurrently discussed in NZZ as involving ‘totalitarian politics’. Some authors even suggest practical solutions to stop their spread:

“It is important to counter tendencies that demand totalitarian allegiance, whether on climate, gender or other issues. The non-admission of entire social movements to debates and forums. The tendentious selection of talk show guests and the erroneous idea that relevant, unpopular opinions can be excluded and politics can be bypassed”, according to Ralf Schuler, NZZ, 16.01.2023

- The left-wing newspaper WOZ presents a strikingly different narrative to the other two newspapers. The phrase ‘gender ideology’ was mentioned most frequently in the context of increasing right-wing extremism. In many instances, the authors critically engage with the right-wing arguments of the other media outlets. For example, in an article from 27.10.2022, Anna Jikhareva problematizes the tendency by some media outlets to discuss the left-wing and right-wing protests as “two extremes”, such relativism, in the author’s opinion, leads to the “trivialization of right-wing violence”:

“Interesting point about those who equate right-wing violence with radical left-wing politics – true to the ‘horseshoe theory’ – also contribute to the

trivialization of right-wing violence. A current example is a ‘Tagesschau’ report from Sunday, in which an anti-fascist demonstration in Bern is contrasted with the Tanzhaus attack. Thus, the events appear merely as two ‘extremes’ to which the ‘reasonable’ centre remains at equidistance - with the consequence that the concerns of neo-Nazis are ultimately legitimised.”

Swiss Controversy Mapping Findings

In its third step, the Swiss case study focused on examining two different episodes of anti-gender mobilisations. Both events unfolded in 2022, one in the French- and the other in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The Swiss German analysis focused on examining the media coverage of a “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich, which was violently disrupted in October 2022 by a young neo-Nazi group. This controversy reveals how gender-related issues, particularly in relation to children, are appropriated by diverse actors as a strategy to engage the public in anti-gender politics. It also sheds light on the role of the right-wing media and politics in contributing and encouraging such events. The Swiss French case study analysed the media coverage of the cancellation of two transphobic talks at the University of Geneva in April and May 2022, unveiling the transnational dimension of anti-trans activism as well as the argument of free speech for justifying anti-gender discourse. Both controversies illustrated the centrality of children in anti-gender and anti-trans activism.

Swiss Controversy 1: Junge Tat disrupting “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich

- Right-wing extremists gain momentum by appropriating the topic of gender. The right-wing media as well as political campaigns against gender topics have been widespread lately, allowing the far-right extremist groups to jump on board and claim that they are saying what others are saying. Such co-optation of gender topics can be seen as a tactic to gain more public support.
- Right-wing and conservative media have capitalised on the event, by shifting attention towards the discussion of the supposed danger of “(trans)gender ideology” to children and society in general. Some opinion pieces and news articles invited their readers to critically engage with the danger of such lessons to children. For example, an NZZ article alarmed: "Reading lesson with the drag queen. The gender obsession is making its way into pedagogy." (Brigit Schmid, 10.11.2022) Die Weltwoche published several news articles and opinion pieces comparing open conversations with kids about diversity and inclusion to a sect, more specifically a “transgender sect”:

“Above all, however, intransigence towards ‘heretics’ who use biological facts to reduce the transgender sect to absurdity characterises the religious dogmatism of this ideology. We know from reports that children who grow up in the sects become dependent and anxious adults. It would be advisable to prevent this social trend.” (Elena Louisa Lange, Weltwoche.ch, 20.05.2022)

- Furthermore, the discourse in the Swiss German right-wing media sparked by the Junge Tat demonstration at “Drag Story Time” was as much about delegitimizing trans and LGBTIQ+ lives as it was about legitimising a range of politics —neo-Nazis, far right, the extreme centre. An example of this is Die Weltwoche article, titled: “The New Self-Congratulation: Drag Queen story-time for Children, like the ones currently taking place in Zurich, are the New Favorite Hobby of a Complacent ‘Left-Wing Bourgeoisie’.” A quote from die Weltwoche:

“Once a subculture of nightlife and partying, a new generation of drag queens are making themselves available as state transgender representatives. The audience consists of parents in creative and academic professions who squeeze themselves and their offspring into Fjällräven backpacks, dutifully state their pronouns, always have their FFP-2 masks to hand and insult anyone walking on the cycle path as a ‘Nazi’.” (Elena Louisa Lange, Weltwoche.ch, 20.05.2022)

Striking in this example is the collective delegitimization of the actors promoting diversity and inclusion, who are characterised as left-wing bourgeois representatives of intellectual and creative professions. On the opposite spectrum the newspaper argues that people who do not support these liberal ideas are therefore vulnerable to being labelled “Nazi”.

In a similar vein, Die Weltwoche justifies the refusal of the SVP to join other political parties in condemning the actions of Junge Tat. In an article from 03.11.2022, Die Weltwoche author Christoph Mörgeli writes:

“A few right-wing extremists disrupted the drag queens' story hour. The parties represented in the city parliament wanted to condemn this in a joint statement. The SVP refused this request. Rightly so.” (Weltwoche, Christoph Mörgeli, 04.11.2022)

According to the author, this decision of SVP is justified because it is their right:

"to reserve the freedom to oppose the early sexualization of children. And to engage critically with the LGBTQ movement. Because the others want to enforce nothing other than the following view: Anyone who disagrees with gender ideology and claims that there are two biological genders is a Nazi".

- Another technique of the right-wing media is to question the appropriateness of investing taxpayers' money in such activities as drag story-time for kids. For example, Joyce Kung in Die Weltwoche, suggests:

"Parents can decide for themselves whether they want to send their children to attend a story-time with pompously disguised men in women's dresses. But if they want it, they should pay for it. And not the taxpayers" (Weltwoche, Joyce Kung, 23.09.2022).

This argument echoes the narrative which surfaced in the parliamentary discourse in relation to the content of sex education brochures, pointing to the synergies in some media and political anti-gender narratives.

- Another feature characterising the coverage of the Swiss German controversy is the predominant focus on actors and practices rather than knowledge. Although most articles have condemned the actions of Junge Tat, for example Schaffhauser Nachrichten (27.10.2022) asks: "Where is the outrage when Nazis march?", much less attention has been given in the press to criticism of other actors advancing the same ideas. There are occasional articles by liberal media outlets discussing the implication in this controversy of some Swiss political parties, for example an article in tagesanzeiger.ch (27.10.2022):

“This is how the SVP helps the neo-Nazis. The other Zurich parties condemned the action of the neo-Nazis at the Tanzhaus, the SVP pressed around - and supported the concerns of the extremists. Why is this dangerous?”

- Left-wing media, on the contrary, emphasised that the ideas spread by the right-wing and conservative outlets, as well as right-wing politicians, were active contributions to the Junge Tat attack on the drag story-time event for kids:

“ The fact that the neo-Nazis seem to feel safe in urban areas is not least thanks to a public that makes their way of thinking acceptable. The physical attack on the reading lesson was preceded by a verbal one: ‘Activist ideologues will stop at nothing’, wrote Weltwoche at the end of September. The NZZ also hardly misses an opportunity to demonise ‘gender ideology’. Add to this a retiring Federal Councillor who provokes with his statements against ‘woke culture’, or a candidate for office who declares war on the ‘transgender craze’” (Anna Jikhareva, WOZ, 27.10.2022)

- “Name Calling” as a tactic to make queer activists and events publicly known was mentioned in different media outlets: Daniel Binswanger, an author for the liberal republik.ch wrote in 20.05.2023:

"In 'Weltwoche daily' this week, Köppel not only declared ‘Drag Story Time’ to be an attack on traditional family values, but also named the time and place of the event - a repeat of the implicit incitement to violence in the style of Glarner.” (referring to Andreas Glarner of the SVP).

Another article in the NZZ, published on 02.12.2022, also mentioned "public naming" as a tactic used by Junge Tat (referring to the video where young neo-Nazis named and declared Brandy Butler an enemy). (NZZ, Giorgio Scherrer 02.12.2022)

Swiss Controversy 2: Protests over controversial anti-trans talks at UNIGE

The Swiss Romand controversy that erupted in the spring of 2022 over the protests held against controversial talks at University of Geneva inaugurated a intense period of anti-trans expression in the media and public discourse, especially around access to gender-affirmative care for trans minors, detransitioning (rts.ch 02.03.2023), and as broader negative discourses about the excesses of “wokisme” (French transliteration) and “cancel culture” (English expression used in French).

- A defining feature of the 2022 Geneva events was their instantiation of the transnational circulation of gender debates and anti-gender discourse, in this case the influence of French debates and French political and intellectual actors over the Romand discussion. All three controversial speakers invited to give talks on UNIGE premises (Co-authors Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff on the one hand, and Eric Marty on the other) came from Paris or had been active in the Paris intellectual

scene, with books by French publishers (*Les Editions de l'Observatoire*, and *Les Editions du Seuil*, respectively).¹ *La fabrique de l'enfant transgenre* had already been promoted by French anti-trans organisations such as the Paris-based Observatoire de la Petite Sirène (founded by Masson and Eliacheff) and Marty's book had been discussed in Parisian media and intellectual spaces. Versions of the Geneva talks had already been given across France.

- Conversely, critical accounts of both the events and the books by Geneva student union activists also found inspiration in contemporaneous interventions within the French discussion.² For example, their analysis of Marty's book made wide use of blog articles in online media *Médiapart* by Antoine Idier, a French cultural historian and critic.³ On October 22nd 2022, Geneva students seeking intellectual support invited Paris-based Alex Mahoudeau, author of the recently published *La Panique Woke* (Textuel, 2022), to speak alongside local scholars and activists.⁴ In addition to its in-house editorials, the Romand conservative press mainly outsourced the most incendiary comments on the controversy to interviewed intellectuals from France, such as media pundit Peggy Sastre⁵ (who is "interested in gender from a biological angle") or the book authors themselves,⁶ whereas more moderate Swiss interviewees, commentators and op-ed authors were mostly recruited among local politicians, such as Alexandre de Senarclens (PLR, centre-right) and Dorina Xhixho (LGBTQ representative for the Geneva Socialist Party, centre-left), or university officials (such as UNIGE president Yves Flückiger).
- A second feature of both mainstream and conservative coverage of the UNIGE controversy was its notable circumvention of a substantive discussion of contents, in favour of a focus on what were reductively presented as threats to free speech in Swiss academia. Thus, Nathalie Piégay, director of the department of Modern French, who had invited Eric Marty, explained after the protest:

"As far as I am concerned, I am keen to maintain a peaceful work atmosphere, open to contradiction, without intimidation. I think controversy is necessary to intellectual and democratic life. By definition it has all its place in academia.

¹ Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff, *La Fabrique de l'enfant-transgenre*. Paris : Editions de l'Observatoire, 2022; Eric Marty, *Le sexe des Modernes. Pensée du Neutre et théorie du genre*. Paris: Seuil, 2021.

² CUAÉ, "Répression à l'université et autres histoires de transphobie," *Renversé.co*, July 7th, 2022.

³ À propos du Sexe des modernes et d'un problème plus général : la critique «de gauche», *blogs.mediapart.fr*, it published on May 17th on the very day of Marty's Geneva talk; and *Le livre homophobe et transphobe de Marty, la critique culturelle et la psychanalyse*, published on *blogs.mediapart.fr* on May 30th about two weeks after Marty's Geneva talk.

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<https://cuae.ch/enregistrement-de-la-conference-transphobie-et-repression-retour-sur-une-polemique-reactionnaire/>

⁵

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/353800979-l-uni-de-geneve-la-liberte-attaquee-par-des-activistes-lgbtiq>, May 19th, 2022.

⁶ <https://www.lepeuple.ch/le-prof-attaque-a-geneve-regle-ses-comptes/>

I'm ready to meet and dialogue with members of the trans community, who in return have to admit that one should also be able to hear discourses with which one does not agree.”⁷

On the online website, watson.ch, speaking with less nuance about student activists, Peggy Sastre declared: “they make me think of 1920-1930s Fascists.”⁸ The article featuring an interview with her, written by Antoine Menuisier, mentioned what it considered a local precedent with the non-inclusion of cis-men in a feminist assembly organised by the UNIGE student union in 2021⁹ while connecting the current protests with all of two examples of “previous intimidations” in French universities over the past years.

In Marty's Swiss interview over the controversy, given exclusively to the conservative newspaper *Le Peuple* (which is led by a self-described “Christian and independent” editorial team)¹⁰, the author of *Le sexe des modernes* condemned student protesters as “pseudo-trans” who refused “dialogue” and decried a “Fascist behaviour,” by “petty-bourgeois [youth], only able to imitate what is being done elsewhere.”

This overall circumvention of contents and the absence of discussion about transphobia itself prevented the public from judging the legitimacy of the protests based on their substance, and instead allowed commentators to exclusively frame the protested speakers as victims of “cancel culture.” “We are stigmatised, accused of being reactionary”, explained Céline Masson¹¹ on Swiss evening TV news *Le 19h30* on April 20th, 2022. Conversely, Swiss Tabloid *Blick*, was the only one in the mainstream press to publish an editorial in support of student concerns (“It's a good thing we don't let transphobes have their say in academia”¹², by Amit Juillard). Commenting ironically on the ubiquity of conservative actors invited to express themselves in the vast majority of news outlets and public arenas to claim that they could no longer speak their minds, it was also one of the only outlets to delve into the substance of the subject. For example, it amplified the voice of Romand trans care specialists refuting Masson & Eliacheff's claim that 90% of youth beginning a transition at age 15

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<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/973817390-coup-de-force-lgbt-a-l-uni-de-geneve-nous-ne-nous-a-utocensurerons-pas>

8

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/353800979-l-uni-de-geneve-la-liberte-attaquee-par-des-activistes-lgbtiq>

9

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/femmes/892314651-a-l-unige-les-hommes-exclus-d-une-assemblee-feministe>

¹⁰ A caption under Eric Marty's photograph specifies “Fed up, Eric Marty decided to speak only to our newspaper.” <https://www.lepeuple.ch/le-prof-attaque-a-geneve-regle-ses-comptes/>

¹¹ 19h30, RTS, April 20th, 2022, <https://www.rts.ch/play/tv/emission/19h30?id=105932>

¹² Heureusement qu'on ne laisse pas les transphobes s'exprimer à l'université <https://www.blick.ch/fr/news/suisse/polemique-a-luni-de-geneve-heureusement-quon-ne-laisse-pas-les-trans-phobes-sexprimer-a-luniversite-id17574327.html>

regret it at age 20 (the actual figure in peer-reviewed scientific studies is 2%) and questioned the double standard allowing transphobic discourse in the name of free speech:

“If those talks had been racist or antisemitic, who would have been offended to see the authors of the books be denounced or getting roughed up? If the books presented had been written by white people seeking to control the life of Blacks deemed incapable of self-determination, would you have shed a tear on the altar of Voltaire?”.

While denouncing “repression” by university administration, on the left-wing Romand news website *Renversé* student union CUAE also offered a long rebuke of both books, attempting to refocus discussion on transphobia¹³, directing readers to a section of its own website providing a lengthy “*Dossier sur la transphobie d’Eric Marty*” dated June 2022.¹⁴



Figure CH18: Photograph of banner unrolled on the premises of UNIGE Uni-Mail building, June 2023

- Finally, a third key trope of the coverage of the UNIGE controversy was the framing of gender issues as opposing a camp of reason and science to a camp represented by activists and “extremism.”

This dichotomy already lay at the core of the discourse of the AMQG, a Geneva-based association founded in the spring of 2021 initially by parents hostile to their teenagers’ wish for gender transition, and calling for a “measured approach to gender questioning” against what they considered transgender activism.¹⁵ AMQG promotes applying the “precautionary principle” to gender dysphoria in children, shunning any form of gender-affirmative care (presented as unsafe and ideological) in favour of

¹³ “Répression à l’université et autres histoires de transphobie,” July 7th, 2022, <https://renverse.co/analyses/article/repression-a-l-universite-et-autres-histoires-de-transphobie-3617>

¹⁴ <https://cuae.ch/quelques-ressources/>

¹⁵ <https://www.amqg.ch/>

“exploratory psychoanalysis” aiming instead to treat the suffering caused by dysphoria without doing anything about it until adult age.

One form taken by the dichotomy during the Geneva events was that of an opposition between invited speakers open to intellectual discussion and protesters “refusing dialogue” or “opposed to debating” and “not constructive.” Thus, UNIGE communication officer Marco Cattaneo’s statement after the incidents objected that, although the talk (by Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff) was not organised by the university, whose premises had been rented by a psychoanalytic society, “... the refusal of dialogue expressed by this group of activists is totally contrary to the academic approach, we cannot endorse it.”¹⁶ Chastising what he considered violent methods, he declared:

“We cannot tolerate such behaviours against academic freedom and insist on making a distinction between the fight against transphobia, which the university sticks to, and the activist elements of Tuesday night.”¹⁷

As it happens, contrasting UNIGE opposition to student protest is framed as ‘foolish’, with its stated rational support for Gender Studies and EDI policy key to the university’s discourse over the events:

UNIGE is “engaged in the fight against transphobia through its equality and diversity office, thanks to research carried out by the Centre Maurice Chalumeau [a well-funded institute promoting sexuality scholarship] or through student associations. It is attached to making knowledge progress on the complex question of gender and the personal and societal questions coming with it.”¹⁸

In summary, through mainstream and conservative framings in the Romand media sphere and academic institutions, student protests over transphobic contents were turned into the main problem to be dealt with, erasing the contradiction between professed general discourses against transphobia by UNIGE and the very substance of the talks and of the books they promoted.

UK Case Study Findings

The research design for these case studies constructed clusters of key issues concerning gender, sexuality and feminism that are key sites, across multiple contexts, of anti-gender discourse in politics and public culture. This expansiveness notwithstanding, this research

¹⁶ <https://www.20min.ch/fr/story/des-militants-trans-empechent-la-tenue-dune-conference-187946547288>

¹⁷

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/353800979-l-uni-de-geneve-la-liberte-attaquee-par-des-activistes-lgbtiq>

¹⁸ <https://www.20min.ch/fr/story/des-militants-trans-empechent-la-tenue-dune-conference-187946547288>

reveals a somewhat narrow pattern: a distinct – and distinctly hostile – preoccupation in the UK with the existence, identities and rights of trans people. This focus in media and politics is singular, but it is not exclusive, i.e., it should not be understood as dominating to the exclusion of other modalities of anti-gender politics. Rather, anti-trans politics is prosecuted as both a coherent ideological goal and as a productive nexus for connecting a more disparate range of political preoccupations, and actors.

This oppressive relationality is present in the range of international bodies that have recently criticised both the overt forms of hatred and delegitimation aimed at trans people, and the demonstrable backsliding on LGBTIQ+ rights in the UK. A joint statement in 2020 from Liberty, Amnesty International UK and Human Rights Watch¹³ stated that:

“Human rights are universal and belong to everyone. Yet too often in the UK trans people are spoken about and treated as though their rights don’t matter. The toxic media coverage about trans people has recently spiked. At times of crisis and political change, marginalised groups are often singled out for abuse and hate. History has shown us time and time again the dangers of setting the rights of one marginalised group up for debate.”

In ILGA-Europe’s widely cited ‘Rainbow Index’ of LGBTIQ+ rights, the UK dropped from 1st place in 2015 to 14th by 2022.¹⁴ As well as documenting hate crimes and legislative stagnation or regression, these reports consistently draw attention to the significance of hostile media and political discourse.

Our findings empirically demonstrate the expansion and intensification of this anti-trans politics, and further the analysis of its production, constitution and circulation by exposing and analysing key discursive strategies derived from a significant corpus of parliamentary, media and civil society sources. They demonstrate how these strategies overlap and diverge across sites of activity, illuminating a surge that is shaped by right-wing, reactionary political instrumentalisation and media opportunism, but also by more disparate affective aversions and unlikely affinities.

UK Parliament Findings

As Craig McLean (2021) has recently noted, there has been a significant growth in the ‘anti-transgender movement’ in the UK, resulting in what they term a “silent radicalization of the British electorate”. In McLean’s analysis, this process profoundly intensified in the aftermath of a parliamentary Transgender Equality Enquiry (TEE) which sat in 2015-16, reported in 2016, and led to the establishment in 2018 of a process of public consultation on reform of The Gender Recognition Act (GRA, 2004). This process of consultation prompted the formation of a “whole host of (gender critical) lobby groups” intent on using the process

to oppose trans people self-identifying as their adopted gender without having to secure a gender recognition certificate (2021: 474-5).

While this analysis emphasises *a presumed and projected radicalization of the electorate* when spoken for and represented in anti-trans rhetoric by politicians, commentators and ‘gender critical’ activists, McClean also points to a rapid and stark process of political re-orientation. To contextualise this report’s findings from a corpus of debates spanning 2018-23, but primarily gathered from debates between 2021-23, the prevalence of debates on transgender issues in the House of Commons was examined using CLARIN, which revealed an extraordinary spike in parliamentary mentions of “transgender” during December 2016, when the TEE reported.

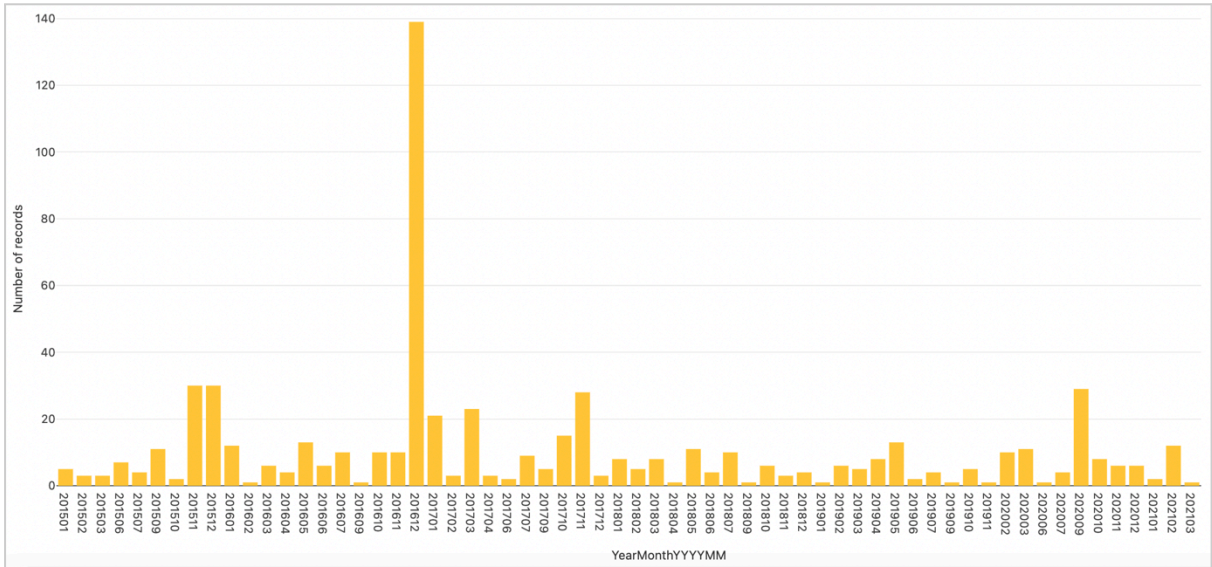


Table UK53: Prevalence of debates on transgender issues in the House of Commons, 2018-2023

The longest debate from this month - Transgender Equality, 01.12.2016 – was selected for coding, using the codes derived from the 2018-23 corpus. Strikingly, no anti-gender material was coded, indicating a complete absence of the talking points and tropes that proliferated in the later debates. Similarly, there was a complete absence of reference to campaign groups that self-describe as “gender critical”, again in notable contrast to the main corpus (which informed our decision to track them, in the following stages of research, through media sourcing, and network mapping). On the contrary, politicians that subsequently became actively involved in promulgating anti-trans politics can be seen, in the run-up to this debate, advocating, for example, for care for transgender prisoners:

Sue-Ellen Cassiana Braverman, CONS (08.12.2015): “On 27 November, a transgender prisoner killed herself while serving in a male jail. What are the Government planning to do to address the concern about another tragic death in this vulnerable group of people?”

The expressions of concern in relation to prison are particularly striking, given the subsequent importance of prisoner placement to the discursive coding presented below. In the debate on 01.12.2016, the Conservative MP Ben Howlett openly criticises the placement of a transgender woman in an all-male prison:

“In November 2016, however, the Ministry of Justice published the results of a data collection exercise conducted in March and April of this year. It was reported that 70 transgender prisoners were held in 33 prisons in England and Wales at that time. The Committee argued that there was ‘clear risk or harm’ when trans prisoners are not located in a prison ‘appropriate to their acquired gender.’ The report also said that holding trans prisoners in solitary confinement was not fair or appropriate, and I am sure that the whole House agrees. Last year, there was the example of Tara Hudson, a transgender prisoner from Bath, who was born male but had lived her entire adult life as a woman. Tara was sent to an all-male prison.”

Bearing this temporal and political context in mind, the main findings from the parliamentary data analysis (corpus spanning 2016-2023) are the following:

- Demonstrating the political intensification described, debates related to gender recognition and trans rights are generally the most extensive, involved, and productive of content codes and data. Sharp differences of position and ideology are also expressed, if to a far lesser extent, in debates on abortion and LGBTIQ+ rights. However most debates in the clusters beyond ‘debating trans lives’ are quite short, technical and procedural, involving questions of clarification on progress with various reports and legislative proposals to responsible ministers.
- The material coded and presented as ‘rhetorical tactics’ and ‘discursive tactics’ is overwhelmingly drawn from contributions from Conservative Party MPs. This dominance is partly explained by the party’s role in government, and by the fact that, in the debates in question, the party was predominantly mobilised to oppose changes to legislation on gender self-identification. The almost total absence of the British Labour party from this data can be taken as evidence of them not publicly engaging in anti-trans politics during this period. Nonetheless this is also, to an extent, a result of the sample parameters; between the completion of data gathering and the time of writing, the Labour party have reneged on an electoral manifesto commitment to support ‘self-ID’ reforms to the GRA.¹⁵
- Further, this coded material is predominantly drawn from contributions by male Conservative MPs. Their prominence in particular categories – ‘silencing’, ‘what if’, ‘trans as lifestyle trend’ – that allow for greater

declamatory licence is predicated on a discursive pattern of speaking “in defence of women”, sometimes in ways that subject opposition MPs who are female to aggressive forms of rhetorical questioning (David Davies (CONS): “I hear what the hon. Lady is saying. May I bluntly ask her whether she would be happy sharing a changing room with somebody who was born male and had a male body?”). To an extent, this reflects a wider pattern where women’s rights and safety are invoked to posit an inherent conflict with trans rights, despite polling evidence in the UK clearly indicating that women are more likely to reject transphobia and support trans rights than men in Britain.¹⁶

- Nevertheless, UK parliamentary discourse bears little resemblance to the overt and often spectacular anti-gender discourse expressed in debates in the European Parliament (where, as our study of the EP documents, a large far-right bloc is explicitly mobilised in and through opposition to ‘gender ideology’, and where this provides a central tenet of their cross-party cooperation). The relative absence of references to ‘gender ideology’, despite the prominence and naturalisation of this term in UK media discourse, is the most striking indicator of this.
- While inflammatory rhetoric is largely absent from parliamentary debate, the prevalence of the code ‘sex as biological fact’ indicates the extent to which transgender rights are held up as inherently in conflict with women’s rights, that is, transgender rights put women’s rights – or ‘sex-based rights’ – at risk. As will be seen below, this prevalence is reproduced in a significant degree of media coverage and comment on the controversy generated by the UK government’s decision to block the passage of the Scottish GRR. In this data this fact is often stated as a form of common sense, or through the articulation of gender/sex and identity/biology dichotomies, which are justified almost exclusively with reference to ‘science and material reality’, as opposed to religious rationales.
- The most overt delegitimation of transgender lives occurs in the categories ‘transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend’ and ‘what if’. What unites these coding categories is the discursive production of imagined scenarios and anxious speculation. They licence a recourse to stereotypes and, by constantly positing transness as a opportunistic way of accessing “women’s spaces”, insistently reproduce the association of transgender men with predatory sexual behaviour and abuse. Similarly, the *imaginative search for explanations for transgender identity that exclude the explanations of trans people themselves* reproduce established twentieth century moral panic

images of young people as vulnerable and susceptible to media and ideological indoctrination. It is notable that this projection of vulnerable subjectivity is not reproduced by Conservative MPs in debates on prohibiting forms of “gay conversion therapy” in the corpus. In arguing for conscience-based exemptions to these prohibitions, party MPs contend that, as a party of liberty, everyone must be treated as a rational agent that can make the autonomous decision to subject themselves to such therapies as a ‘free choice’. This underlines the extent to which transgender identity, particularly among young people, is framed as a consequence of factors other than their own agency: social media influences, trends in popular culture, and dangerously zealous activism, particularly in schools.

- The category of ‘trans as erasure’ reinforces the dominant emphasis on sex/gender and biology/identity dichotomies, but it is characterised by speaking positions that do not as readily appear when these arguments are circulated in media discourse. In contra-distinction to articulations that position transgender identity as a problem for forms of commonsense, MPs that speak against trans rights as ‘a feminist’, ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay man’ posit it as a threat to historically achieved and hard-won political and sexual freedoms.
- Given the extent to which the idea of “transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend” depends on projecting indoctrination or undue influence, there is little overt reference to the ‘problem’ of what is held to be ‘excessive activism’ in the debate corpus (a finding also at odds with the centrality of this trope to media discourse). As with ‘gender ideology’, this restraint is confined to this selection of parliamentary discourse, as this reference point is actively reproduced by Conservative politicians in other settings (see section conclusion).
- The trope of what is projected as ‘excessive activism’ must be read against the fact of a growing number of highly mobilised anti-transgender organisations which are frequently mentioned in the House of Commons, and often described as “women’s rights groups”. Several of the most frequent contributors of coded material are involved in Conservative Party or party-related initiatives that explicitly campaign on gender recognition and relationships and sex education in schools, such as Policy Exchange’s ‘Biology Matters Project’ and The New Social Covenant. The fact that both groups openly oppose something called ‘gender identity ideology’, and yet this trope scarcely features in parliamentary discourse, underlines how anti-gender discourse does not walk in straight lines from one context to another. Nevertheless, the fact that significant contributors to the data are involved in

cognate ideological campaigns is relevant to explaining the presence of anti-gender discourse in Commons proceedings. Subsequent to the data collection period (May 2023), one of the top contributors of coded material, the MP Miriam Cates, co-founded The New Conservatives, a lobby group that aims to influence the formation of The Conservative Party's 2024 election manifesto, including seeking a manifesto pledge to 'ban gender ideology in schools'.¹⁸

In conclusion, these findings empirically demonstrate the intense ways in which the political landscape in the UK is reconstituted through anti-trans politics. While much of the coded material attests to ideological and political conviction on the issue of sex vs. gender, and while the discursive expression of these ideas is less characterised by the overt stereotypes and targeting language encountered in other political contests, anti-transgender politics has become an important and renewable currency that is instrumentalised for multiple political rationales.

These findings point to an increased political import of anti-trans political rhetoric amongst the UK's ruling party over their term in government. In February 2023 the Conservative Party's Deputy Chairman, Lee Anderson, used his first interview in the role to declare that the party should campaign in the next election on a "...mix of culture wars and trans debate".¹⁹ It is precisely this mobilising 'mix' that accounts for the abrupt incorporation of 'gender ideology' and anti-transgender rhetoric into the Conservative Party Conference speeches of the Home Secretary and Prime Minister in October 2023. In her highly publicised speech, the then-Home Secretary Suella Braverman described 'gender ideology' as a 'poison' beloved of a 'luxury beliefs brigade' that her party must determinedly challenge on behalf of the 'common sense majority'.¹⁷ The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, made a clear reference to the 'problem of activism' in his keynote speech to the same party conference in October 2023: "It shouldn't be controversial for parents to know what their children are being taught in school about relationships. Patients should know when hospitals are talking about men or women. We shouldn't get bullied into believing that people can be any sex they want to be. They can't. A man is a man and a woman is a woman, that's just common sense".

The idea of 'being bullied' is illegible in this construction without the vision of a powerful and aggressive 'trans lobby' that has been assiduously cultivated in media and public discourse. This declaration of strategic choice has been made in a context where whilst sexual orientation hate crimes are down by 6%, transgender identity hate crimes rose by 11% (from 4,262 to 4,732) from April 2022 to March 2023, the highest number since the time series began in the year ending March 2012. The Home Office said, "Transgender issues have been heavily discussed by politicians, the media and on social media over the last year,

which may have led to an increase in these offences, or more awareness in the police in the identification and recording of these crimes.”

Our findings demonstrate the emergence, in the House of Commons, of a concerted focus on transgender-related issues that significantly departs from the broadly inclusive political focus evident in the period when the reform of the Gender Recognition Act was first proposed and debated. This departure is characterised by the consistent reproduction of discourse that positions trans people, particularly trans women, as threats to ‘women’s rights’. In the next section, the report considers the influential role of media coverage and campaigning in furthering this discourse of threat and risk.

UK Media Findings

The nature of British media coverage of transgender-related issues has been a focus of criticism and concern for some time. The negative representation of transgender people was discussed at the Leveson Inquiry (2011-12) into “the culture, practices and ethics of the press” and directly criticised by the chair of the public inquiry, Lord Leveson.²⁰ A 2020 IPSO report “examining trends in editorial standards in coverage of transgender issues” notes a ‘particularly marked growth’ in ‘transgender-related stories during the last five years’, as

“All publication types are publishing more transgender-related stories but most notable has been the proportion of transgender-related stories published by the tabloid press. At the start of the decade, most of the stories were published in the broadsheets but over half of the stories published now are in tabloids.”²¹

A study by the transgender media researcher ‘MinnyMum’ provides statistics on the stark increase in stories about people who, while comprising approximately 0.1% of the population, are the subject of an average of 154 articles per month in mainstream titles between 2015-2022, with a pattern of significant intensification over time. In May 2022 16 articles a day were published on ‘trans issues’, with *The Daily Mail* alone publishing on average five a day during this month.²² The extent of this hypervisibility is important; as Sivamohan Valluvan has pointed out, a feature of contemporary reactionary politics is to render “...the excluded Other the overdetermined and outsized object of political discourse” (2019: 35-6). This outsizing, unsurprisingly, is achieved through predominantly negative coverage. A similar study by Elli Folan notes that “Of the 115 Daily Mail articles in trans issues in January 2023, 100 of them (87%) could reasonably be categorised as negative, in comparison to zero negative articles in January 2013.”²³

While the extent and velocity of this negative coverage is well-established, there is far less research on the discursive aspects of the negativity, and little consideration of systemic dimensions, that is, how and why this hostile coverage has intensified now, within a

transformed and febrile media system. Bearing this political and systemic context in mind, the main findings from the media data analysis are the following.

- The comparative analysis between three broadsheet newspapers empirically demonstrates the extent to which transgender coverage has become a key pillar of right-wing media's creation of a 'culture war' strategy in the UK. This involves a concerted and hostile focus on the lives of transgender people themselves, and the positioning of the 'trans debate' as part of a wider and more fluid targeting of gender and sexuality issues that can be encompassed by and collapsed into the idea of 'wokeness'.
- The treatment of the transnationally distributed and controversial term 'gender ideology' provided an initial way into this comparison between newspapers. While *The Guardian* endured internal upheaval in 2020, prompted by staff protest at 'anti-trans bias' in comment and opinion pieces,²⁴ in our data it clearly treats the term 'gender ideology' as ideologically loaded, and as exclusive property of the transnational far-right. *The Telegraph*, meanwhile, systematically naturalises the term through its reporting, in both news coverage and opinion pieces. This naturalised treatment of what is well-established as an anti-gender campaigning concept, in a context where editorial guidelines and style guides routinely offer advice for the journalistic treatment of controversial ideas and claims, is significant in pointing at ideological intervention through media activity.
- In contradistinction to other news sources, *The Telegraph* exclusively reserves its usage of 'gender ideology' for UK domestic reporting, linking it in almost every articulation in the corpus to transgender issues, particularly the 'problem of activism'. This positions 'gender ideology' as an established political problem in education, social services and public spaces and institutions, and is key to the development of the 'problem of activism' in the UK context. This data points to this coverage as a form of campaigning journalism which focuses concertedly on trans-inclusive services and associations.
- The campaigning valence of the *Telegraph* is reiterated by the network of actors and organisations that consistently provide the source or focus of its coverage. It is striking that half of the actors mentioned in stories that feature the term 'gender ideology' are self-described 'gender critical' actors who, in many cases, are actively involved in campaigns and organisations mobilised against transgender rights. Similarly, in the data on organisations mentioned, 56% are 'gender critical'. All of these mentions are as story sources, as

opposed to story subjects or respondents, a finding well-illustrated by comparing the two most cited organisations in the sample. For Women Scotland was founded in 2018, and in this short space of time has been included as a regular source of stories and framing quotations for *The Telegraph* and cognate media (a significant achievement for such a young organisation, albeit one bolstered by the publicity accorded the Scottish GRR reform process). Mermaids, a charity and advocacy organisation for transgender youth, is mentioned as frequently as For Women Scotland in the coverage, but it is predominantly mentioned as a subject embroiled in controversies that they must respond to.

- Within media regulatory systems, journalism can legitimately be politically and ideologically partial. Within these arrangements, civil society groups can strive to position themselves as trusted sources on issues of concern. However, what these sourcing routines demonstrate is a pattern of differentiated access which poses important questions of media ethics. In political communications research, the differential access of ‘interest groups’ to media coverage, and particularly to being the source of news coverage and issue framing, is regarded as a key indicator of the democratic functioning of the news media (Binderkrantz, Bonafont and Halpin, 2016). While ‘interest group diversity’ can be measured across a spectrum of media outlets, our findings indicate that it is significant when one set of interests, namely ‘gender critical’ or anti-transgender campaigning groups, have been successful in being granted disproportionate access to news coverage and news framing.
- *The Telegraph’s* concerted and hostile focus on transgender issues in the UK can be found in other newspapers on the political right – as the quoted studies of *The Daily Mail* show – and must be further understood, as our findings suggest, as folded into an emerging cross-platform right-wing media ecosystem where key actors continually amplify and cross-reference each other’s stories. The cross-platform creation of an issue around transgender and ‘woke’ stories can be seen in the daily output of GB News and The Free Speech Union. It is well-established that forms of content saturation increase the credibility and persuasiveness of stories for sectors of the audience (Lecheler et al 2015). These cross-media dynamics promote not just content confirmation but also competition for attention and status within the right-wing media sector, a competition that is expressed through increased search for sensational, attention-grabbing content, and increasingly extreme ‘takes’ that seek to provoke more interaction, comment and publicity. This

underlines that there is media-systemic as well as ideological integration of this cross-media network.

- As the case of GB News demonstrates, this integration also has a clear commercial rationale, as it allows newer market entrants access to sensational and seemingly popular stories without sinking costs into news gathering and journalism (Petley and Barnett 2023). Consequently, this report contends that anti-trans content is not just a product of campaigning journalism, it is also a valuable commodity with exchange value in a media sector aiming at carving out audiences in a fragmented media public and divided electorate. This systemic dimension is critical to understanding the accelerated and expanded production of these stories, suggesting that this content surge is a result not only of ideological animus, but also commercial considerations and datafied calculation. Our data shows that there is a commercial rationale for anti-trans content.
- Significant amounts of anti-transgender content is carried by both GB News and Free Speech Union as a key dimension of how they position themselves as champions of free speech. Coverage of a handful of controversies over 'gender critical' speakers on university campuses has animated a media frame of 'excessive' transgender activism as a threat to freedom of expression. More substantively, the ceaseless positioning of 'gender ideology' as a repressive hegemony serves as a legitimating framework for breaking 'taboos' and 'silences' and thus positioning anti-transgender sensationalism as a form of democratic journalism. The systemic dimension is also important here, as this positioning is a dimension of GB News' market positioning as 'necessary pluralism' to the putatively liberal hegemony of the BBC, a manoeuvre which is necessary to justify maximal levels of opinion and comment – which are much cheaper than news-making - within the regulatory framework.

UK Controversy Mapping Findings

- In the sample of 50 opinion pieces from 22 news sources commenting on the GRR, only two were written by writers who identify as transgender. This is indicative of how trans issues get written about, and who speaks on transgender issues. It is also the inverse of the repressive hypervisibility noted in the media findings: even where there is broadly sympathetic coverage, transgender people are significantly more likely to be spoken about than to be platformed in a 'debate' about their lives and rights.

- While anti-gender politics are not exclusive to the political right and far-right, the sectoral analysis of opinion and comment demonstrates key dimensions of its significance on the political right, and the nature of its presence in other sectors. The 'centre-left' and 'centre-right' media sampled in this study largely eschew sensationalist and 'culture war' discourse, while the binary of sex and gender remains prevalent as a 'commonsense' explanatory framework. Left-wing and progressive media have a clear political motivation to criticise the current UK government, however the extent and character of their critique of how transgender people are being exploited for political gain is not just a consequence of political opposition, it is a clear normative commitment. In the right-wing sector, the dominance of 'presumed public disquiet' indicates the importance of 'populist' modes of communication vested in the conceit of 'speaking up' for the 'silenced majority.'
- The dynamics of the so-called 'trans debate' clearly prefer highly sensationalist coverage of issues that can be presented as indicating the nature and extent of the 'problem'. In a large corpus of articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, the GRR and the case of Isla Bryson are the subject in the headline or main paragraph mentions – of almost identical levels of coverage: 20% in both instances. The case of Isla Bryson – a transwoman convicted of rape and sexual assault and initially committed to a women's prison – became a huge political issue in mid-January that impacted on the SNP's support for a challenge to Westminster's legislative block. Both issues received the same amount of coverage in the sample period, despite the Bryson case occurring more than 1/3 through the timeline of the controversy.
- The importance of media coverage to political tactics in this controversy is underlined by the popularity of a key tactic of anti-gender organisations; to prepopulate complaint letters against media outlets, with a particular focus on the BBC given its status as the public service broadcaster.
- In terms of network building, the data showed a significant proliferation of "women's rights" groups mobilised to oppose the Scottish legislation on gender recognition. The data demonstrated that they appear far more frequently in media coverage in direct comparison with trans inclusive bodies and all other relevant agents and institutions. For example, in terms of groups used for published quotes in the Bryson case coverage, 80% self-identify as 'gender critical' or post 'anti-gender ideology' on their websites. In the GRA coverage, it is 70%, with one of these groups, For Women Scotland, quoted 500% more than any other campaigning group in discussion of the legislation.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

The analysis proceeds through three approaches in each case study: parliamentary debates, media analysis, and controversy mapping. This division into three areas of analysis is based on an approach whereby (a) parliamentary debate and (b) media coverage analysis allow for (i) an engagement with specific actors, tactics and discursive repertoires, while also allowing for (ii) tracking patterns of discourse and association across themes and debates in the controversy mapping phase.

The methodological approach was developed with reference to the need for general thematic compatibility across case studies, i.e., broad areas of contestation where anti-gender politics is active; the need to also capture contextual particularity in how these thematic areas of contestation are currently treated in national contexts; and the need to capture discrete parliament/media data while also folding both into the final, multi-method stage, controversy mapping. A thematic template organised through clusters of affinitive themes and issues was developed, allowing national case study teams to choose and adapt the most relevant and salient issue within these organising thematic groupings.

The research was carried out by the research teams sequentially, moving through the Parliamentary - Media - Controversy Mapping phases. Training sessions were scheduled in advance of each phase. The data collection was sequentially organised, however, the content was regarded as cumulatively relevant across all phases of the methodology (so for example, news articles collated and coded in the media analysis could, if relevant, also be integrated into the controversy mapping).

Data search frameworks: Issue clusters

The issue clusters were designed to facilitate cross-case study thematic analysis while allowing research teams to select the political issues most keenly contested over the research period of 2015-2022. Controversy mapping required the selection of shorter contemporary time frames.

The clusters were designed to be functional orientations rather than a set taxonomy of the most important issues. Given the obvious overlaps and connections between them, the idea in practice was to provide an analytical justification for primarily locating an issue in a cluster, rather than trying to artificially frame the issue in such a way that it belongs to one cluster alone. Issues and keywords could be tagged to multiple clusters while being analysed primarily as an instance of a primary cluster. Below is the list of the five clusters. Once the

clusters were agreed, national case study themes could add issues to the clusters, but they could not develop further clusters to add to this template.

The Five Issue Clusters
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeting gender 2. 'Debating' Trans lives 3. Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education 4. Delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics 5. Attacking feminism and gender equalities

Table M1: Issue Clusters for Parliamentary research

1. Targeting gender - This cluster examines the political targeting of gender as a critical project and/or as a problem concept.

What links the issues here is a clear trend in anti-gender politics; an objection to the very idea of gender, to its 'unnatural' introduction and implications, to its status as an ideology, imposition or project. As such, this cluster relates to those analytical themes that emerged in the European Parliament study – which was conducted as a 'pilot study' – that examined how gender is constructed as a problem with consequences. Possible dimensions were identified that could be added to and adapted by national case study teams: attacks on Gender Studies, gender-inclusive language and writing, 'gender ideology' in sexuality and relationships education, 'gender ideology' in 'trans debates', gender as a concept (as opposed to sex, nature, etc).

Each cluster theme was rendered searchable through identifying key words, and their translation into the research languages was discussed and agreed by the research team through pilot searches.

2. Debating Trans lives - This cluster examines the ways that attacking trans people offers a rich repertoire of linkages and affects that appeal to a broad constituency of faith, ideology, and 'commonsense' based aversions. It is also one that is deeply integrated into the other clusters in transversal ways – 'gender ideology' is regularly referenced in 'trans rights debates', sexuality and relationship education is politicised as 'turning kids trans', and so forth. Possible dimensions identified included gender recognition legislation and self-ID politics; prisons/sports/public toilets as categories of contestation and moral panic; drag queen story time and trans visibility in public space and culture; pronouns. Possible search keywords: trans lobby; trans ideology; gender recognition act; biological sex; trans women; single sex spaces; female/lesbian erasure.

3. Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education - This cluster focuses on issues that are almost always under contestation in some way in a given context. Possible

dimensions: abortion rights; assisted reproduction; sex ed in schools and 'parents' rights'; access to contraception; maternity/parental leave; and social rights.

4. Delegitimising LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics - These issues vary substantially across the four national case studies in question, and on occasion this cluster overlaps significantly with 'trans rights' (however the primary cluster decisions were clear). Possible dimensions: assisted reproduction; family/parenting (queer parental leave and resource equality), (tradition, christian values); Hate speech (including free speech debates); Pride and the 'it's gone too far' discourse; gender inclusive language; LGBT ideology as an imposition from 'the West'. Possible keywords: LGBTIQ+ free and freedom zones; LGBT lobby; homophobia.

5. Attacking feminism and gender equalities - This cluster focused on the increasingly overt attacks on feminism and gender equality, while also encompassing the ways in which feminisms are drawn on and mobilised to re-articulate or further, inter alia, racialising politics. Possible dimensions: Feminism 'has gone too far'; gender essentialisms; resurgent misogyny/masculinism/men's rights; feminisms used as border politics; feminist forms of anti-gender politics and 'strange alliances'. Possible keywords: 'Néo-féminisme' (a stand-in for 'feminism has gone too far' in French discourse); feminazi; women's lobby; feminist agenda; Me Too; Not all Men; the red pill; family woman; real women; militant feminist; traditional family; Muslim women; headscarf; hijab.

Data gathering and analytical approach

Parliamentary and media data were gathered and coded in two complementary ways. The corpus for analysis was gathered and grouped by theme where an issue featured in the title of a debate, or the headline of an article. Secondly, keywords were tracked across a time-based, sample corpus to discursively examine their prevalence, usage, and associations. Because the aim was to analyse the manifestation of anti-gender politics by specific actors, organisations and networks, and also to examine the wider diffusion and reproduction of ideas, both approaches were necessary.

The data selection proceeded by attempting to locate five debates per core cluster to generate a minimum corpus of $5 \times 5 = 25$ debates (a debate understood as a single parliamentary session available as a discrete text for search, however this required adaptation for the Polish parliament in particular). Five keywords were selected per case study, one drawn from each cluster. Each case study built their thematic corpus of debates by conducting an initial keyword search in debate and motion titles, analysing the material, and consolidating the keywords for tracking across the time-bound parliament sample.

Quantitative approach to debate data

First, the metadata was entered into Excel, recording the following seven fields for every debate:

Debate Title; Term; Sitting Date; Language(s); Hyperlink to debate file; Keywords; Notes

A key quantitative output was frequency word lists, either extracted from CLARIN (as seen below) or using Nvivo coding feature (for the Swiss case study). CLARIN is a computational linguistics tool that stores and searches parliamentary corpus. CLARIN produced word lists and CSVs/excel files for further analysis:

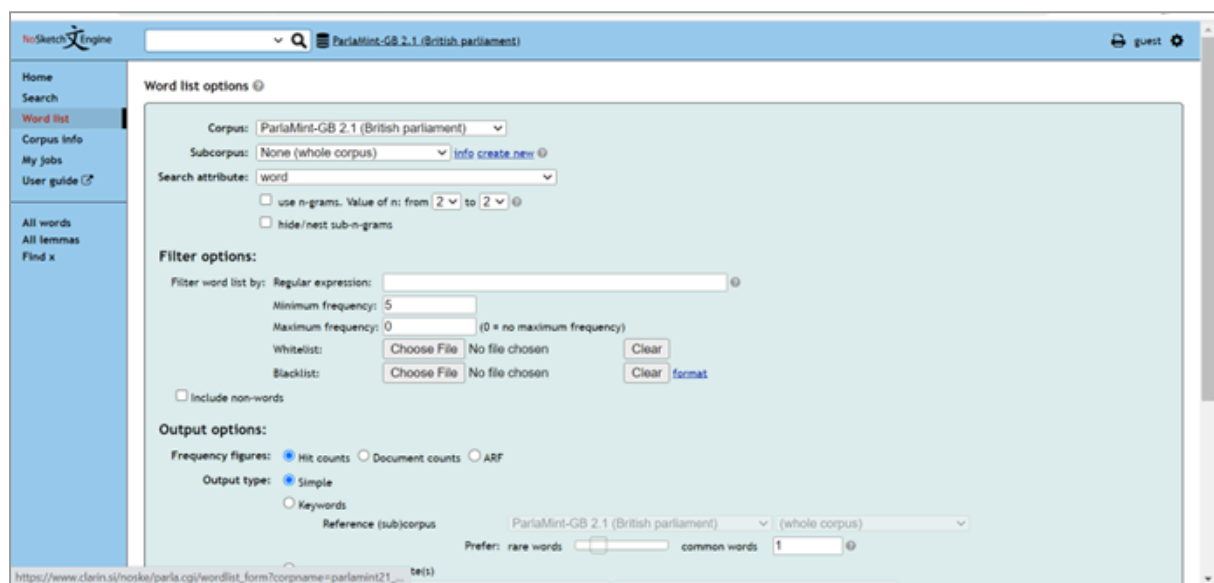


Figure M2: Screenshot of CLARIN interface for British Parliament

Country	Date Parameters	Hyperlink
CH	Swiss parliamentary database, 2017-2022	https://www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista/curia-vista-explained
UK	Great Britain parliamentary corpus ParlaMint-GB, 2015-2021	https://www.clarin.si/noske/parla.cgi/first_form?corpname=parlamint21_gb;align=https://hansard.parliament.uk/
PL	Polish parliamentary corpus ParlaMint, 2015-2020 v2.1	https://www.clarin.si/noske/parla.cgi/corp_info?corpname=parlamint21_pl&struct_attr_stats=1&subcorpora=1
HU	Hungarian parliamentary corpus ParlaMint-HU, 2014-2020 v2.1	https://www.clarin.si/noske/parla.cgi/corp_info?corpname=parlamint21_hu&struct_attr_stats=1&subcorpora=1

Table M3: *Parliamentary Corpora for each Case Study*

Note: *Researchers were given some flexibility to choose dates across parliamentary terms where the cluster issue-led approach required some adjustment to the temporal parameters of the project (2015-2022/23).*

Methodology: Parliament per Case Study

UK Parliament Methodology

Data sources

Parliamentary data for proceedings in the House of Commons was collected from the Hansard website (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/>) which is the House of Commons' public database and archive. The corpus contains proceedings from both houses between 05.01.2015 and 21.07.2022. This contains 670,912 contributions (utterances) from 1,951 members of parliament and peers across 2,209 meetings, and the total size of the corpus is roughly 135 million words. Data collection for WP1 focused solely on the House of Commons as it is the directly elected representative body primarily responsible for producing legislation. Further, given the extent of the debates on themes of relevance in this period, sufficient data were available from this source alone.

To examine relevant discourse beyond the thematic sample of debates, keywords were sampled across the wider corpus using a secondary data resource called CLARIN, a digital infrastructure offering data, tools and services to support research based on language resources. Concordancers are computer programs that enable the searching and statistical treatment of data in big text collections (corpora).² The CLARIN UK parliament debate dataset was consulted as a complement to the debate-based Hansard corpus, CLARIN enabled the quantification of keyword occurrence and frequency, and the collocation between key terms.

Hansard debate corpus

The UK Hansard corpus for debates related to the cluster themes by using sets of associated search terms, focusing on terms most likely to appear in the titles of parliamentary debates. Corresponding to the case study design, the multi-stage sampling technique did not seek to make representative or generalisable observations and findings beyond the selected corpus (Yin 2018).

Each WP1 thematic cluster was populated with a selection of words and phrases that capture issues, problems, and aspects of the given theme. A longlist (N=17) was composed by eliminating redundancies (e.g. semantic or grammatical variants), and balanced numbers were kept across clusters. Search terms were selected by conducting pilot keyword searches

and noting how particular phrases are used in debate titles and proceedings (for example ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘Istanbul Convention’ are both quite common in the European Parliament but rarely appear in the UK Parliament). A shortlist (N=11) was developed by ensuring a balanced spread of key words and phrases across clusters. The selection at each step was driven by building a picture of the specificity of the debate texts and drawing out themes through the researchers’ prior knowledge and expertise of generative issues and discourses in anti-gender politics.

Using Hansard, purposive sampling was conducted in the time frame of 2018-2023 for House of Commons debates whose title and frame contained at least one keyword. The table below presents a quantitative overview of the debate corpus constructed from this sampling approach.

Debate Count	31
Time Period	10.03.2020 – 17.01.2023*
Search Terms	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition LGBTIQ Sexual and Reproductive Rights Religion Marriage Equality Gender Based Violence Migrant Women Sexual Education Racism and Migration Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

Table M4: UK Debate Corpus Summary

Note: *Plus one comparison debate from 2016, see explanation in next section).

The following summary table outlines the debates collected from Hansard (N=31) in each cluster (please see Appendix A [Table AA7: UK1 – Cluster 2: ‘Debating’ Trans Lives](#) through [Table AA10: UK4 – Cluster 5: Attacking feminism and gender equalities](#) for the full list).

Cluster Name	Debate Count	Debate Title	Search Terms
‘Debating’ Trans lives	N=10 32.3%	GR Reform (Scotland) Bill: Section 35 Power 17.01.2023 GR Reform (contd.) 17.01.2023 Transgender Conversion Therapy 13.07.2022 Legal Recognition of Non-Binary Gender 23.05.2022 Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 21.02.2022 Gender Recognition (GR) 23.02.2022 Transgender Prisoners, 12.01.2022	Trans Rights Gender Recognition Act Transgender Gender-based violence

		GRA Consultation 24.09.2020 Transgender People: Discrimination, 22.07.2020 Self-identification of Gender, 21.11.2018	
Attacking feminism and gender equalities	N=9 29%	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 01.12.2022 Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Bill, 09.12.2022 Gender Specific Religious Persecution, 17.03.2022 Ethnicity Pay Gap, 20.09.2021 Online Abuse and Hate Towards Women, 07.07.2021 Safer Streets for Women, 24.03.2021 Gender-based violence 26.11.2020 Black Women: Domestic Abuse, 30.06.2020 Leaving the EU: Effect on Women, 17.05.2018	Gender-based violence Racism Religion Gender equality/ mainstreaming Istanbul Convention Hate speech
Delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics	N=6 19.3%	Conversion Therapy Ban (CTB), 30.03.2022 CTB: Faith-based settings, 24.11.2021 Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans Women's Health Inequalities, 10.03.2020 Gay Conversion Therapy, 07.06.2018 Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) (Northern Ireland), 28.03.2018 Provision of LGBT Inclusive Education in Schools, 20.02.2018	LGBTIQ Religion Marriage Equality Sexual education
Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	N=6 19.3%	Maternity Outcomes: Migrant Women, 25.01.2023 Legal Rights to Access Abortion, 28.11.2022 Abortion in Northern Ireland, 25.03.2022 Hungary: Same-Sex Couple Adoption, 24.11.2020 Decriminalisation of Abortion 23.07.2019 Relationships and Sex Education, 25.02.2019	LGBTIQ Sexual and reproductive rights Migrant women Sexual education Abortion

Table M5: UK Debates by Cluster

As is immediately apparent from the list, issues pertaining to 'transgender' comprise almost one third of the sample. While 'transgender' was one of the search terms used to build the corpus, this prominence is also due in large part to the prominence of debates on gender self-identification, conversion therapy and related issues in the UK parliament between 2018 and 2023.

Keyword corpus using computational methods

In order to analyse the usage of a sample of these keywords in parliamentary proceedings outside of the selected Hansard corpus, the CLARIN UK parliament corpus (15.01.2015 to 13.07.2022) was employed.

The initial exploratory search used the keyword term 'transgender'. This yielded 782 instances, that is, 782 records of discrete utterances in debate transcripts by speakers in the upper and lower houses. This was reduced to 528 instances when filtered solely for lower house (Commons) MPs. These instances comprised a sub-corpus which was then stored for further analysis. The rationale for including a comparative debate from 2016 in the Hansard corpus was provided by the CLARIN parliamentary corpus, which demonstrated a highly significant spike in the use of the word 'transgender' by lower house MPs on 01.12.2016. This debate, entitled "Transgender Equality", was included in the corpus to provide a minimal but important point of comparison to debates from outside the sampling time frame.

Data coding

UK parliament debate transcripts are – in comparison with other parliamentary records examined in these national case studies – straightforward to search, archive and code. Nevertheless, several stages and levels of coding were necessary to organise the dataset and build the database.

The database allows filtering debates per case study and searching specific words within debate titles across and between case studies. Actor mapping was conducted by linking an actor field to each of the codes, allowing the recording of utterances and their attribution to the relevant actors. The actor field sits between a metadata and analysis code and has the capacity to log metadata for legal persons and organisations, which enabled the building of a picture of the communities participating in debates in terms of location, party affiliation and position.

The 125 actors logged for the UK parliamentary case study give an overview of the MPs and organisations participating or referenced in specific debates, the frequency of interventions per debate and the actors consistently taking coded positions on a topic over time. Where relevant, publicly available hyperlinks are added to the actor record e.g. a campaign group's website. This information was intended for later controversy mapping tasks.

The first set of code columns entered to the database are descriptive data. The descriptive/metadata category captured seven fields for each debate: debate title, term, sitting date, language, hyperlink to Hansard, keywords, analysis notes.

The second set of codes are generic, in that they allow searching for common information across debates regardless of cluster theme. They lay the basis for the analysis of tactics and strategies by focusing on the distribution within debates of political and civil society actors, and particular forms of widely distributed actions. These codes are Actors/Organisations/Public incidents mentioned in relation to a theme, or a Constituent voice invoked in relation to a theme.

The third set of codes are analytical, and in many instances are specific to the cluster theme they emerge from. The coding for this phase focused on capturing how actors framed the key dimension of an issue they sought to address within a given thematic debate, and the central arguments they drew on in support of this framing.

The coding was conducted by using an iterative approach to content analysis. This approach is mainly guided by emergent coding which seeks to "...support abstraction from the data in order to develop a theory that is grounded in the empirical data..." (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019). In practice this involves "cycles of coding" (Reynolds 2019); reading individual transcripts and noting discursive aspects of interest, gathering and analysing these aspects across the cluster of thematic debates, and on this basis elaborating the codes at higher levels of abstraction and by relating them to the researchers' wider knowledge of political discourses on the given issue. This coding process yielded ten codes, which are divided into two sub-groups of five, presented in the tables below. Parliamentary discourse must be approached both as shaped by general media/political discourse – and thus responsive and permeable to wider discursive approaches – while concomitantly being formed by the particularity of institutional norms and procedures (Konstantinova et al 2019). Further:

"The discursive interaction of parliamentarians is constantly marked by their institutional role-based commitments, by an ongoing dialogically shaped institutional confrontation, and by their awareness of acting in front and for the benefit of a multilayered audience. Parliamentary debates are meant to achieve a number of institutionally specific purposes, namely position-claiming, persuading, negotiating, agenda-setting, and opinion-building, usually along ideological or party lines." (Ilie 2015:2-3)

Bearing in mind these aspects of parliamentary discourse, the following codes emerged from tracking how MPs legitimate their positions in debates. These approaches are structurally important to the thematic exposition; however, they also have a generic aspect that ensures their reproduction in debates beyond this thematic focus and are employed by participants on 'both sides' of antagonistic debates. As such they encompass both conventional forms of political rhetoric (for example, quoting constituents) and rhetorical appeals attuned to the themes under discussion (for example, 'asserting the established tolerance of the UK').

Rhetorical Strategy	Description
Bureaucratic Empathy	A common tactic of accepting the validity of an issue/ relevance of testimonies and experiences and expressing sympathy, while pointing to processual or institutional reasons for inaction / deferred action / future consultation.
Referring to critical public incidents	Referring to a public controversy, news story or event in the public domain to evidence their point e.g. a teacher fired for their “gender critical” beliefs. Often the story is heavily redacted or oversimplified to incite outrage.
Quoting anonymous or named constituent voices	Quoting or ventriloquising interactions with voters' to cite concern over gender freedoms or as an anti anti-gender tactic, to prove that voters care about the issue.
Asserting the established tolerance of the UK	Any reference to the UK as inherently tolerant; or as having an international reputation for tolerance (primarily on LGBTIQ+ issues); or having established histories of tolerance in action.
Proffering “what if” scenarios	Sketching out worst case abstract/hypothetical scenarios in the service of arguments that support or oppose the expansion of rights, services or legitimacy in debates on LGBTIQ+ issues.

Table M6: UK Parliament Rhetorical Strategies

The following five codes illustrate key discursive strategies that were exclusively articulated in debates pertaining to LGBTIQ+ issues, and within that, overwhelmingly in relation to ‘trans issues’. As this suggests, the thematic focus ‘debating trans lives’ not only yielded the most debates to the UK parliament corpus, it also produced the most critically refined codes. The other thematic debate groupings yielded far less specific and distributed codes, a development which can predominantly be explained by the extraordinary – and multivalent – antagonisms which are predominantly expressed in the debates on trans and gender recognition-related issues in the UK parliament during this period.

Discursive Strategy	Description
Asserting sex as an incontrovertible biological fact	Explicit statements as to the factuality of the sex binary, the nature of womanhood/manhood, tending towards supportive statements for “sex-based rights”
Positing Trans identity as a product of ideology or lifestyle trend	Statements that locate the cause of trans identity and trans-ness in forms of ephemeral but powerful influence from media, cultural, peer or other relevant sources.
Positioning transness as an implicit erasure of other identities	Statements that claim that the existence or actions of trans people, and forms of support for them, erase gender and sexual identities, and threaten sex specific spaces and rights
Claiming that “silencing” is a problem in the ‘trans debate’	Specific or general claims of silencing, or references to the problem of “cancel culture”, in representations of the “trans debate”
Pointing to activism as a democratic problem	References to, or specific criticisms of both named groups and general references (e.g. the ‘trans lobby’) that seek to suggest that campaigning is a democratic problem (unrepresentative, elite) or a

	hegemonic problem (over-stating influence and reach, often while downplaying parallel with favoured groups)
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Table M7: UK Parliament Discursive Strategies

Given this centrality, the data presented below has been refined to focus on the debates that explicitly addressed gender recognition and ‘transgender issues’, resulting in N=18. Given the overall distribution of the coding across themes, and the sensationalist and fractious nature of public debate on these issues in UK media and politics during this period, it was a reasonable supposition that the analysis of anti-gender politics would be furthered by a focus on these thematic debates. This was further supported by the coding and analysis that resulted in the exclusion of the other 13 debates from this analysis, as there is no meaningful evidence of anti-gender discourse in these transcripts. In contradistinction, as the next section discussed, it is the coded material from ‘Debating trans lives’ and ‘delegitimizing LGBTIQ’ cluster debates that discursive strategies of relevance to anti-gender politics clearly – and exclusively – emerged.

Switzerland Parliament Methodology

Data sources and sampling selection

The transcripts of Swiss parliamentary debates are available at www.parliament.ch. A two-step process was used to collect the debates. In the first step, debates were searched related to the five cluster themes by using sets of associated search terms, focusing on terms most likely to appear in the titles of debates. Below is a quantitative overview and a breakdown of the thematic category distribution across the sample. In the following table, debates are listed under the thematic clusters that they belong to along with the debate title, sitting date, and the initial search terms used.

Debate Count	Step 1: 37 debates were found and distributed among five cluster categories	Step 2: 30 additional debates were found based on a broadened key-word search. The additional keywords were derived in the process of coding of the initial corpus.
Time Period	28.02.2018 – 17.01.2023	28.02.2018 – 17.01.2023
Search Term	<i>Initial search terms:</i> Same sex marriage Gender equal language LGBTIQ Rights incl. Hate Speech Gender Transgender Third gender Sexual education	<i>Additional keywords:</i> Sexual Woman Gender-ideology

	Sex, reproductive rights, race, religion, headscarf Migration/migrants	
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Table M8: Quantitative Overview of Debates

An overview of the distribution of the initial corpus of debates across thematic clusters can be found in the Swiss case study chapter. For the full list of debates with URL link access, see Appendix A:

[Table AA13 \(CH1\) – ‘Cluster 1: Targeting Gender’](#)

[Table AA14 \(CH2\) – ‘Cluster 2: Debating Trans Lives’](#)

[Table AA15 \(CH3\) – ‘Cluster 3: Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education’](#)

[Table AA16 \(CH4\) – ‘Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ lives, experiences and politics’](#)

[Table AA17 \(CH5\) – ‘Cluster 5: Attacking feminism and gender equality’](#)

The second step involved identifying three additional keywords from the corpus of initially collected material. The aim was to broaden the search that would consequently allow for more intersectional content to emerge. While ‘gender ideology’ was a term intentionally chosen to be traced in all three steps of the data collection/analysis, the other two terms were identified based on the word frequency query in Nvivo. The word frequency cloud reproduced here visualises the results of the word frequency query, with frequently occurring words in larger fonts. Out of this list, the decision was to pick two additional terms to expand the archival search: ‘women’ and ‘sexual’.

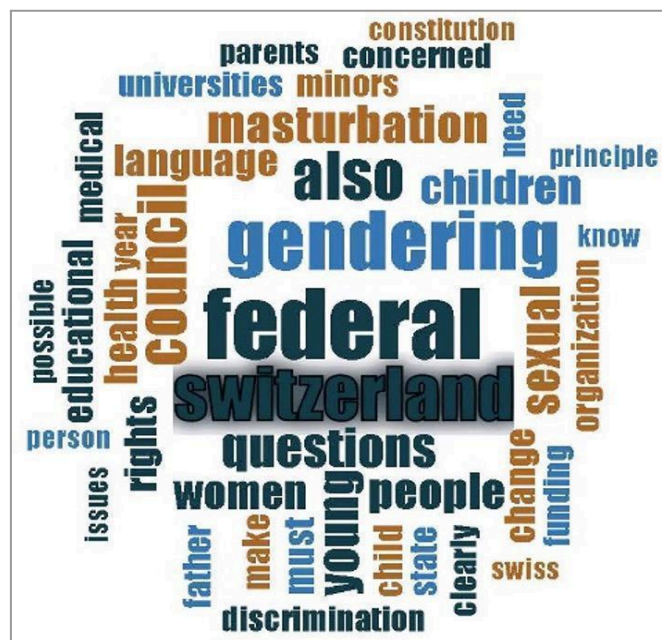


Figure M9: Word frequency in Swiss Debates

The broadened search revealed an additional 30 debates. The search term ‘woman’ allowed us to collect the most debates, with the majority of them focusing on the issue of sexual and reproductive rights, trans issues, as well as topics related to racism. The phrase ‘gender

ideology’ does not appear frequently within the Swiss parliamentary corpus, featuring three times only. However, they relate to three broad areas of contestation, where anti-gender politics is active in the Swiss parliament: gender equality and mainstreaming, gender-inclusive language and legal gender reassignment.

Hungary Parliament Methodology

For the Hungarian case study, parliamentary debates which took place within 2017-2023 were searched according to the cluster specific themes.

Debates related to the cluster themes were searched by using sets of associated search terms, focusing on terms most likely to appear in the titles of the debates. CLARIN (a platform providing access to multimodal digital language data, including EU parliamentary data) was dismissed in the Hungarian case study because it proved to be less efficient compared to other available databases (e.g. for gender, it had one result; for feminist, zero results; for transznemű (transgender), one result).

Instead, data were harvested using Hungaricana, the Hungarian national online archive. One of its sections is the Records of the Parliamentary Library. This includes a subsection, Parliamentary Documents, from 1790 until present. In Hungaricana, Parliamentary sessions are searchable by cycle (four-year terms) and within those cycles, by the session (year/spring, summer or fall session). Documents after the regime change are included in the Records of the Plenary Sessions of the Parliament from 1990 to 2022.

Since Hungaricana contains data only until 2022, data from 01.01.2023 were retrieved from the website of the Parliament, from the section Records/Parliamentary Diary. The search interface was used, where results can be narrowed down to specific periods. The results have links to video records. In order to access the text, one must note the date, go back to Records (Jegyzőkönyvek), and open the relevant issue of Parliamentary Diary (Országgyűlési Napló).

The table below contains the quantitative overview of the sample obtained via the multi-step search process.

Debate Count Total	Debate Count by Debate Source	Debate Count by Search Term
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<p>Total: 25 debates collected and distributed among five cluster categories</p> <p><i>Time Period: 04.04.2017 - 07.03.2023</i></p>	<p>Subset of: 18 debates</p> <p>Source: Search results from Hungaricana</p> <p><i>Time Period:</i> 04.04.2017 - 08.11.2022</p>	<p>LMBT*: LMBT is LGBT (leszbikus, meleg = gay, biszexuális, transznemű), sometimes LMBTQ or LMBTQIA is used (but in activist context, not in the Parliament): 7 debates</p> <p>gender*: 8 debates</p> <p>feminist*: ('feminista' is feminist, 'feministák' is the plural): 3 debates</p> <p>örökbefogadás (adoption): 1 debate</p> <p>gyermekvédelem (child protection): 1 debate</p> <p>transznemű* = transgender, plural: transzneműek: 3 debates</p> <p>Isztambuli Egyezmény (Istanbul Convention): 1 debate</p> <p>nemvált*: (nemváltás or nemváltoztatás = gender change or transition, nemváltó = transitioning): 1 debate</p>
	<p>Subset of: 7 debates</p> <p>Source: Retrieved from the website of the Parliament parlament.hu</p> <p><i>Time Period:</i> 01.01.2023 – 14.06.2023</p>	

Table M10: Quantitative Overview and a Breakdown of the Sample

Note: *Denotes wildcard search

The thematic clusters provided the starting point for devising search terms to shortlist debates. Returned data (parliamentary sessions, from which specific debates were extracted) showed a high degree of permeability and cross-reference between searched terms and defining characteristics of WP1 Clusters (1-5).

Cluster	Debate Count	Debate Title	Search Term
Targeting gender	43.5%, 10 debates	Joint debate on the bill amending Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, 04.04.2017	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda, 08.05.2017	Feminista (Feminist)
		General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on family support and pension insurance until the end of the debate, 13.11.2018	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda, 14.12.2020	Gender*

		General debate on the ninth amendment of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary until closure, 18.11.2020	LMBT*
		Joint debate on the political declaration on the importance of protecting children and women and rejecting accession to the Istanbul Convention, 04.05.2020	Gender/Istanbul Convention
		Speeches before the agenda, 28.09.2023	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda, 20.09.2021	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
		Hour of instant questions, 22.05.2023	Gender*
		Continuing the general debate on the draft on Hungary's 2024 central budget, 14.06.2023	Gender*
Delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics	21.7%, 7 debates	General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on media services until closure, 13.06.2019	LMBT*
		General debate on the draft law amending certain laws in the field of justice until the end of the debate, 17.22.2020	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
		Bence Tordai (Dialogue) - to the Minister of Interior - "What is the government willing to implement from our proposals to prevent mass frost deaths?", 01.06.2021	LMBT*
		What is the government willing to implement of our proposals to prevent mass frostbite?, 08.11.2022	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda, 27.02.2023	LMBT*
		Speeches before the agenda, 22.05.2023	LMBT*
		General debate on the draft on complaints, whistleblowing and malpractice until closure, 07.03.2023	Gender*
Debating Trans Lives	13%, 3 debates	"Do organisations influence public life in Hungary, Prime Minister?", 14.12.2020	Transznemű (transgender)
		General debate on the proposal to amend certain laws on administrative matters and	Transznemű (transgender)

		on the free distribution of property 07.04.2020	
		Merged debate on the referral for a national referendum under an exceptional procedure, 30.11.2021	Nemváltás (gender reassignment)
Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	4.35%, 2 debates	What does the government do in order to protect our children?, 07.03.2023	LMBT*
		General debate on the proposal for a Council decision on tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children until closure, 01.06.2021	LMBT*
Attacking feminism and gender equalities	8.7%, 3 debates	Speeches before the agenda, 29.11.2021	Feminista (feminist)
		Speeches before the agenda, 20.06.2022	Feminista (feminist)
		On recent issues, 03.04.2023	LMBT

Table M11: Distribution of Debates across Thematic Clusters

Note: *Denotes wildcard search

Poland Parliament Methodology

Data sources and sampling selection

The website of the parliament (<https://sejm.gov.pl>) is also the Sejm's public database and archive, and this served as the data collection point. For consistency with the other national case studies, only the transcripts of selected thematic debates (henceforth 'Debates'), held during multi-day plenary sessions (henceforth 'Plenaries'), of Sejm sittings (henceforth 'Sittings') were collected and analysed. Full Terms of Office of Sejm VIII (2015-19) and Sejm IX (2019-23) were chosen, aligning to the study timeframe. Sejm IX ran until November 2023, but data collection was conducted in June-July 2023, and thus 30.05.2023 was the effective cut-off date for the selection of debates.

The sampling followed a multi-stage selection process, which is detailed in the [Appendix A Table AA19 \(PL1\) – 'Methodological steps for the Polish case study in Parliamentary Debates segment'](#). The thematic clusters served as a starting point for producing and organising the dataset, but quickly showed high redundancy and cross-permeability. Therefore the analysis of the debate corpus commenced by identifying seven thematic codes specific to the Polish context that were informed by insights from existing research. A further six thematic codes were subsequently added, developed from primary analysis of the transcripts.

Methodology: Media per Case Study

Overall approach to media methodology

The media research used the following databases.

Case Study	Resource Database	Link
UK	LexisNexis	https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/news?sourceid=1061905
CH	SwissDox	https://swissdox.ch/
	Europresse (for French-language newspapers)	https://www.europresse.com/
HU	Telex and Válasz Online are exclusively online media outlets. Magyar Hírlap has some relevant articles which were published only in print.	https://telex.hu/
		https://www.valaszonline.hu/
		https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/
	For the search of the print issues, ADT Digital Compendium of Science	https://www.arcanum.com/hu/adt/
PL	LexisNexis for Gazeta Wyborcza, and for Rzeczpospolita the newspaper's own online archive (paid subscription option) was used; For Do Rzeczy and Super Express, the site specific search formula on Google Search was used.	https://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/news?sourceid=1061905

Table M12: Media Databases Consulted

These databases allowed researchers to search specific newspapers and news sites for keywords, adjust for specific dates, and download PDFs of hundreds of original articles which are very often paywalled without these tools. Below the steps are outlined:

1. Three 'national' newspapers that provide some coverage of the conventional political spectrum were chosen; for example, the UK case study focused on The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph and The Scotsman;
2. Each case study worked through keyword searches across newspapers within defined time periods, and sampling strategies were decided according to corpus size;
3. The case studies shared one core keyword, 'gender ideology', translated into as many related terms as was necessary to capture the discursive field (e.g. in French in Switzerland *théorie du genre* / *idéologie du genre* were both necessary);

4. The case studies then selected other keywords according to each context, with each study covering a minimum of three and a maximum of five;
5. Of these keywords, one of them aimed to unlock ‘intersectional’ dimensions of how anti-gender politics can function;
6. In quantitative terms, the article data were entered into Excel capturing the following key dimensions, here an example is reproduced with ‘gender ideology’ as the keyword:
 - Article headline
 - Genre (news/reportage, comment/editorial, feature)
 - Trigger issue for story
 - Position of keyword in the article
 - Is ‘gender ideology’ placed in “” Yes or No
 - Is ‘gender ideology’ defined
 - Whose definition is used
 - What actors are mentioned
 - What organisations/campaigns are mentioned

UK Media Methodology

Data selection

The data selection proceeded in two steps.

1. In common with the other national case studies, this first step aimed to analyse how the ideologically loaded and politically disputed idea of ‘gender ideology’ was reproduced in news coverage and opinion/comment, the issues it was associated with, and how it was defined and characterised. To do this, a search was conducted using the newspaper database LexisNexis for all articles featuring the phrase ‘gender ideology’ during the following sample period:

Article Count	Sample Period	Media Sources
130	01.01.2020 to 09.03.2023	The Telegraph N=64; 49% The Guardian N=52; 40% The Scotsman N=14; 10.7 %

Table M13: UK ‘gender ideology’ Article Sample

2. In order to explore the role and significance of new and emerging media actors in the networked media environment, a wider series of ideologically motivated, online-first media actors was sampled. A collection of all stories that related to the issue clusters from the following platforms was carried out, with slightly varying time periods adjusted to the variability in data-gathering permitted by different social media platforms:

Media Source	Sample Period	Data Sample
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GB News Facebook page	03.03.2023 - 20.03.2023	25 Facebook posts (inclusive of link, image, commentary text, and metadata). Random sample period, comparatively restricted in time because of the difficulty of accessing stories on this Facebook page beyond one week of temporal reliability.
Free Speech Union (FSU) Facebook page	01.01.2023 - 20.03.2023	142 Facebook posts (inclusive of link, image, commentary text, and metadata).
GB News YouTube channel	21.11.2022 - 21.03.2023*	129 relevant videos selected, categorised by screen grab of video freeze frame on YouTube; 129 videos analysed for discourse sample; 71 videos transcribed in full using AI software, for content and discourse analysis.

Table M14: UK Sample of all Media Content related to Issue Clusters

Note: *This period extended back into late 2022 to allow material of relevance to the Controversy Mapping to also be collected, see next chapter

Data coding

To code the newspaper sample for Step 1, basic descriptive aspects were initially identified:

Descriptive Aspects
Article Date Title Author Genre

Table M15: Generic Codes for Media Data Collection

Analytical codes were then developed based on identifying (a) the reason for the term's occurrence in the text (trigger issue); (b) the importance accorded in the text (position of keyword); (c) the agents it was associated with (actors and organisations); and (d) how this profoundly ideological term was framed within the conventions of news journalism and opinion writing (is it presented in inverted commas, is a definition provided, if so, whose definition is included).

Analytical Codes
Trigger Issue Position of Keyword Actors Organisations Gender Ideology in "" Gender Ideology Definition Whose Gender Ideology Definition

Table M16: Analytical Codes for ‘gender ideology’ Media Content

The social media data in Step 2 were coded in ways designed to capture the specificities of the media and platforms. The Facebook data were screenshots of the posts, and the date, links, images displayed, and meta-data were categorised by extracting from these screenshots. The YouTube videos required several stages of coding: (a) the sample of 129 videos were firstly categorised by screenshots, and organised according to timeline, headline and genre/programme type; (b) the first two minutes of each video were viewed, and data transcribed in response to two key questions: What is the key problem/trigger issue stated? Are other media stories used as the basis for the GB News story? In response to these questions, verbatim quotations and actor mentions were recorded; (c) when the dominance of the ‘trans issue’ in the trigger issues became apparent, all the videos where this issue was the key issue were selected for transcription (N=75) and transcribed by using an AI transcription tool (SpeakAi); (d) these transcripts were checked for accuracy and then searched for mentions of ‘ideology’ and ‘gender ideology’ which were then selected for qualitative analysis.

Switzerland Media Methodology

In the first step the ideologically loaded and politically disputed idea of ‘gender ideology’, how it was reproduced in news coverage and opinion/comment, the issues it was associated with, and how it was defined and characterised was examined.

To do this a search was conducted through the newspaper databases SwissDox (for the German-language newspapers) and Europresse (for French-language newspapers) for all articles featuring the phrase ‘gender ideology’, including its German and French variants. Search terms such as ‘transgender’ and ‘woke’ were used to complement the database with additional articles pertaining to anti-gender politics.

Article Count	Time Period Sampled	Media Sources
Total for all search terms = 163	01.01.2021 - 08.03.2023	Die Weltwoche: 63
		NZZ : 37
		20 Minuten: 21
		Le Temps: 18
		La Tribune de Genève: 10
		WOZ: 8
		20 Minutes Romandie: 6

Total number of articles using the search term 'gender ideology' = 58	01.01.2018 - 08.03.2023 Longer period for 'gender ideology' search:	NZZ : 19
		Die Weltwoche: 14
		La Tribune de Genève: 9
		WOZ: 7
		Le Temps: 6

Table M17: Quantitative Overview of Collected Media Data

The chart below illustrates the distribution of articles across newspapers, found using all search terms. As shown, Die Weltwoche (63 articles; 39%), NZZ (37 articles; 23%) and 20 Minuten (21 articles; 13%) yielded the most results.

Hungary Media Methodology

Due to the vast quantity of the search results, the media study search was narrowed to years 2020-2023, when the gender debate was the most prevalent in the Hungarian context. For the collection of materials, the websites of the journals were used - <https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/> ; <https://telex.hu/> ; <https://www.valaszonline.hu/>. Telex and Válasz Online are exclusively online media outlets. Magyar Hírlap has some relevant articles which were published only in print. For the search of the print issues ADT Digital Compendium of Science (at Arcanum.hu) was used. Arcanum.hu is Hungary's largest and continuously expanding digital periodical database, which contains domestic scientific and specialised journals, encyclopaedias, weekly and daily newspapers.

The graph below illustrates the proportional distribution of articles across newspapers in the Hungary media sample for all search terms.

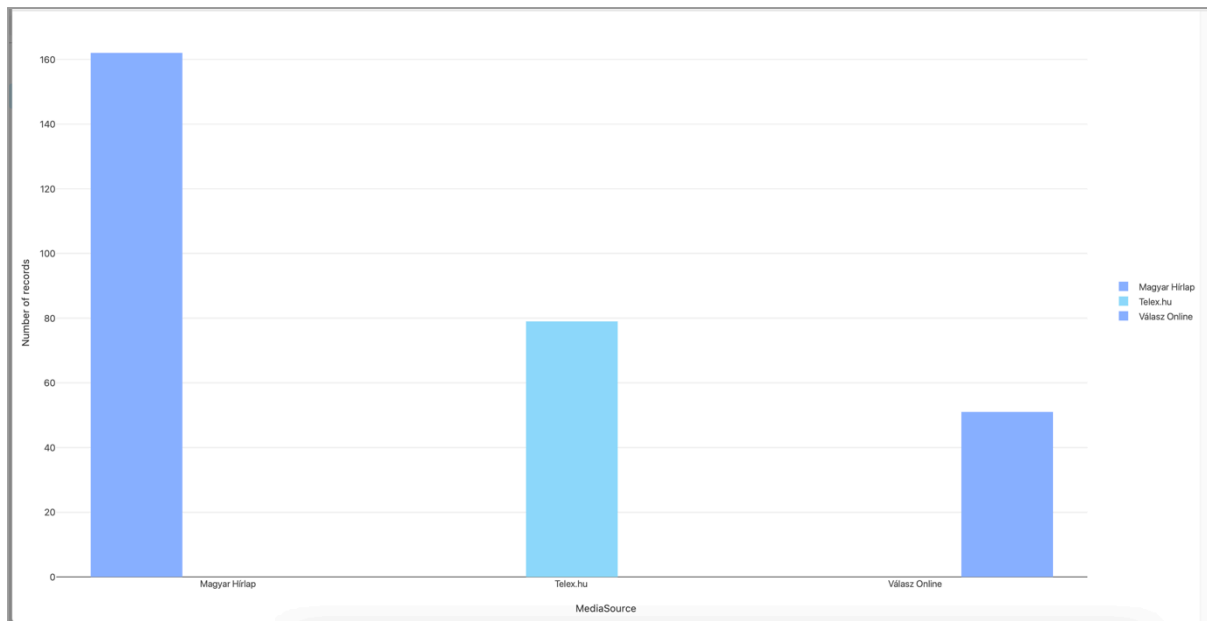


Figure M18: Proportional distribution of Articles across Hungarian Newspapers for all Search Terms

The largest number of the articles was collected in the newspaper Magyar Hírlap (55%; 162 articles); Telex.hu (27%; 79 articles) and Válasz Online (17.5%; 51 articles).

Media Source	Article Count	Time Period Sampled
Magyar Hírlap	162	01.01.2020 - 26.06.2023
Telex.hu	79	02.10.2020 - 26.06.2023
Válasz Online	51	09.12.2018 - 08.07.2023
Total	292	

Table M19: Number of Articles collected, total and by Newspaper

292 articles were entered into the database, 164 articles were obtained through a search using the term 'gender ideology', 128 articles were obtained using the additional search terms: 'Feminism' (and its grammatical variants), 'LMBT' (LGBT and its variants), 'transznemű' (Transgender and its variants). The term 'feminist' yielded the most results (37 articles); 'LMBT' (33 articles); 'transznemű' (26 articles); 'gender' (10 articles). Additional articles were found via combining search terms.

Data coding

Data coding was standardised across case studies. The following information was logged for each article: Media source; Time period sampled; Article headline; Subtitle/Lead; Link; Writer; Case study; Language; Genre; Search term; Trigger issue; Position of keyword; Actors;

Organisations mentioned; Gender ideology in quotation marks yes/no; Gender ideology definition; Whose gender ideology definition; Keyword hits in articles; Notes.

Poland Media Methodology

Following the general media research framework the following press sources were chosen: two broadsheet newspapers (Rzeczpospolita (RZ), Gazeta Wyborcza (GW)); one tabloid newspaper (Super Express (SE)); one right-wing news outlet (doRzeczy.pl (DR)).

Both Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza are the biggest, 'broadsheet'-type, national newspaper titles, popularly perceived as leaning towards (respectively) conservative, right/centre-right and liberal, left/centre-left values & politics. One tabloid title was added to offer some comparative insight for the broadsheet titles. (Fakty and Super Express were considered, and since both have similar profiles, SE was chosen randomly). Finally, doRzeczy.pl was chosen as an example of a (far) right media outlet, due to its popularity and prominence among conservative politicians. It offers some comparative insight for the other titles as a media outlet that is self-positioning as conservative, (far) right-wing, traditionalist, pro-governmental, anti-European. The media component of the Polish case aimed to broaden the discursive scope of data gathering and analysis beyond the political 'right' or 'conservative' fields, thus 'left' and 'liberal' media were added, or those without clear political leaning.

The time period spans 01.2021-06.2023 (according to database article availability), and sampling followed non-probability principles and a multi-stage selection process, which is detailed in [Appendix B: Table AB7 \(PL4\) – 'Methodological steps for Polish case in Media study segment'](#). The information about the new outlets was coded according to the coding template first developed for the UK study.

Methodology: Controversy Mapping per Case Study

The origins of Controversy Mapping (CM) are in Science and Technology Studies, specifically in the efforts of Bruno Latour to ‘open up the black box’ of scientific controversies to ‘map’ the range of positions, actors and relations that shape these debates and conflicts as they play out in public. As Venturini and Munk note, ‘sociotechnical controversies’ that stem from the successes or failures of developments in science and technology unfold in intensely mediated public spheres, inviting participation and investment far beyond the rarified context of scientists in a laboratory. The aim of CM is thus to take these dynamics seriously as interpretative and productive forces, rather than seeing them as separable from the otherwise rarified pursuit of science. CM therefore uses information visualisation to “...unfold public debate, to care for all viewpoints while not giving everyone the same credit, to explore collective disputes and make them more legible...” (2022: 5).

This step was preceded by identifying two genres of controversy: those manufactured to generate attention and conflict by political actors, and unplanned controversies where a controversy takes shape around an event such as a proposed law or contested cultural event in the public domain, and where actors and networks respond.

Controversy mapping methods

This phase of research proceeded through a mixture of fixed steps and a set of options chosen according to the nature of the controversy and the digital tools available. The network mapping was conducted by using Issue Crawler, a software tool designed to automatically identify and analyse issues discussed on the web. It works through the Firefox browser by scanning online sources such as blogs, forums, and news articles to extract information about particular topics or issues of interest. The issue crawler uses a combination of natural language processing and machine learning algorithms to identify relevant keywords, topics, and entities related to a particular issue. It then creates a network graph of these keywords, topics, and entities, showing the relationships and connections between them.

The resulting network graph can be used to gain insights into how a particular issue is being discussed online, who the main actors or stakeholders are, and what the key arguments or positions are. This information can be useful for researchers, journalists, and policymakers who are interested in tracking public opinion and understanding how different groups are engaging with a particular issue.

The steps taken for the controversy mapping of the UK case study were used as an instructional guide for case study work in other countries. The steps taken were as follows:

1. The timeline of the controversy was defined and explained through a factual narrative, providing key dates, and actions involving individuals, politicians, institutions, organisations, municipalities and media. In developing the timeline it was also possible to identify and summarise the particularity and consequences of the controversy in terms of anti-gender political impact and any tactics that became apparent.
2. The material from the parliament and media corpora could be used to the extent relevant. For example, if there were anti-abortion debates in the corpus, this data was further mined for pertinent content, key actors and organisations. If there were newspaper articles covering the controversy topic, that data was mined for positionality, writers and actors cited in the article/column.
3. Issue actors were identified and their primary communications platform were logged, which allowed the seed URLs for controversy mapping to be collated.
4. Tables were collated to group the actors and their corresponding URLs. It is important to note that the URLs all correspond to an actor and not a media outlet, and care was taken to ensure all URLs comprise only organisations and specific people.
5. The seed URLs (a minimum of 10) for each case study were copied into issue crawler to harvest the data.

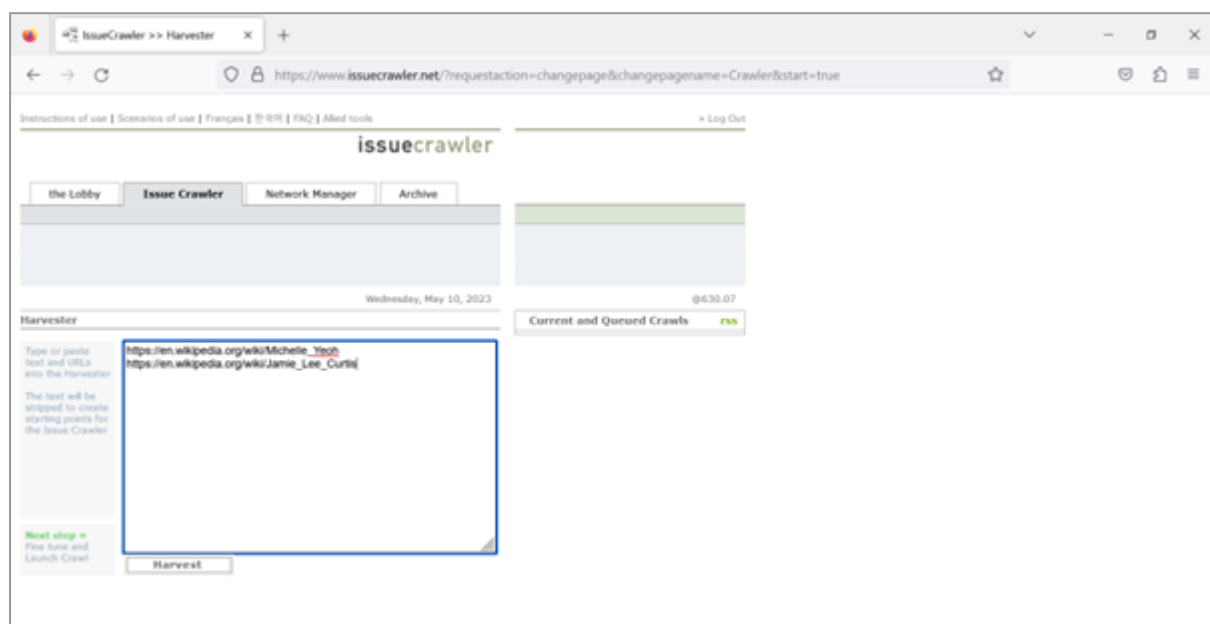


Figure M20: Screenshot of Issue Crawler interface with Sample Data

The data was harvested at a Crawl Depth of 2 and by “page”, using the suggested parameters from the guide, and adjustable from the dropdown menu in the settings panel.

6. Subsequent to the data being harvested, visualisations were produced by Issue Crawler in the form of Spring Maps. An SVG file and GEFX file were also produced, which facilitated further in-depth analysis.

UK Controversy Mapping Methodology

To ‘unfold public debate’ around the chosen controversy of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, the following steps were followed, combining media data analysis, information visualisation and qualitative analysis.

1. To open out the range of viewpoints a corpus of opinion pieces from a wide selection of news and comment sources was assembled. The guiding principle was to map a plural range of opinions on what the controversy is and what dimensions are most important, and why. This was researched using Google News and searching for “Scotland gender recognition act” and aimed to build a purposive sample of a wider range of opinion piece beyond the three titles focused on in the Media Study. A total of fifty op-eds were gathered and coded from the following media sources:

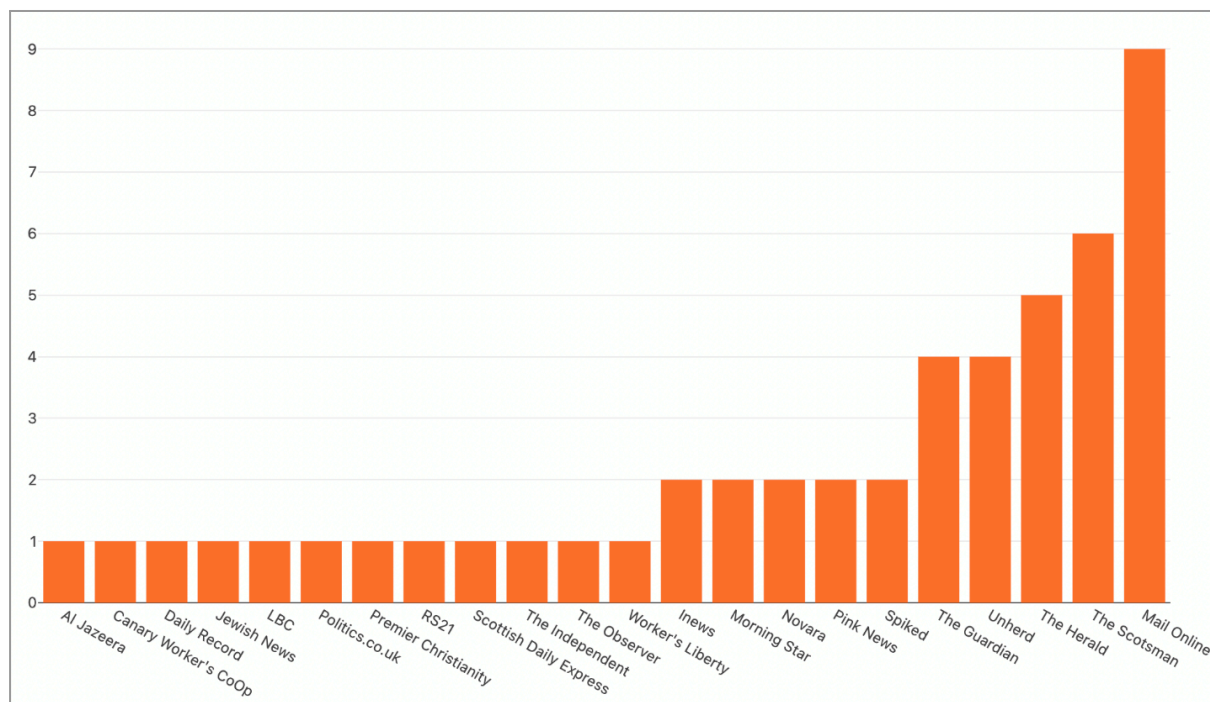


Figure M21: Media Sources of op-eds for Controversy Mapping

In order to construct a sample, both random and purposeful sampling techniques were used. On Google News the search was limited to UK titles or media with a UK edition. Within the 50 selected, a broad diversity of different media titles was sought, however it was also clear that certain titles were cropping up frequently because of the sheer scale of their output. For this reason, certain titles - such as the Mail Online, Herald and UnHerd - were included multiple times. Inductive coding was used to capture the arguments offered in each piece as to what the controversy was centrally about, and what caused it. Arguments were coded if they were clearly the opinion of the author, as opposed to, for example, the author

paraphrasing an argument they wished to quote, or refute. Given that generically opinion pieces offer a range of central arguments, articles were coded for multiple contributions up to a limit of three significant rationales.

2. This broad focus was complemented by returning to some of the newspapers examined in the media study, in order to complement the analysis derived from the ‘gender ideology’ analysis with a sample of intensive coverage of a related controversy. A search period of 30.11.2022 – 13.03.2023 was chosen to encompass the late-stage debates of the GRR and the ‘long tail’ of the January blocking decision. This renewed study was particularly important with The Telegraph, given the significant extent and nature of its coverage and its central influence in wider media and activist networks. Searching using the various phrases used for the legal wording of the GRR proved difficult so the search term was adapted to ‘transgender’, thus capturing all GRR coverage plus allowing an examination of the wider issue network.

The newspaper corpus was gathered through LexisNexis:

Newspaper	Article Count: ‘transgender’ (30.11.2022 – 13.03.2023)
The Telegraph	222 (205 coded when repeat hits excluded), of which 40 were op-eds/opinion/letters
Daily Mail / Mail on Sunday	172 news stories
The Times	179 news stories, 25 opinion pieces
The Guardian	174 news stories

Table M22: Overview of Newspaper Corpus gathered through LexisNexis

3. Issue networks were built by harvesting all the organisations mentioned in The Telegraph and Guardian coverage. This choice was made given the clearly differentiated coverage examined in the media study, and for pragmatic reasons, as the visualisation tools utilised work best with a certain scale of data. The website of each organisation mentioned was sourced and included in a list of ‘seed urls’ per newspaper for processing by the Issue Crawler software. A pilot was conducted that allowed a calibration of the approach to the data from the new newspaper “transgender” articles corpus. Using Gephi, these lists were rendered as “network cluster maps”. Cluster mapping describes the quantitative measurement of the presence of clusters across dispersed actors. It is based on common definitions that identify cluster categories as groups of actors that empirically tend to be connected through web links.

4. The top ten organisations mentioned from The Telegraph network map were selected to conduct a qualitative analysis of tactics deployed in campaigning on the controversy issue. This involved analysing the organisation’s website and social media to gain an understanding of what content was shared (their own campaigns, reshares of other organisations etc.), in

what way (call-to-action, factsheet etc.) where (Twitter) and how frequently (once off or content saturation).

Switzerland Controversy Mapping Methodology

Controversy 1: Drag Story Time

The first step in each controversy was to gather a wide sample of opinion pieces, interview or qualitatively selected news coverages. 28 articles were collected that allowed the mapping of an initial overview of the issues related to the controversy. Social media links were traced that have been referenced by journalists in the articles within the sample. The second step involved actor mapping. Actors that emerged in the articles were entered into the database. Seed URLs were extracted for the individual actors and organisations mentioned in our media and controversy mapping corpus, in reference to the above events. On the basis of selected Seed URLs, issue mapping was conducted in the issue-crawler. The results presented themselves as a rather disjointed actor map, with most activity happening on social media (the red YouTube circle, for instance, is a YouTube channel of Junge Tat). Weltwoche.ch, a right-wing newspaper, which allegedly inspired Junge Tat to this action, was identified via critical opinion pieces about 'drag story time'. By visiting the webpages of these actors, a database of tactics strategies publicised online was collected.

Controversy 2: Protests over controversial talks at UNIGE

Fifteen opinion pieces and interviews by actors who made interventions during the controversy were selected. From there, URLs were selected of organisations publicly involved in the controversy and their repertoires of tactics were gathered. In order to map the controversy on Issue Crawler, the following 20 URLs were selected pertaining to organisations and actors that contributed to or commented on the controversy, located on different sides of the issue. See [Appendix C: Table AC9 \(CH15\) – 'Romandie case study seed URLs'](#). The mapping on Issue Crawler was run based on these 20 URLs, Crawl Depth of 2, co-link analysis by page, and privilege starting points off, and produced the below spring map for this network.

Hungary Controversy Mapping Methodology

The first step in the Hungary controversy analysis was to gather a wide sample of opinion pieces, and interviews. The controversy mapping covered a broader range of newspapers compared to the media data mapping but focused on a limited time-frame for the controversy. In total, 53 articles were collected that allowed mapping the key issues related to the controversy and to construct a narrative overview. Apart from the generic information, the articles were coded to include information on the actors and tactics.

In a separate tab, all actors that emerged in the articles were recorded. A list of seed URLs (web pages of individuals and organisations publicly involved in the controversy) were compiled and their repertoires of tactics were gathered. In order to map the controversy on Issue Crawler, 41 seed URLs were selected from organisations and actors that contributed to or commented on the controversy, located on the anti-gender side of the issue. The mapping on Issue Crawler was run based on these 41 URLs, Crawl Depth of 2, co-link analysis by page, and privilege starting points off.

Poland Controversy Mapping Methodology

Building the dataset of N=50 articles followed a non-probability sampling approach, with purposive selection balancing a range of diverse sources, including community ones, mainstream liberal and conservative media, and right/far-right outlets. Issue Crawler and Gephi visualisation methodology was not implemented in this case study. The final dataset consisted of 50 articles from the following media outlets located using the keywords - Margot, aresztowanie Margot (arresting Margot), Małgorzata Sz., Stop Bzdurom:

- Gazeta Polska (GP), (1 article); Fronda, (2 articles); Klub Jagielloński (5); wPolityce.pl (6); doRzeczy.pl, (7);
- Krytyka Polityczna (KP) (2 articles); Codziennik Feministyczny (CF), OKO.press (3 articles); Gazeta Wyborcza (GW) (7);
- Tygodnik Powszechny (TP) (1 article); Vogue Polska (2 articles); Newsweek (4); Rzeczpospolita (RZ) (7).

In selecting a range of media outlets to scope for actors and discursive tactics of writing about the 'Margot controversy', it was important for the case to work across a broad spectrum of newspapers, magazines and outlets, to better understand the diverse and complementary perspectives that all together form a more complex understanding of the chosen case.

Chapter 4 - Hungary

Hungarian Parliament

Introduction

Hungary has a unicameral parliament known as the National Assembly (Országgyűlés), consisting of 199 members. The parliamentary system is based on semi-proportional representation; members serve 4-year terms. The Head of State is the President of the Republic, whose primary responsibilities are representative, and is elected indirectly by the Parliament for a five-year term and can be re-elected once. Executive power is exercised by the government, which is led by the Prime Minister (Szelényi 2023).

There are two main factions in the Hungarian political system: the right-wing national conservative political alliance between Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) and KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party), and the centre-right to left-wing political alliance United for Hungary, which consists of the following parties – Democratic Coalition (DK), Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Movement for a Better Hungary (or as of 2023 Jobbik - Conservatives), Momentum, Dialogue and LMP-Greens (as of 2023 Dialogue – The Greens' Party). United for Hungary was formed to compete in the 2022 parliamentary elections, in which it lost to the ruling Fidesz-KDNP.

The Fidesz–KDNP party coalition has governed Hungary since 2010, obtaining a majority in each of the 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022 national elections. Viktor Orbán, who has been the leader of the Fidesz party since its inception in the late 1980s, has been Prime Minister since 2010. Hungarian politics has been marked by significant controversies over issues such as immigration, press freedom, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary. National and international critics have raised concerns about the concentration of power in the executive branch and have perceived an erosion of democratic norms and institutions. Similarly, Hungary's relationship with the EU has been a subject of debate and controversy, particularly concerning issues related to the rule of law, media freedom, and human rights.

Data sampling and selection

For the Hungarian case-study, parliamentary debates related to cluster-specific themes which took place within the time span of 2017-2023 were gathered by using sets of associated search terms, focusing on terms most likely to appear in the titles of the debates. The goal was to gather, then categorise, a corpus for analysis by theme, where an issue features in the title of a debate, or the headline of an article. The CLARIN database was not suitable for use in this case study due to issues with keyword search efficiency (for example, only one result for the wildcard search-term gender*; 0 results for the term feminist*; 1 result for the term transznemű* [transgender]). Instead, data was harvested using Hungaricana, the Hungarian national online archive, specifically The Records of the Parliamentary Library. This includes a subsection of Parliamentary Documents from 1790 until the present. In Hungaricana, Parliamentary sessions are searchable by cycle (four-year terms) and within those, by session (year / spring, summer or fall session). Documents after the regime change are included in the Records of the Plenary Sessions of the Parliament from 1990 to 2022. Since Hungaricana contains data only prior to 2022, data from 01.01.2023 was retrieved from the website of the Parliament: parlament.hu.

The following table contains the quantitative overview of the sample obtained via this multi-step search process.

Debate Count Total	Debate Count by Debate Source	Debate Count by Search Term
<p>Total: 25 debates collected and distributed among five cluster categories</p> <p><i>Time Period: 04.04.2017 - 07.03.2023</i></p>	<p>Subset of: 18 debates</p> <p>Source: Search results from Hungaricana</p> <p><i>Time Period: 04.04.2017 - 08.11.2022</i></p>	<p>LMBT*: LMBT is LGBT (leszbikus, meleg = gay, biszexuális, transznemű), sometimes LMBTQ or LMBTQIA is used (but rather in activist context, not in the Parliament): 7 debates</p> <p>gender*: 8 debates</p> <p>feminist*: ('feminista' is feminist, 'feministák' is the plural): 3 debates</p> <p>örökbefogadás (adoption): 1 debate</p> <p>gyermekvédelem (child protection): 1 debate</p> <p>transznemű* = transgender, plural: transzneműek: 3 debates</p> <p>Isztambuli Egyezmény (Istanbul Convention): 1 debate</p>

	Subset of: 7 debates Source: Retrieved from the website of the Parliament parlament.hu <i>Time Period:</i> 01.01.2023 – 14.06.2023	nemvált*: (nemváltás or nemváltoztatás = gender change or transition, nemváltó = transitioning): 1 debate
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Table HU1: Quantitative Overview and a Breakdown of the Sample

Note: *Denotes wildcard search

Data presentation

The following Thematic Clusters provided a starting point for devising search terms to shortlist debates:

Cluster Name	Debate Count	Debate Title	Search Term
Targeting gender	43.5%, 10 debates	Joint debate on the bill amending Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education (04.04.2017)	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda (08.05.2017)	Feminista (Feminist)
		General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on family support and pension insurance (13.11.2018)	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda (14.12.2020)	Gender*
		General debate on the ninth amendment of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary until closure (18.11.2020)	LMBT*
		Joint debate on the political declaration on the importance of protecting children and women and rejecting accession to the Istanbul Convention (04.05.2020)	Gender/Istanbul Convention

		Speeches before the agenda (28.09.2021)	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda (20.09.2021)	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
		Hour of instant questions (22.05.2023)	Gender*
		Continuing the general debate on the draft on Hungary's 2024 central budget (14.06.2023)	Gender*
Delegitimizing LGBTQ+ lives, experiences and politics	21.7%, 7 debates	General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on media services (13.06.2019)	LMBT*
		General debate on the draft law amending certain laws in the field of justice (17.22.2020)	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
		Bence Tordai (Dialogue) - to the Minister of Interior - "What is the government willing to implement from our proposals to prevent mass frost deaths?" (01.06.2021)	LMBT*
		What is the government willing to implement of our proposals to prevent mass frostbite? (08.11.2022)	Gender*
		Speeches before the agenda (27.02.2023)	LMBT*
		Speeches before the agenda (22.05.2023)	LMBT*
		General debate on the draft on complaints, whistleblowing and malpractice (07.03.2023)	Gender*
Debating Trans Lives	13%, 3 debates	"Do organisations influence public life in Hungary, Prime Minister?" (14.12.2020)	Transznemű (transgender)
		General debate on the proposal to amend certain laws on administrative matters and on the free distribution of property (07.04.2020)	Transznemű (transgender)

		Merged debate on the referral for a national referendum under an exceptional procedure (30.11.2021)	Nemváltás (gender reassignment)
Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	4.35%, 2 debates	What does the government do in order to protect our children? (07.03.2023)	LMBT*
		General debate on the proposal for a Council decision on tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children (01.06.2021)	LMBT*
Attacking feminism and gender equalities	8.7%, 3 debates	Speeches before the agenda (29.11.2021)	Feminista (feminist)
		Speeches before the agenda (20.06.2022)	Feminista (feminist)
		On recent issues (03.04.2023)	LMBT*

Table HU2: Distribution of Debates across Thematic Clusters

Note: * denotes wildcard search

Note: For a full list of debates with URL links, see Appendix A :

[Table AA22 \(HU1\) – ‘Cluster 1: Targeting gender’](#),

[Table AA23 \(HU2\) – ‘Cluster 2: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ lives, experiences and politics’](#),

[Table AA24 \(HU3\) – ‘Cluster 3: Debating trans lives’](#),

[Table AA25 \(HU4\) – ‘Cluster 4: Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education’](#),

[Table AA26 \(HU5\) – ‘Cluster 5: Attacking feminisms and gender equalities’](#)

Data coding

The coding of the Hungarian debate corpus involved several steps.

In the first step, debates were coded for **descriptive** aspects. The following 10 fields were recorded for every debate: Debate Title; Debate Title English; Subtitle; Term; Sitting Date; Language(s); Hyperlink to debate file; Thematic Clusters; Keywords; Notes.

In the second step, the debates were coded in columns containing a **generic** set of codes. Generic codes allow searching for common information across debates regardless of cluster theme. These codes lay the basis for the analysis of tactics and strategies.

Actor mapping is central to the Hungarian case-study; an actor field is linked to each of the codes, allowing the researcher to log utterances and correlate them to specific actors. 24

MPs, whose statements were included in the coded material, were logged for the Hungarian case study database, which provides an overview of the specific debates they have taken part in, and the frequency of interventions. See [Appendix A: Table AA27 \(HU6\) – ‘Presentation of actors by party \(whose quotes were included in the coded material\)’](#)

The third set of codes are **analytical**. Analytical codes were derived via a close and reflexive reading of the transcripts, assigning meaning and grouping data accordingly. Airtable was used as the coding platform, allowing labelling (assign codes), sorting the labels (codes), cross-linking relevant pieces of information and generating illustrations of findings (graphs, charts, pivot tables) via the Airtable Extensions tool.

A mixed methods approach was used to code the parliamentary data. An inductive approach was initially used to map themes emerging from the data. A deductive approach was then employed to continue the textual analysis when the codes were identified (Swain 2018; Proudfoot 2023). Codes such as ‘Biology and sex’ and ‘Anti-immigration/Islamophobia’, due to the broad resonance of these terms, support comparability across case studies. Inductively developed codes that emerged from the data are clearly related to Hungary-specific developments, such as ‘Attacks on Gender Studies as a discipline’, or ‘EU and foreign-funded organisations in Hungary’. The table below explains the coding categories:

TC ID	Thematic Codes	Description
TC1	Family and adoption	Statements that oppose inclusive family and adoption policies and legislation, rooted in beliefs that adhere to traditional gender roles and family structures.
TC2	Attacking Gender Studies as a discipline and theoretical work on gender	Statements aimed at discrediting Gender Studies as a discipline, through arguments that 'Gender Studies' as a discipline is “ideologically biased”, “promotes a political agenda”, and/or is “not a real science”, among others.
TC3	Children at risk	Statements asserting that ‘gender ideology’ threatens children, often expressed in debates over issues related to gender identity, gender expression, and education.
TC4	Biology and sex	Explicit statements as to the factuality of the sex binary, the nature of womanhood/manhood, tending towards supportive statements for ‘sex-based rights’

TC5	On the role of EU, and foreign-funded organisations in Hungary	Statements against certain EU policies and institutions, against foreign-funded organisations in Hungary, as well as more general discussion on the imposition of values from the EU.
TC6	Anti-immigration/Islamophobia	Statements conveying negative attitudes and the stigmatisation of immigrants and Muslims
TC7	Trans issues/activism	Statements and arguments that question, limit or attack trans rights, freedoms or activism

Table HU3: Hungary Case Study Thematic Codes

TC1 Family and adoption

Most statements in this category emphasise the value of a traditional heterosexual marriage to the well-being of children, thereby – whether explicitly or not – excluding non-heterosexual couples from the opportunity to adopt children.

"Congressman, I ask you if you have ever read any of Mária Kopp's relevant studies. (referring to Mária Kopp Institute for Demography and Families). [...] Mária Kopp has described exactly how stable a marriage is, how important the form of family that a stable marriage can give a child is for his or her well-being [...] the statistics are that within the first five years, one in three cohabiting relationships break up, while only one in ten marriages break up and nine remain [...] And the fact is, ladies and gentlemen, that we must always look at the interests of the child from this point of view, who needs stability, who needs peace of mind, who needs development, who needs love." (Nacsá Lőrinc (KDNP), General debate on the draft law amending certain laws in the field of justice until the end of the debate, 2020 fall term)

TC2 Attacking Gender Studies as a discipline and the theoretical work on gender

Statements in this category were mostly found in the debates which took place prior to 2018, i.e. preceding the de-accreditation of the departments of Gender Studies in Hungarian Universities.

"As is the case, for example, at CEU, where one can find interesting theses, such as 'Playing with Identity - A Study of the Sado-Mazo Community in Budapest', or another 'To Be and to Be - The Experiences of Young Feminist Men in Iceland', or a third 'Queer Theory and the Qur'an - How do non-heterosexual Muslim men in London articulate their sexual narratives?', LGBTQ, we could go on, XYZ, who knows what abbreviations and words are behind - it's not even interesting. It's mindless madness." (Miklós Soltész (KDNP), Speeches before the agenda, 2017 spring term)

TC3 Children at risk

This category is the most prevalent in the corpus, demonstrating the striking association between anti-gender and the protection of children in Hungarian parliamentary discourse. LGBTIQ+ activism is often referred to as “homosexual propaganda” which threatens children by promoting “early sexualization”, or “confuses normal children” by exposing them to diverse sexualities or gender identities. Another set of statements argue for the need to safeguard the well-being of children by protecting them from paedophilia, once again framed in the context of a threat posed by the “LGBTIQ lobby”. This is demonstrated in the quote below by János Volner (independent MP) during the General Debate on the proposal for a Council decision on “tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children until closure”, 2021 Spring Term:

“If there is a political tendency within which paedophilia can find protection, it is undoubtedly on the left, and more precisely on the side of the liberals. I would like to remind you that the LGBTQ movement has been embroiled in similar scandals on more than one occasion, and that it has been the case that people have been allowed to speak and make demands in public who have not only made demands on behalf of homosexuals, transgender people and other minorities that I do not know and frankly do not interest me, but have also started to advocate lowering the so-called age of consent.”

TC4 Biology and sex

This category comprises multiple statements aimed at defending the presumed naturalness of the male/female sex binary, presented as grounded in either/both biological/scientific or religious interpretations.

"We Hungarians value traditional Christian values. Thus, we value the createdness of the world, and also the fact that a human was created male or female. [...] And the gender ideology that relativises the mystery of man and woman is a growing concern. The natural laws governing the form and content of human communities are increasingly under aggressive threat from open society and LGBT ideology. It is therefore very important that the rights of children and the rights of future generations are protected at a constitutional level." (Vejkey Imre (KDNP), General debate on the ninth amendment of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary until closure, 2020 fall term).

TC5 On the role of the EU and foreign-funded organisations in Hungary

This category contains statements presenting the EU/West as a threat, mostly in response to EU's responses to Hungary's restrictive approach to the rule of law:

"It is obvious that the citizens of Hungary said no to illegal migration in a referendum, and that Hungary has a very strict package of child protection laws, saying no to the sexualisation of underage children. Is there a problem with democracy on the left and in the European Union I ask. Brussels expects member states to take a pro-migrant stance. And it would make gender ideological madness the norm in Europe. We, on the other hand, continue to say: no war, no migration, no gender. We are not prepared to give in to this now, or later." (Mónika Dunai (Fidesz), Hour of instant questions, 2023 spring term)

TC6 Anti-immigration/Islamophobia:

This category includes contentions where immigration in general, and Muslims in particular are presented as a threat to Hungary. These arguments are often articulated in response to the criticism from the EU, as the example below shows:

"The homosexual Bundestag representative stated: 'I am grateful to Viktor Orbán for closing the Balkan route in 2015 and thereby slowing down the flooding of our country with Islamists, because he did much more for the sexual diversity of Germany and Europe than all the free brave flag-wavers' – so he said this to his fellow left-wing and liberal representatives. So, my fellow Members of Parliament, distinguished attendees, a truly involved, homosexual German representative who read this law did not find anything in it like those who did not read it, only in the general hysteria against Hungary, always at the instigation of their Hungarian allies, they tried repeatedly to attack Hungary." (Rétvári Bence, (Fidesz), Speeches before the agenda, 2021 fall term)

In this particular case, the anti-immigration/Islamophobic trope is supported by the protection of sexual diversities narrative, illustrating how anti-gender and anti-immigration/Islamophobia rhetoric can be used to reinforce each other.

TC7 Trans issues/activism

Mentions of trans people were not found in our sample of parliamentary debates prior to 2020. The intensification of this narrative in 2021 coincided with the introduction of the Child Protection Law which caused resistance from the EU and Hungarian civil society. Whenever transgender people are mentioned – aside from occasional solidarity mentions from the opposition – they appear in parliamentary discourse in discussions around legal gender reassignment and as well as in relation to protecting children from books portraying transgender people, or information about different gender identities taught at schools:

"Accordingly, it is necessary to define the concept of gender at birth. Given that it is not possible to change the biological gender completely, it is necessary to state in legislation that it is not possible to change it in the civil registry either. That is, after any gender reassignment surgery, the civil registry data will remain unchanged

regarding gender." (Vejkey Imre (KDNP), General debate on the ninth amendment of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary until closure, 2020 fall term)

Hungarian Media

Introduction

The rationale for the choice of three news outlets is as follows.

Magyar Hírlap (Eng. the Hungarian Newspaper) was chosen since it is a particularly influential right-wing newspaper. The newspaper was founded in 1968 during state socialism and was privatised after political changes in 1989.¹⁹ The last print issue appeared on 09.07.2022; since then it is online-only. Until 2006 it was considered to be a liberal outlet, however, over the following years it was re-oriented towards a conservative and right-wing, as well as "anti-globalist", political direction – it was the first to start using the expression 'gender ideology' in its published articles²⁰. Magyar Hírlap is a pro-government daily, and also one of the main beneficiaries of state advertising. The newspaper often publishes interviews with governmental politicians, and cites statements or analyses of government-friendly analysts. A key reason for its inclusion was the prevalence of opinion pieces, which include a selection written by members of the public.

Válasz Online (<https://www.valaszonline.hu/>) was chosen as the centrist media outlet (Válasz means answer in Hungarian). This newspaper was founded in December 2018 by editors and journalists from the conservative right-wing weekly newspaper Heti Válasz, after it was discontinued. The editors built up Válasz Online with their own work, but claim to follow the Heti Válasz traditions. Válasz Online has no print edition.

It is widely considered to be a high quality outlet, which publishes a limited number of long-read, well-researched pieces, including interviews, analyses and opinion essays. They set out to present a form of conservatism that is not aligned with the government, defining

¹⁹ The 1989-90 events in Hungary, were part of a broader transformation of the Eastern Block, marked by the collapse of the Soviet Empire. On October 23, 1989, following round-table talks involving representatives from the government, opposition groups and other stakeholders, Hungary transitioned to a multi-party system and free elections. It changed its name from the Hungarian People's Republic to the Republic of Hungary. The 1990 elections resulted in a coalition government led by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which marked the beginning of Hungary's transition to democracy. The economic system changed from a socialist command economy to a market-based economy. Political and social transition included a shift to a more individual approach compared to previous Soviet collectivism and its centralised structure of society. See, for example, Bozoki, András. *The roundtable Talks of 1989: the Genesis of Hungarian Democracy: Analysis and Documents*. Budapest: Central European University Press 2002.

²⁰ Antoni R, 2022, "From pre-school education to the Istanbul Convention: a long decade of gender panic in Hungary", *444.hu*

itself as a form of middle-class conservatism and seeking a “middle ground” in the so-called “gender wars”. They are also particularly interested in how religious people see the “gender debate”. They give a platform to conservative religious people as well, but emphasise that the church cannot be subordinate to the government. They have also published a debate on homosexuality and the church, with two opposing sides, establishing that “homosexuality is a sin” is a permissible opinion. Nevertheless their analysis takes the concept of gender seriously and they avoid perpetuating “fake news” on “gender war” issues. Válasz Online gives space to debates where readers can send in essays or counter opinions to a previously published opinion piece.

Telex.hu was chosen as a liberal-progressive media outlet. It is one of the most-read opposition-aligned portals. Telex.hu was founded on 2nd October 2020, by the editorial board of Index.hu; the board had resigned from Index.hu when ownership of that outlet changed, resulting in loss of independence from the government. Telex often publishes comprehensive critical analyses of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s anti-gender politics, giving voice to NGO experts. It is, however, open to criticism of ‘identity politics’. They also give space and coverage to progressive NGOs like Budapest Pride or Political Capital, often publishing detailed reports on civil demonstrations and roundtable discussions, and lengthy interviews with key activists. They also publish relevant investigative reports, for example on the international expansion of MCC (Mathias Corvinus Collegium) – the conservative Hungarian educational institution funded by Viktor Orbán’s right-wing government.

Data sampling and selection

Due to the vast quantity of search results on these issues in Hungary, the media study search was narrowed to the years 2020-2023, when the gender debate was the most prevalent in the Hungarian context. For the collection of materials, the websites of the following journals were used as sources: <https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/> / <https://telex.hu/> / <https://www.valaszonline.hu/>

Telex and Válasz Online are exclusively online; Magyar Hírlap’s recent digital-only transition means that some relevant articles were published only in print, and these were accessed through the ADT Digital Compendium of Science (at Arcanum.hu), which is Hungary’s largest and continuously expanding digital periodical database.

The graph below illustrates the proportional distribution of articles across newspapers in the Hungary media sample for all search terms.

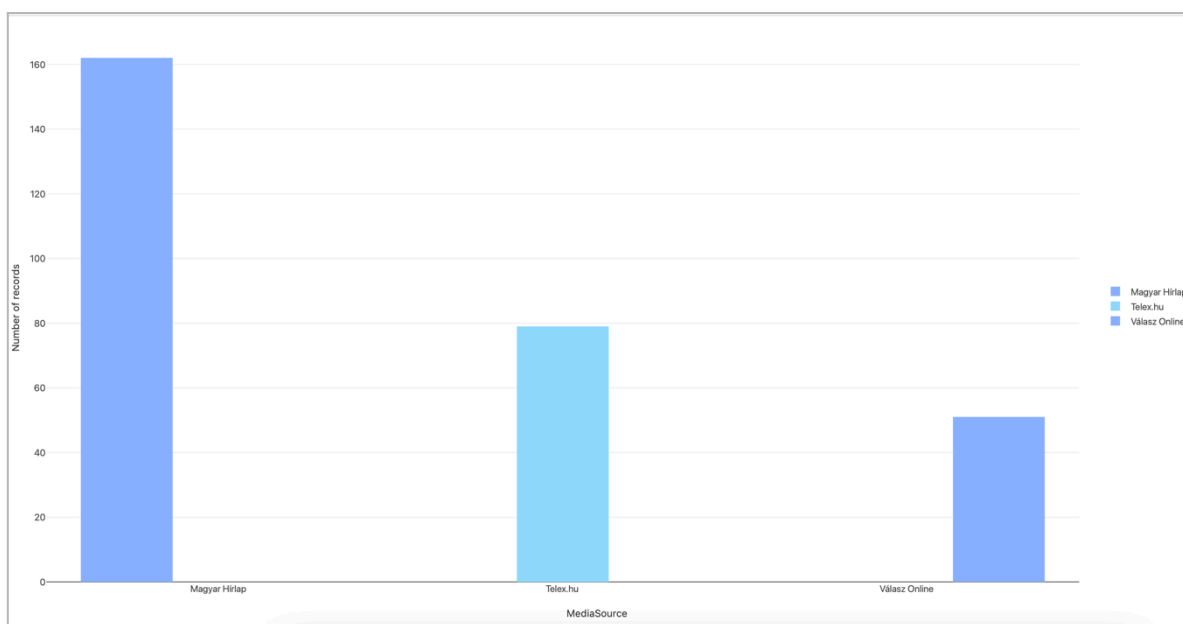


Table HU4: Proportional distribution of Articles across newspapers for all Search Terms

The largest number of articles was collected from the newspaper Magyar Hírlap at 55% with 162 articles, Telex at 27% with 79 articles, and Válasz Online at 17.5% with 51 articles.

Media source	No. Articles	Time period sampled
Magyar Hírlap	162	01.01.2020 – 26.06.2023
Telex.hu	79	02.10.2020 – 26.06.2023
Válasz Online	51	09.12.2018 – 08.07.2023
Total:	292	

Table HU5: Number of Articles collected, total and by newspaper

In total, 292 articles were entered into the database, 164 obtained through a search using the term 'gender ideology' and a further 128 by using additional search terms: 'Feminism' (and its grammatical variants), 'LMBT' (LGBT and its variants), 'transznemű' (Transgender and its variants). Of these, the term 'Feminist' yielded most results with 37 articles, 'LMBT' with 33 articles, 'transznemű' with 26, 'gender' with 10. Additional articles were found via combined search-term.

Data presentation

Trigger issues across all three newspapers and all search terms

'Rights' (human, minorities, LGBTIQ+, women's) is the most frequent trigger issue in the entire Hungarian media sample, yielding 66 articles. The articles in this category discuss legal issues and human rights in relation to diverse topics, including: abortion in Hungary and abroad, adoption, the Istanbul Convention, prostitution, pornography, and migration. The next most popular trigger issue was 'sex-education in schools' (41 articles), whilst the third most frequent trigger issue was 'World politics: EU' (35 articles).

Presentation of trigger issues in relation to 'gender ideology'

The next stage examined how the ideologically loaded and politically disputed idea of 'gender ideology' was reproduced in news coverage and opinion/comment, the issues it was associated with, and how it was defined and characterised.

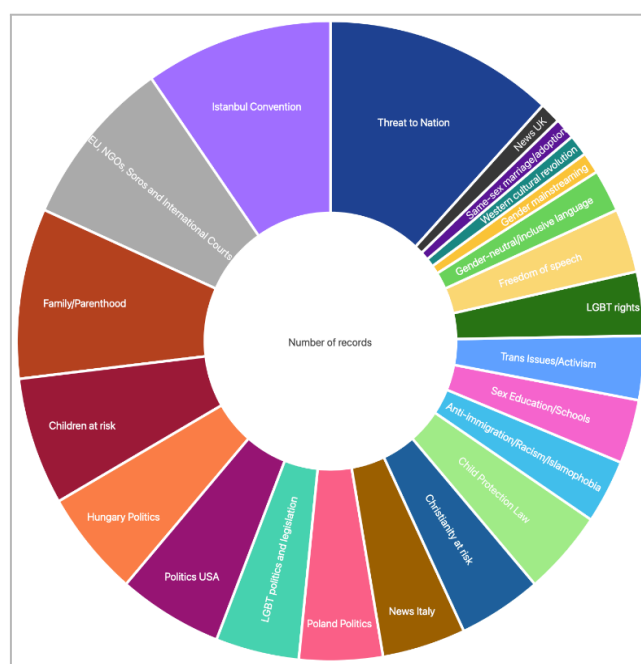


Figure HU6: Distribution of Trigger Issues in relation to the Phrase 'gender ideology'

The phrase 'gender ideology' was most frequently used in articles with the following trigger issues: 'threat to nation' (12%, 11 articles); 'Istanbul Convention' (10%, 9 articles) and 'EU, NGOs, Soros and International Courts' (9%, 8 articles).

Distribution of articles by newspapers

The graph below shows the distribution of all articles in which the phrase 'gender ideology' (genderideológi*, genderideológia, genderideológiát, genderideológiában) was mentioned by newspapers.

Note: * denotes wildcard search

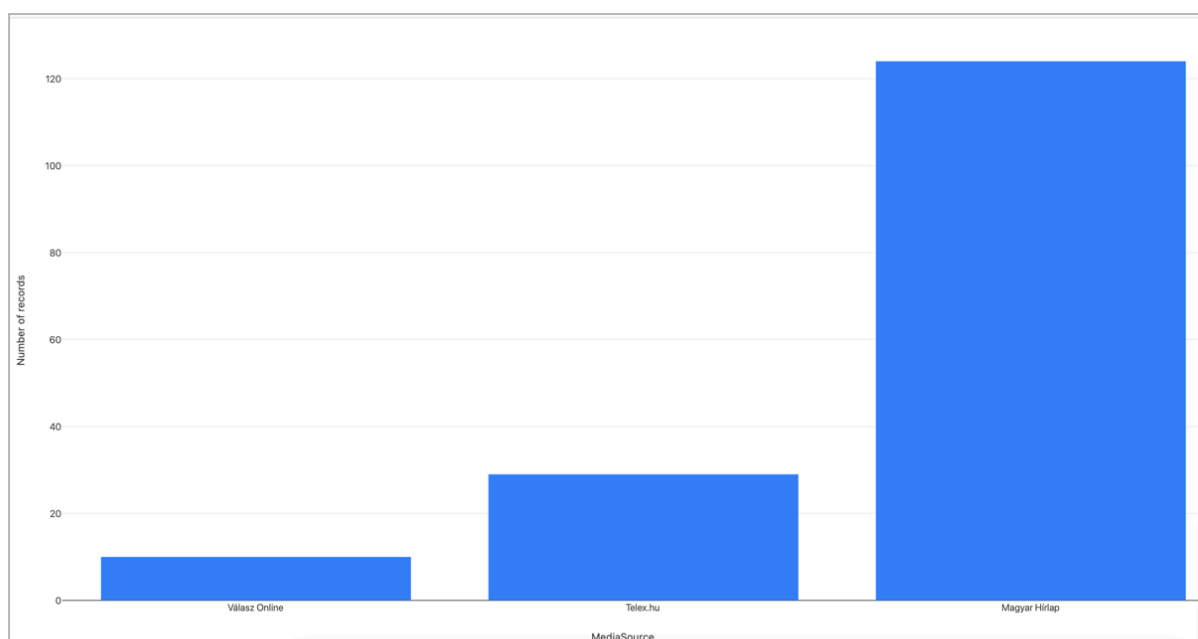


Table HU7: *Reproduction of 'gender ideology' in News Coverage across all Sampled Newspapers*

The pro-government newspaper Magyar Hírlap had used the phrase 'gender ideology' most frequently in our sample – in 76% of all cases (124 articles). It appeared in Telex.hu in 18% of all cases (29 articles) and Válasz online just 6% (10 articles).

Genres in which the phrase 'gender ideology' is used

News pieces and opinion pieces are the two most prevalent genres where the term 'gender ideology' was used 40% (66 articles) and 39% (64 articles) respectively. The rest of the sample consisted of reports 9% (14 articles), and articles and interviews 7% (11 articles).

Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term 'gender ideology'

The writers who have used the term most frequently are Mariann Öry (12 articles), Károly Lóránt (10 articles), and ŐM (8 articles). All three authors publish in Magyar Hírlap. Below are some examples of the 'gender ideology' presentation in the articles written by the above-mentioned authors.

In an article in Magyar Hírlap (30.01.2021), ŐM mentions 'gender ideology' along with immigration as one of the growing threats to the European unity, a direction which, according to the author, is pioneered by Germany:

"If Germany, and thus Europe, takes a left-wing direction, it means that the principle of aid instead of work, the image of a federal Europe, pro-immigration and gender ideology will become even more pronounced, Balázs Orbán, Parliamentary and Strategic State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office (pictured) warned in today's podcast of Magyar Hírlap's Faktum podcast on the German elections. "

ÓM features Balázs Orbán, who talks about the decline of the German Christian Democrats party and dangers that the current composition of the European Parliament – “with its liberal bourgeois majority” – pose to the integrity of Europe. In another example, Lóránt Károly in an article in Magyar Hírlap (11.12.2020) features an interview with John Schindler, a former US National Security Agency official, in the conservative online portal The Federalist:

“Schindler points to the process by which the old left was replaced by what he calls the cultural left, which no longer aims at a fairer distribution of income, as the left parties of the past did, but at the representation and imposition of multiculturalism, gender ideology and the like. This ideology has been coupled with a big-capitalist right which no longer represents traditional right-wing values but only its own profit interests, for example by supporting unrestricted and often illegal immigration.”

What unites these articles, besides the lack of reflection on the meaning of ‘gender ideology’ is the idea of a threat that it presumably poses to nation states and the European Union. Also of note is the intersection of anti-gender and anti-immigration narratives in these examples.

Position of ‘gender ideology’ as a keyword

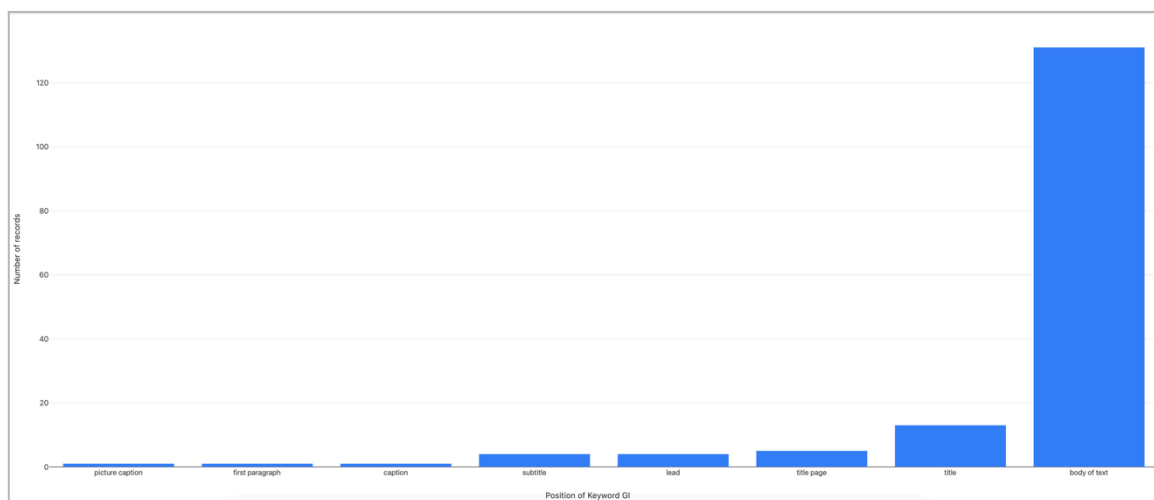


Table HU8: *Position of ‘gender ideology’ in the Articles in all Sampled Newspapers*

The term 'gender ideology' predominately emerged in the body of the selected texts (131 articles), followed by the presentation in the title of the texts (13 articles). Magyar Hírlap is the newspaper that featured the phrase 'gender ideology' in the title or the lead most frequently, a finding which fits with the general extent of its usage in coverage and its presumed level of recognition for its readers.

Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not

The review of the entire Hungarian media sample shows that in only 7% of instances (11 articles) were quotation marks used for the phrase 'gender ideology', whereas in 91% of cases (150 articles) no quotation marks were used. In 2% (3 articles) a mixed use (with and without quotation marks throughout the article) was noted.

Quotation marks are used primarily in Telex.hu 81% (9 articles), and Válasz online – 18% (2 articles). 'Gender ideology' in Magyar Hírlap emerges exclusively without quotation marks in this data corpus. (See [Appendix A: Figure AB14 \(HU7\) – 'Presentation \(by newspaper\) of quotation mark usage for 'gender ideology''](#))

The presence or absence of quotation marks does not necessarily reflect the author's position in relation to 'gender ideology'. The examples below illustrate this point. Both authors write in Telex.hu, both assuming critical distance to the phrase; however, in one instance the phrase is used without, and in one with quotation marks.

In Telex.hu (02.02.2021) András Mizsur critically discusses the government's proposal to change the model of higher education. It was proposed that the majority of universities would be removed from the scope of state-run institutions and transferred to trusts (or "government-friendly advisory boards" as the author describes them, established specifically for this purpose). There was strong opposition to this restructuring, but the government, as the author states, claimed to have identified a group of conservative students supporting the model change, as:

"...students at most universities have been inundated with liberal filth, peppered with LGBTQP propaganda. However, the model change could now bring about significant changes, finally increasing the conservative student population again. Let's ask the new leaders to stop enjoying their newfound status and start doing something positive. Free us from the reign of terror of gender ideology."

In this instance, "gender ideology" is presented as a quote, where the author discusses the anti-gender views expressed by Egyetemi Ellenállás (University Resistance) on their website and Facebook posts, where they identify universities as battlefields against "liberal dictatorship".

The term 'gender-ideology' emerges in Fruzsina Előd's article on 21.10.2021 in quotation marks in her discussion of Hungary's then-approaching 2022 elections. The author reflects on the ways in which politicians thematise such issues as migration and gender to achieve political gains. She identifies similarities between the campaign of the Law and Justice party in Poland and Orbán's political campaigns.

“The 2022 Hungarian parliamentary elections are fast approaching, and after the all-consuming migration focus in 2018, Fidesz may need another ‘us and them’ type of confrontation. Worldviews and social movements – which are extremely diverse, by the way – can be used to this end, under the umbrella of ‘gender ideology’.”

Is a definition of ‘gender ideology’ offered, if yes, whose definition.

Gender ideology was defined once in Telex.hu, and 20 times in Magyar Hírlap.

Fruzsina Előd’s article from 21.10.2020 in Telex.hu defines ‘gender ideology’ as an umbrella term and examines how constructing ‘gender ideology’ as a threat fuses a range of different issues together, ranging from prohibiting children’s books, or Pride events to rejecting the Istanbul Convention. She quotes Judit Varga, the Minister of Justice, who described the Istanbul Convention as a “Trojan horse of gender ideology”. Viktor Orbán, in his memorandum on the need to renew the European People's Party, put the gender issues on the same level of threat with migration: “We gave up on the family model based on the marriage of a woman and a man and fell into the arms of gender ideology. Instead of supporting the birth of a child, we see mass migration as the solution to our population problems” (quoted from Előd’s article).

In her article in Magyar Hírlap (20.11.2020) Katalin Koncz reflects on the meaning of gender as a concept:

“It is not only elusive for the general public, but even for researchers, as it blurs and confuses the meanings and phenomena of biological sex, social gender, social roles, gender identity, and sexual orientation.” The author adds: “The distortion and appropriation of the scientifically interpretable concept of gender for political purposes deserves special attention if it stretches the boundaries of our Christian culture and is integrated into the educational system”.

She continues: “Today's gender-ideological trends are divorced from scientific foundations. Gender is understood as sexual identity. They follow the ‘non-binary’ concept, according to which there are countless variations and intermediate states between the two extremes (female and male), and the most diverse sexual minorities can be placed on this continuum. According to the genderfluid ‘theory’, the biological differences between the sexes are far from sharp, there are non-binary people, ‘transgenders’, it is difficult to map the range of terms, which is the basis for the dozens of gender designations. [...] A strong advocacy ability and propaganda based on huge financial and institutional resources supports the gender ideology that penetrates the socialisation process.”

Dániel Kacsoh (11.08.2020) interviews Pál Völner, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Justice. In this interview, Pál Völner provides his definition of 'gender ideology' in relation to the Istanbul Convention.

“All the victim protection measures included in the document have been incorporated into Hungarian law, and we have also published this in a table. But we are not willing to accept formulations that fall within the scope of gender ideology”.

Pál Völner particularly emphasises his disagreement with the intersectionality of experiences, captured in the Istanbul Convention, which in the author's opinion would particularly impact such issues as immigration and school education.

Pál Dippold in his article from 05.10.2020 defines “gender ideology” as a threat to biological sexes, and consequently to women's rights:

“Soros's left-liberals are constantly attacking us. They vilify you with false accusations, not shying away from blackmailing, citing one-sided and biased sources. Women were pushed forward in these matters in the name of gender equality. This, let's say, is quite interesting in those times in which, along the lines of gender ideology, they are working on erasing biological sexes.”

Empowerment of women and theoretical work on gender are placed, in his argument, in opposition, as the author sees an apparent contradiction in promoting gender equality and women's equality.

Actors mentioned in all three newspapers

Actors (Linked Objects)	MediaSource				Total
	Magyar Hírlap	Telex.hu	Válasz Online		
	Orbán Viktor	12	12	6	30
	Varga Judit	6	3	1	10
	Párkányi Eszter	7	1	0	8
	Orbán Balázs	6	2	0	8
	Novák Katalin	4	4	0	8
	Karácsony Gergely	4	3	0	7
	Joe Biden	5	0	2	7
	Szánthó Miklós	5	1	0	6
Rod Dreher	3	2	1	6	
Dobrev Klára	6	0	0	6	
Ursula von der Leyen	4	1	0	5	
Gyurcsány Ferenc	5	0	0	5	
Fekete-Győr András	4	1	0	5	
Donáth Anna	4	0	1	5	
Szabó Tímea	4	0	0	4	
Pope Francis	3	1	0	4	
Márki-Zay Péter	3	1	0	4	
Mark Rutte	3	0	1	4	
Kövér László	1	3	0	4	
Kocsis Máté	1	3	0	4	

Table HU9: Actors mentioned in all three Sampled Newspapers

Across all newspapers, Viktor Orbán – the prime minister of Hungary – was mentioned most frequently, in 30 articles. Judit Varga, a MP as of July 2023, but who served as Minister of

Justice during the sampling period features in 10 articles; Eszter Párkányi (8 articles) is an analyst at the Alapjogokért Központ (Center for Fundamental Rights); Balázs Orbán (8 articles) is Political Director of the Prime Minister's office; Katalin Novák (8 articles) is the president of Hungary.

Hungarian Controversy Mapping

Introduction

Between June and September 2021, Hungary enacted a controversial Child Protection Law. The law, formally known as the "Act on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Children " bans the portrayal or promotion of homosexuality and transgender issues to minors in schools, advertisements, and media. In fact, the law effectively stigmatises and discriminates against LGBTIQ+ individuals, not least through conflating homosexuality and transgender identities with paedophilia.

There have been ongoing debates and protests against the law, both within Hungary and internationally. LGBTIQ+ activists and human rights organisations have strongly condemned the law, expressing concerns about how it further marginalises an already vulnerable community, and its negative impact on the mental health and well-being of LGBTIQ+ people in Hungary. The European Union has initiated legal action against Hungary over concerns about its compatibility with EU values and principles. Some EU member states have also expressed concerns about the law.

The choice was made to focus on the "Child Protection Law" as a controversy to be mapped, based on its potential to enrich our understanding of how anti-gender ideas, circulating in media and politics, are being mobilised in wider public debate as well as by anti-gender actors and tactics.

Methodology

The first step in this controversy analysis involved gathering a wide sample of opinion pieces and interviews. In total 52 articles were collected. Additionally, the social media links of organisations and individuals mentioned in the media because of their implication in the controversy, were collected. These steps informed a mapping of the key issues relating to the controversy and constructed a detailed timeline of related events.

The Child Protection Law – measures and related events in Hungary

25.05.2021 Máté Kocsis, the leader of Fidesz, issues the draft of the new child protection law ("law for the stricter measures against paedophile criminals"). "There is no excuse for paedophile acts and there cannot be any excuse. They must be punished with the most severe penalties, no matter how they are committed," the Fidesz politician wrote on his Facebook page (25.05.2021, Telex.hu). The package, originally intended as an anti-paedophile law, was amended at the last minute to include, among other things, a ban on advertising homosexuality to minors.

10.06.2021 Government MPs add anti-LGBTIQ+ amendments to the anti-paedophile law, creating national and international outrage. The amendments package, as the right-wing newspaper Magyarhirlap.hu reported 10.06.2021, was adopted by the legislative committee of the Parliament in order "to strengthen the measures against paedophile offenders and formulate regulations regarding sexual education lessons at schools".

More specifically, the amended law states:

6. Amendment of Act CCXI of 2011 on the Protection of Families Article 10 (1) Paragraph (1) of Article 1 of Act CCXI of 2011 on the Protection of Families (hereinafter: the Act) shall be replaced by the following:

"(1) The State shall protect the institution of family and marriage, also because of their intrinsic dignity and value, with particular regard to the parent-child relationship, in which the mother is a woman and the father is a man, which is the basis of the family relationship."

(2) The Csvt. Article 1(2) of the Act shall be replaced by the following provision:

"(2) The protection of orderly family relations and the right of children to self-identity in accordance with their sex at birth are of particular importance for the protection of physical, mental and spiritual health."

(3) The following Article 5/A is added to the Act:

"Section 5/A In the interests of the objectives of this Act and the protection of children, it shall be prohibited to make pornographic content available to persons under the age of eighteen, as well as content that depicts sexuality for its own sake or promotes or displays deviation from the identity of the sex of birth, gender reassignment or homosexuality."

7. Amendment of Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education

Section 11 (1) The following paragraph (12) shall be added to Section 9 of Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education (hereinafter referred to as the Nktv.):

"(12) When providing lessons on sexual culture, sexual life, sexual orientation and sexual development to pupils, special attention shall be paid to the provisions of Article XVI (1) of the Fundamental Law. These sessions shall not be aimed at promoting gender nonconformity, gender reassignment or homosexuality."

14.06.2021 A large coalition of organisations, Amnesty International Magyarország, Budapest Pride, Háttér Társaság, a Labrisz Leszbikus Egyesület, Magyar Helsinki Bizottság, Prizma Közösség, Szívárványcsaládokért Alapítvány and TASZ organised a demonstration near the Parliament in which ten thousand people participated. Budapest Pride encouraged the press and fellow NGOs to use the expression "homophobic law" instead of Child Protection Law. The opposition, when talking about the Child Protection Law, either used quotation

marks, or referred to it as the “so-called child protection law”. Some NGOs referred to the child protection law as the “propaganda law” (propagandatörvény) (14.06.2021, hvg.hu).

10.06.2021 NGOs issued a joint statement protesting the law and calling on MPs not to vote for the law with the amendments. They compared the Hungarian child protection law with the Russian propaganda of homosexuality law (15.06.2021, Tasz.hu).

15.06.2021 The parliament voted for the Child Protection Law with the anti-LGBTIQ+ amendments. Jobbik also voted in favour of it, breaking the unity of the opposition shortly before the elections (they promised that after the election, if in power they would remove the anti-LGBTIQ+ elements).

16.06.2021 Another demonstration took place opposing President János Áder from signing the law into effect.

24.06.2021 During his speech in Brussels Viktor Orbán claimed that he used to be a “defender of homosexuals”. “I am a fighter for their rights. I was a freedom fighter in the communist regime. Homosexuality was punished and I fought for their freedom and their rights. So, I am defending the rights of homosexuals, but this law is not about that,” Orbán told reporters on his arrival for a meeting of EU leaders. “It's not about homosexuals. The law is about letting parents decide what kind of sex education they want for their kids, (this) right should exclusively belong to parents” (24.06.2021, reuters.com).

28.06.2021 24.hu reported that two gay doctors were beaten up on the streets of Pécs.

29.06.2021 The oppositional newspaper Telex.hu criticised the anti-LGBTIQ+ amendment to the child protection law as obscure and harmful.

02.07.2021 The far-right students’ group Egyetemi Ellenállás protested against the inclusive attitude of ELTE (Eötvös Loránd University).

07.07.2021 The Líra bookstore received a fine of 250,000 HUF, on the basis of the law of consumer protection, for the children’s book *Micsoda család* (What A Family) which portrays a family with two mothers. The bookstore was fined for not explicitly stating that the book contains “elements deviating from traditional gender roles”. The book was published by Szivárványcsaládokért Alapítvány (Foundation for Rainbow Families).

“Bookshops are not prepared for prior content censorship, which they are not even able to do because of the publication of about 10,000 new Hungarian books a year,’ Líra responded in a statement, arguing that the LGBTIQ+ content was obvious because customers could see that the book is about rainbow families. As a preventive measure, Líra bookstores put the following note on their entrance doors: ‘In this bookshop we also sell books with non-traditional content.’” (07.07.2021, Telex.hu).

08.07.2021 The Child Protection Law came into effect. The NGO TASZ encouraged people not to abide by the Child Protection Law: “The Homophobic Propaganda Act is inapplicable

and uninterpretable as legislation, but it can still cause enormous damage if its provisions are enforced." (444.hu)

08.07.2021 On the Government Info site, in answering the question of the opposition portal 444.hu, Gergely Gulyás (Minister of the Prime Minister's Office) was unable to define what 'popularising homosexuality' means in the child protection law.

12.07.2021 The conservative, government-friendly Batthyány Association of Professors issued a statement against gender ideology:

"The Batthyány Circle of Professors is deeply concerned to see that expectations and practices that are fundamentally at odds with the conservative-civic values that underpin our lives and thinking are becoming widely accepted in European politics. We are concerned that neo-liberal and neo-Marxist principles are gaining a stronger voice in domestic citizens' political circles and in the pro-neo-liberal, independent and civilian media and organisations in our country. We do not agree that the nation is an obsolete historical construct that needs to be replaced by supranational organisation. We express our dismay at the movements that claim to valorise the role of social gender, to devalue birth sex, or to oppose the two." (Pbk.info.hu)

21.07.2021 Viktor Orbán announces that there will be a referendum on the Child Protection Law, following "pressure" from Brussels.

The referendum announced by the Prime Minister consisted of the following questions:

- Do you support public education facilities having educational programs for underage children, without the parents' consent, that introduce sexual orientations?
- Do you support the propagation of gender reassignment treatments to underage children?
- Do you support making gender reassignment treatments available to underage children?
- Do you support the unrestricted sharing of media content with underage children that influences their sexual development?
- Do you support sharing media content with underage children that portrays gender change [sic]? (Telex.hu)

06.08.2021 Implementation regulations were issued to accompany the child protection law:

Section 20/A (1) It shall be prohibited to display or exhibit in a shop window any deviation from the self-identity of the sex of birth, any change of sex, any product depicting sexuality for its own purpose, or any product displaying or promoting homosexuality and intended for children.

(2) Within 200 metres of any entrance to an educational institution, child and youth protection institution, church or other place of worship, no product may be displayed that deviates from the identity of the sex of birth, changes the sex, depicts sexuality for its own purpose, or displays or promotes homosexuality.

(3) Products for children which imply a gender non-conforming identity, gender reassignment, sexual depictions for sexual purposes, and products which display or promote homosexuality may only be marketed in closed packaging separately from other products.”

16.08.2021 The Magyar Kétfarkú Kutypárt (Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party) filed a legal complaint against the referendum, arguing that: “The Parliament has already passed the law, the referendum is practically meaningless. The referendum questions are unclear and misleading, worded as if sex-change operations were possible in Hungary, and conflate transsexuality and intersexuality.” (Telex.hu)

30.11.2021 Parliament voted for the Child Protection Law referendum to be held at the same time as parliamentary elections in April 2022 (hirado.hu).

21.12.2021 Budapest Pride protested against the appointment of Katalin Novák as head of state. They point out that she is on friendly terms with public figures from countries where LGBTIQ+ communities are prosecuted (Budapestpride.hu).

21.01.2022 Magyar Pszichológiai Társaság (Hungarian Psychological Association) and Magyar Pszichiátriai Társaság (Hungarian Psychiatric Association) issued a joint professional statement against the Child Protection Law (mpt.hu).



28.01.2022 Feminist economist Anna Betlen gave an interview in the governmental propaganda journal Mandiner, criticising the recognition of trans identities by Magyar Pszichológiai Társaság.

11.02.2022 The Governmental Information Centre launched a billboard campaign “Let’s protect our children” - on the billboards (displayed throughout the country), a mother is hugging her young daughter, while the message on the poster says: "We believe that the right to educate children about sex belongs solely to parents and not to activist groups" (text and image source: ripost.hu).

Figure HU10: Governmental Information Centre billboard campaign

March - April 2022 NGOs, led by Háttér Társaság and Amnesty International, carried out a campaign to make the Child Protection Referendum invalid. They encouraged people to put two X-s, by framing it as “giving an invalid answer to an invalid question” (ervenytelenul.hu).

09.04.2022 The government sought to punish the NGOs that were partners in the anti-referendum campaign, but later the Curia (The Supreme Court of Hungary) annulled the fines that were imposed (Labrisz.hu).

11.10.2022 A parliamentary group dealing with LGBTIQ+ rights was established, "MP group for a Multicolour Hungary" (24.hu).

23.11.2022 President Katalin Novák welcomed activists from Háttér Társaság in her office. They asked her: to stand up for social minorities and openly condemn attacks and hate speech against them; to introduce a bill that will allow legal gender and name change again; to encourage the education of people working in public institutions and bodies, and the application of an inclusive approach in public offices; to communicate to decision-makers the importance of introducing HIV combination prevention; not to sign into law any legislation that may be passed by parliament during her presidency that would undermine the safety, freedom or equality of LGBTIQ+ people (24.hu).

23.11.2022 The far right organisation HVIM expresses outrage Katalin Novák's engagement in conversation with "LMBTQP" people (far right actors put P at the end of "LMBTQ" spectrum, referring to paedophile) (magyarjelen.hu).

23.02.2023 Máté Kocsis (Fidesz faction leader) indicates that in autumn the government intends to make the child protection law even stricter, and everyone should prepare for serious debate (Telex.hu).

08.04.2023 15 EU states join the EU procedure against Hungary due to the Child Protection Law (hirklikk.hu).

11.04.2023 The Parliament proposed the 'whistle-blower' law, which enables anyone to report citizens who question the constitutionally recognised role of marriage and the family, the fact that a child's gender corresponds to the child's sex assigned at birth, or the Hungarian lifestyle (noizz.hu).

23.04.2023 Katalin Novák refuses to sign the 'whistleblower' law (magyarnemzet.hu).

13.06.2023 The government-funded Mathias Corvinus Collegium Foundation (MCC) bought the book chain Libri in its entirety. They had previously bought a share in 2020; by 2022 the social science section was full of anti-gender, anti-trans and anti-feminist volumes, published by MCC.

07.07.2023 Libri book stores begin to cover books in wrapping foil, even books where LGBTIQ+ characters are only marginal (hvg.hu).

08.07.2023 Péter Ungár, an opposition MP, posted on Facebook, a couple of days before Budapest pride, that nonbinary people do not exist.

14.07.2023 The Budapest Government Office fined the publisher Lóra with a fine of 12 million HUF (32,000 EUR) for not covering the volumes of *Heartstopper* in foil and for putting them in the children's/teens section. The creative director of Lóra, Krisztián Nyáry, noted that they can appeal only after paying the fine.

16.07.2023 The Government Information Centre reacted to the Budapest Pride March which took place the day before. They claim that the sexuality of adults is a private matter, but “child protection” is a public cause (Magyarnemzet.hu).

18.07.2023 The writer Natália Szeifert launched a website for books affected by the homophobic law, entitled Fólia Nélkül (Without Foil) <https://folianelkul.com/>. The site aims to provide an opportunity to read free excerpts from the books which are covered in the bookstores as customers cannot open and look into them (Hvg.hu).

20.07.2023 Libri considers removing all LGBTIQ+-related content from certain bookshops regardless of foil-covering, but later denies this in the media.

20.07.2023 Labrisz issued a statement on its website arguing that they are not breaking the law because it is not clear what “promotion” of homosexuality means (labrisz.hu).

25.07.2023 University students distributed banned books and foil-covered books in a protest in front of a Libri bookstore in Budapest (444.hu).

01.08.2023 34 authors of the publisher Jelenkor issued a protest statement against what they term as a 'shameful homophobic law' (litera.hu).

Actor mapping

In total, 41 seed URLs from organisations and actors that contributed to or commented on the controversy, and featured in the media coverage, were compiled (See [Appendix C Table AC14: HU9 – ‘Seed URLs of organisations and actors that contributed to or commented on the controversy: located on the anti-gender side of the issue’](#)). The mapping was conducted on Issue Crawler to a Depth of 2, co-link analysis by page. The results present themselves as a rather disjointed map (see below). At the very centre of the network, the official website of the Hungarian Government is visible.

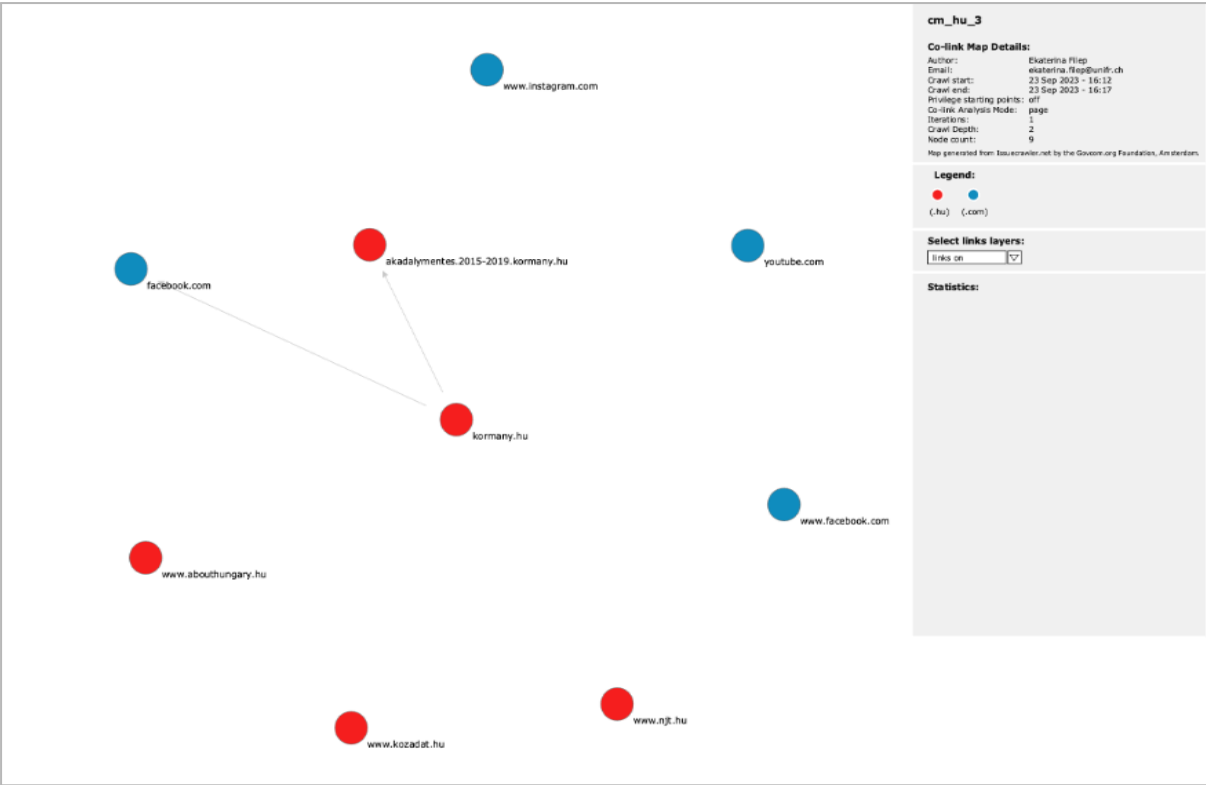


Table HU11: Network Cluster for Hungarian Controversy

Tactics

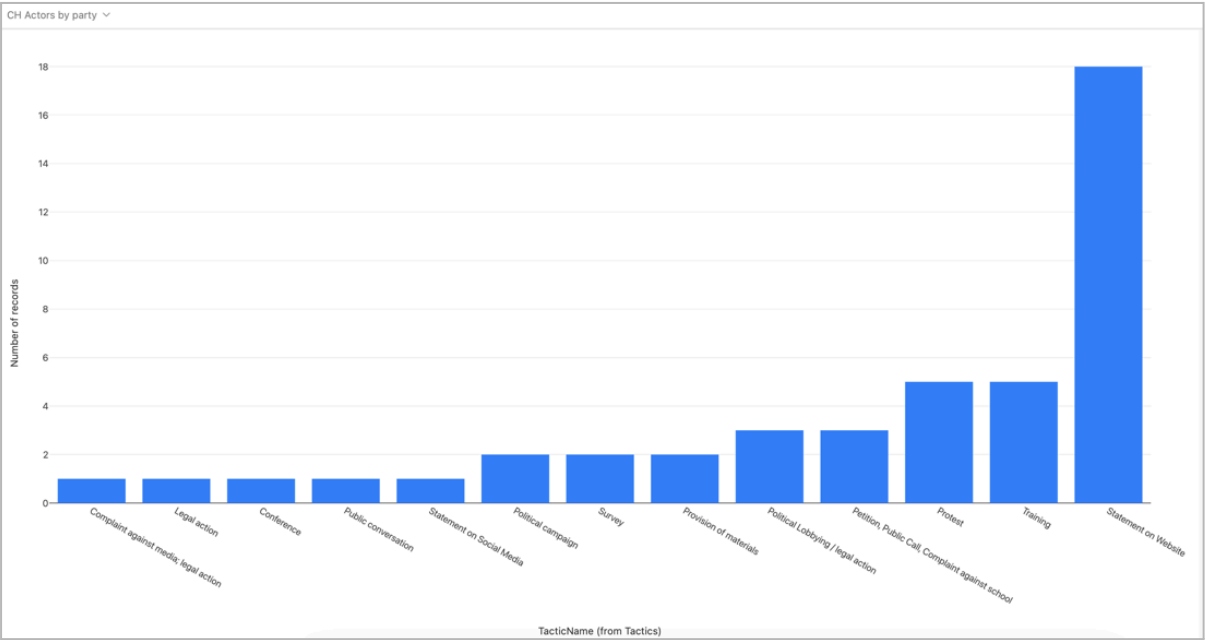


Table HU12: Representations of Tactics employed by all Actors in a given Controversy

As this graph shows, statements on the website appear to be the most frequent tactic employed by the actors in this controversy (40%), followed by protest and training each at

11%. The prevalence of online activism can partially be attributed to the Covid-19 related measures at the time of the controversy.

Hungarian Case Study Findings

Introduction

The Hungarian government's anti-gender politics has attracted significant political and academic attention in recent years. Although the right-wing conservative Fidesz party has been in power since 2010, the intensification of anti-gender politics is frequently dated to the party and government's opposition to the Istanbul Convention, and the de-accreditation of Gender Studies MA programs, in 2017 (Kováts 2019). This intensification of anti-gender discourse was a conscious and strategic instrumentalization of the topic by Fidesz, aimed at strengthening its political position (Kováts/Pető 2017). Most recently, the Hungarian government passed several restrictive laws in the realm of gender equality. In December 2020, it banned the adoption of children by same-sex couples, and in March 2020 it sought to limit transgender rights by banning legal gender reassignment. In June 2021, the controversial Child Protection Law came into force, prohibiting the "exposure of minors" to LGBTIQ-related content. Government-organised and far-right media regularly publish content on anti-gender topics in an attempt to shape public perception of gender-related issues and manufacture moral panic. This data mapping report contributes to expanding the existing knowledge on anti-gender mobilisation in Hungary by mapping the current state of anti-gender discourses in Hungarian parliamentary, media and public discourses.

Hungarian Parliament Findings

The first segment of the Hungarian case-study focused on the analysis of 25 debates obtained from the records of the Hungarian Parliamentary library (2017-2023). The debates were chosen based on the presence of diverse gender and sexuality related topics. Following are the key findings which emerged from this analysis.

- Given the established importance of anti-gender discourses in Hungarian politics over the last six to seven years, the presence and importance of anti-gender mobilisation in parliament is surprisingly limited. For example, despite the importance of anti-trans and homophobic messaging to the Orbán government (Patakfalvi, 2022) – which is also continuously reproduced in pro-government media - only one debate advanced the anti-trans debate, and a further two featured data relevant to the category 'debating trans lives'. This finding is even more striking in light of the significant legislative changes which were enacted during this period, including the bill prohibiting the legal recognition of transgender people in Hungary, and the legislation preventing adoption by unmarried or non-heterosexual couples and single people. The prevailing balance of power in Hungarian politics offers an explanation to this finding. Since Fidesz-KDNP has a two-thirds majority in parliament, there is a lack of lengthy and engaged debates on the issues at stake,

such that parliamentary debate with the opposition is merely formal. (Wilkin 2018, Szelényi 2023).

- The data reveals rhetorical strategies that combine established forms of anti-gender propaganda with novel, opportunist and sensationalist arguments advanced by anti-gender actors in the Hungarian parliament. Whereas their well-established arguments are based on conservative ideas about gender and family, and their relation to the nation (Fodor 2022), the novel or sensationalist arguments tend to capitalise on newly emerging anti-gender narratives circulating in transnational discourse. These include fear mongering about “transgender kids in the West”, sex education and the “perversion” of kids, or the threat of paedophilia. For example, the independent MP János Volner, previously of the far-right party Jobbik, stated, in the context of the debate on tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children, that: “In the United States, for example, a Democratic senator has proposed to the US Congress that paedophilia should be considered a disease and not a crime, because these are people who are attracted to children and their activities should not in fact be criminalised”.
- It is a consistent feature of anti-gender discourse in this corpus that those advocating for LGBTIQ+ rights are cast by the government as ‘a danger to society’ because they promote particular policies and discourses. They are regularly held to threaten children, heteronormative families and the values of the nation through indoctrination. This is particularly evident in considerations of the Child Protection Law, which came into force in 2022, thereby introducing measures aimed at protecting children from content that authorities deemed to be promoting homosexuality or gender reassignment. This law stirred up significant public debate both nationally and transnationally. Given the importance of civic activism in opposing the law, the data shows a significant effort to delegitimize civil society in parliamentary debates. János Volner, for instance, stated that: “Prime Minister! Do you not find it absurd that social organisations which help liberal politics to gain ground by any means possible receive more foreign support than all the parties in Hungary which receive the most state support?” (Debate title: Do organisations influence public life in Hungary, Prime Minister?, 2020)
- LGBTIQ+ and transgender individuals and activists are delegitimised through a purposeful conflation of issues and arguments. Hungarian conservative MPs frequently conflate LGBTIQ+ issues with the topic of paedophilia. This is both a general conflation aimed at denigrating LGBTIQ+ people, and also a key way of attacking activism. This same conflation is reproduced by different political parties. For example, László Horváth of Fidesz stated the following in the context of the general debate on the draft on Hungary's 2024 central budget: “Here in the context of violence we continue to take a zero-tolerance position, violence of any kind, physical, psychological, emotional or whether it's paedophilia, whether it's

transgenderism, whether it's gender or even LGBTQ propaganda." Similarly, the independent MP János Volner, previously of the far-right party Jobbik, argued that "If there is a political tendency that can protect paedophilia, it is undoubtedly on the left". The same MP also added: "I would like to remind you that the LGBTQ movement has been embroiled in similar scandals on more than one occasion, and that it has been the case that people have been allowed to speak and make demands in public who have not only made demands on behalf of homosexuals, transgender people and other minorities [...] but have also started to advocate lowering the so-called age of consent". Evident in such narratives is a tactic of seeking to manufacture 'moral panic', an approach that according to a recent report *Manufacturing Moral Panic: Weaponizing Children to Undermine Gender Justice and Human Rights* is a particularly useful tool, because by presenting themselves as "adults, concerned with children's wellbeing and safety", politicians can appeal to people's moral duty to protect children (2021: 10).

- It is a regular feature of parliamentary discourse that MPs from Fidesz seek to present their arguments through the language of "rights and freedoms". The significance of this is that it presents the exclusion of civil society as a question of protecting rights and democracy. The exclusion of NGOs, including LGBTIQ+ groups, from collaborating with schools on educational programs, and the prohibition of sex education in schools, is framed as a parental right. This is held to mean the parents' right to educate their children on sexuality the way they want, and is related to a particular idea of children's rights, where the child has the right to his/her gender identity based on birth sex. For instance, Lőrinc Nacsá from KDNP argued: "it must be said that the mother is a woman and the father is a man, and that the child has the right to an upbringing that is in keeping with his or her gender identity and that is based on Hungary's constitutional identity and Christian culture." (2021 Fall term). In a similar vein, Róbert Répássy (state secretary) argued: "The Fundamental Rights Charter clearly states that the decision on how to bring up children is the parents' right. It is on this basis that we protect and defend the best interests of our children, and any sexual propaganda should only be carried out with the permission of the parent, in accordance with the parental consent in educational establishments" (2023 spring term).
- Fidesz MPs regularly stress their support for the right of individuals to live as they wish in Hungary provided that they leave children alone. This "guarantee" of liberal freedom often presented itself in the corpus in statements responding to the criticism of the opposition or international criticism. Such rhetoric goes further than what Nash and Browne (2020) have described as heteroactivism – strategic attempts "to reassert the superiority and centrality of hetero- and gender-normative individuals" – by extending the protection argument to imagined, conspiratorial threats. This rhetoric of 'live and let live' was also instrumentalised in the spring 2020

debate on the Gender Recognition Ban. Government MPs argued that the change solely concerned gender identity on the official registry, allowing people otherwise to live as they wish and identify with the gender they want. Thus, the government attempted to deflect criticism of the law by diminishing the significance of the legal change.

- Attacking Gender Studies as a discipline no longer emerges as a central tactic in Hungarian politics. Given that the two Gender Studies departments that existed in Hungary were shut down in 2018 (Peto 2016, Helms, Krizsan 2017) discrediting Gender Studies departments is less relevant. The critique of theoretical work on gender remains, however, a viable tactic, where it is routinely discredited as ‘ideologically-based pseudo-science’ or as serving political agendas.
- Mentions of trans people in the sample of parliamentary debates occur only after 2020. This could be explained by the fact that prior to 2020 there was never an official ruling on gender recognition in Hungary. In 2020, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law that eliminated the possibility for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals to undergo legal gender reassignment. The new law requires individuals to be identified according to the “sex assigned at birth”. After 2021, transgender people – aside from occasional solidarity expressed by the opposition – appear in parliamentary discourse in association with the dangers of “sex education” wanting to “corrupt Hungarian children”. The intensification of this narrative in 2021 coincided with the introduction of the Child Protection Law which prompted resistance from the EU and in Hungarian civil society.
- The threat from George Soros and foreign-funded NGOs is a common narrative, relating to a wider presentation of the EU and the West as “cultural colonisers” (Korolczuk and Graff 2018). There are multiple instances in the data where politicians express critical views of George Soros and his organisations, which are accused of meddling in Hungary's internal affairs and using financial resources to influence Hungarian politics. The government has criticised Soros for his support of civil society organisations and NGOs promoting democracy and human rights, including LGBTIQ+ rights. The EU/West is manifested in anti-gender parliamentary rhetoric as a threat, mostly in response to the EU’s criticism of Hungary’s approach to democratic values. So, Lőrinc Nacsa of KDNP appealed to the parliament: “Dear Parliament! A quite astonishing and concerted series of attacks has been launched against our country because of the law on the fight against paedophiles and child protection adopted in the spring session. [...] Brussels is vainly trying to get us to allow LGBTQ activists into kindergartens and schools, but we are not willing to do that” (2021 Fall term).

Hungarian Media Findings

The Hungarian media sample consisted of three news outlets positioned differently on the political spectrum. Magyar Hírlap was chosen as a right-wing outlet, strongly attached to Fidesz. Válasz Online was selected as a reliably centrist media outlet, which publishes limited but lengthy feature articles, interviews and opinion pieces. Telex.hu was included as a liberal-progressive media source, being one of the most-read opposition-aligned outlets. The media corpus comprised 292 articles and revealed the following findings:

- There is a significant alignment between discourses in the parliament and the government media. That is to say, while the presence of anti-gender discourse in parliament is relatively limited given the political coordinates described, the same frameworks and discourses are reproduced in the media, and are in fact amplified and heightened. This is due to the fact that the media in Hungary is heavily politicised. Magyar Hírlap is a pro-government media channel and amplifies the views of the government (European Press Roundup, 2022), for example by allocating front pages to politicians campaigning on anti-gender issues, or denigrating oppositional politicians.
- Magyar Hírlap, regarded as the mouthpiece of the conservative ruling party Fidesz, is openly hostile on many gender and sexuality-related issues, including LGBTQ rights, gender quotas, sex education, feminist or LGBTQ+ inclusive childrens' books or film adaptations, and progressive (LGBTQ+ inclusive) Christian congregations. Further, both the quality of discourse and quantity of coverage suggest that the outlet is campaigning on anti-gender issues. The newspaper deploys the term 'gender ideology' most often in the sample.
- The coverage of gender issues in the centrist media outlet Válasz Online aligns with the newspaper's political positioning by presenting a non-aligned conservatism that also points out the hypocrisy of the government's conservatism. In its coverage of gender and sexuality-related topics, the newspaper assumes the position of a "rational middle ground" in what they have termed "gender wars". This is most clearly seen in treating LGBTQ+ rights as subjects for balanced debate, such as in a debate on homosexuality and the church, with one side arguing that the inferiority of homosexuality can be justified by the Bible, the other arguing that stability and love is more important to a child than the sexual or gender identity of the parents, and that being a proud gay adoptive dad can be reconciled with being Christian. "Is a family a family? The Historical debate between András Hodász Catholic priest and the LGBT campaigner György Mészáros." (Válasz Online, 2021).
- A similar middle-ground positioning on gender issues in Válasz Online is articulated in the discussion of the Istanbul Convention, which is frequently framed as a "platform for identity wars", where neither left nor right is seen as clearly right or wrong.

- Telex.hu positions itself as a critical opponent of the government's anti-gender rhetoric. The newspaper frequently publishes comprehensive critical analyses of Orbán's anti-gender politics as well as lengthy investigative reports, for example on the expansion of the government-aligned Mathias Corvinus Collegium. They give voice to progressive NGOs like Budapest Pride or Political Capital. They frequently criticised Fidesz for vilifying LGBTIQ+ people and framing them as a target group similar to their approach to migrants, refugees and civil society organisations. They also criticise them for copying US right-wing republican arguments and tactics, such as hijacking the discussion of public education by stoking a confected moral panic about sex education.
- Although there are notable differences in the way gender- and sexuality-related issues are covered in Válasz Online and Telex.hu, when it comes to the coverage of trans issues, both outlets assume a closer positioning relative to each other. Válasz Online is cautious about recycling fake news, and there are occasional pieces debunking the misinformation and disinformation campaigns about transgender people, particularly transgender children. At the same time they provide positive coverage of actors that promote transphobic views, particularly some international figures. Telex.hu has a consistently critical position on conservative or right-wing interpretations of gender- and sexuality-related issues, while also displaying a hesitancy to openly criticise transphobic views.
- Magyar Hírlap, as a pro-government newspaper, is hostile towards transgender people, evident in their usage of transphobic language, the recycling of transphobic news, and the provision of platforms to trans-exclusionary campaigners. Occasionally, limited empathy is expressed concerning transgender people's experiences of discrimination. In one article from 2021, titled "We must return to normality" Keresztesi Tamás writes: "according to those surveyed, 26% of transgender people in Hungary reported experiencing violence, and 96% of them were verbally harassed". Despite the sympathy expressed in this sentence, the author asks "...is it worth it?". A similar pattern can be observed in relation to homosexuality, where 'the good homosexual' trope emerges when homosexuality is experienced as a "silent or invisible" experience, confined within the privacy of one's home (Magyar Hírlap, Benze, 12.10.2020).
- The use of demeaning language, such as "gender terror", or the Istanbul Convention being referred to as a "legal freak", is characteristic of Magyar Hírlap's coverage of gender issues. Explicit hate speech and personal insults also feature in some articles. The editor-in-chief, Pál Dippold, also a well-known novelist, has compared Soros to a "stinky polecat", and female opposition MEPs to "stinky polecat furies". A former MP László Tamás wrote in Magyar Hírlap that a lot of people would "give a huge slap" to the participants of the Budapest Pride march, and the few liberal or left-wing politicians that join them (Magyar Hírlap Tamás, 13.11.2020).

- Magyar Hírlap contains the majority of definitions of the phrase ‘gender ideology’ (in the entire corpus ‘gender ideology’ was defined once time in Telex.hu, and 20 times in Magyar Hírlap). This finding challenges the initial assumption that right-wing media reproduces the term as a matter of fact, given its continued circulation in media discourse since 2010. The consistent use of definitions feature in attempts to remind readers about the dangers and threats associated with the term. Some of those definitions compare ‘gender ideology’ to immigration as one of the most serious threats to European unity, whilst others present it as an “extremist ideology”, or a tool of “globalist world power”. In all cases, ‘gender ideology’ is invoked as a threat to national values.
- Across all three newspapers the actors most frequently mentioned in relation to issues of gender and sexuality in news coverage are politicians, including Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Judit Varga, who served as Minister of Justice during the time of the sampling, Eszter Párkányi, an analyst at the Alapjogokért Központ (Center for Fundamental Rights), Balázs Orbán, the Political Director of the Prime Minister’s office and Katalin Novák, the President of Hungary. Magyar Hírlap coverage tends to reinforce the anti-gender views and positions voiced by these actors, whereas Válasz Online and Telex.hu critically review their speeches, interviews and statements. Transnationally known anti-gender actors are also frequently mobilised in these discussions, such as the German writer and sociologist Gabriele Kuby, British author J. K. Rowling, or the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. Hungarian national political actors appear as the most influential figures in anti-gender politics, while at the same time transnational actors and ideas are featured and integrated.

Hungarian Controversy Mapping Findings

Examining media coverage of the events related to the Child Protection Law in Hungary exposes a range of political and media anti-gender tactics and reveals how they are being mobilised, often reinforcing each other in specific instances.

- This controversy further exposes how anti-gender narratives In Hungary and other post-socialist countries adapt to nationalistic frames, represented as a struggle of values and ideas. This is particularly visible when Hungary is depicted as defending its “national values” against communists, Brussels, EU, Liberal West, Soros, and “the elites”. A vivid example of this that emerges in this controversy is the call by the Batthyány Circle of Professors published on their website: “The Batthyány Circle of Professors is deeply concerned to see that expectations and practices that are fundamentally at odds with the conservative-civic values that underpin our lives and thinking are becoming widely accepted in European politics. We are concerned that neo-liberal and neo-Marxist principles are gaining a stronger voice in domestic

citizen's political circles and in the pro-neo-liberal, independent and civilian media and organisations in our country. We do not agree that the nation is an obsolete historical construct that needs to be replaced by supranational organisation. We express our dismay at the movements that claim to valorise the role of social gender to devalue birth sex, or to oppose the two". (Pbk.info.hu)

- The strategies of media and political actors involved in the controversy can largely be characterised as heteroactivism (Browne and Nash 2017). This involves anti-gender actors seeking to strengthen heteronormative patriarchy and legitimise undermining sexual and gender freedoms by framing it as the protection of families and children. The children and the family framework allows both political and media actors to argue that the goal of the law is not to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people, but to protect children from the harmful impact of (trans)gender-ideology (Rowlands 2023).
- A key example of this rhetoric is Viktor Orbán's speech in Brussels on 24.06.2021: "I am a fighter for their rights [in Orbán's words 'homosexual guys']. I was a freedom fighter in the communist regime. Homosexuality was punished and I fought for their freedom and their rights. So, I am defending the rights of homosexuals, but this law is not about that". [...] "It's not about homosexuals. The law is about letting parents decide what kind of sex education they want for their kids, [this] right should exclusively belong to the parents" (24.06.2021, reuters.com). By denying the discriminatory nature of their politics, these actors insist on other issues being at stake, such as children's wellbeing. The discursive strategies in both media and politics predominantly focus on creating moral panic and stigmatising and delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ activists, not least through conflating homosexuality and transgender identities with paedophilia.
- Discrediting those who support gender equality as "brainwashed by propaganda on the internet" and doing nothing more than virtue signalling emerges as a common tactic. As Jeszensky Zsolt argues "In Hungary, a law has been passed which seeks to protect normality from the ideology of conquest. The normality that twenty years ago would have been taken for granted even by those who now - in most cases out of good intentions, not malice, we must admit - are competing with each other to flaunt their virtues, display rainbow pictures and bid a final farewell to normality" (Jeszensky, 29.06.2021, pestisracok.hu).
- Drawing on the language of rights and social protection is a key element in anti-gender actors' attempts to strengthen the legitimacy of their arguments. For example, when LGBTQ-inclusive sex education and affirmative care of trans children is described as "experimenting on children" (or even child abuse), the language of rights is mobilised to protect the children and emphasize the responsibility of adults

in protecting the children. As a Magyar Nemzet article argues: “What is more important: the basic human right of a child in the development of their biologically-given natural human gender and their right to be cared for by their parents, or a completely false, "commercial" purpose, a propaganda activity that wants to distort the natural gender development of children by NGOs that produce gender ideology, by drag queens, by transvestites?” The author goes on to speculate about what would happen “... should pedophiles also issue publications citing rights, that pedophilia is not a serious crime, but - according to the new story - "love of children"? (Tamás, 29.05.2023, Magyar Nemzet).

- ‘Amplifying specific voices’ emerged as the most frequent media tactic in the corpus of 53 articles/opinion pieces related to the controversy. Other frequent media tactics were ‘Positioning West as a threat’ and ‘Admiring Hungary as a bastion of conservative values’. A follow-up analysis of the tactics deployed by specific actors whose involvement in the controversy was mentioned in the media reveals ‘statements on the websites’ as a key tactic. It must be noted, however, that the controversy unfolded during the COVID-19 crisis, hence much activity took place online. Furthermore, anti-gender organisations, although many are publicly funded, do not need to make a significant effort to spread their views, as their press releases and online communications are regularly circulated through the vast system of government-aligned media, including full ownership of the regional daily newspaper sector, print and online news sources, and television channels, which regularly refer to government propaganda websites as authentic sources (Szelényi 2023).
- The Issue Network building - based on 41 seed URLs of anti-gender actors featured in the controversy - produced a dispersed network with the official website of the Hungarian Government as the large central node.
- Overall, the period of the controversy was characterised by significant, high-level tactical investment. The referendum on the Child Protection Law was organised around a list of misleading questions whereby legal actions were taken against the targets of anti-gender actors, such as the imposition of fines on bookstores or NGOs. There was a great deal of investment in publicity, such as the billboard and poster campaign by the far-right students’ group Egyetemi Ellenállás, calling to protect children.
- The only tactic that failed was the referendum itself. The campaign by Háttér society and LGBTIQ+ and human rights NGOs called on people to invalidate their votes by putting a double ‘X’ in response to the meaningless questions. Whereas the activists opposing the Child Protection Law emphasised the discriminatory and hateful way in

which the referendum questions were formulated, Orbán justified the need for the referendum as a necessary response to Brussels' "attack on Hungary".

Chapter 5 - Poland

Introduction

This section of the report presents the data and findings from the Polish case study. As with the other national case studies, it covers parliamentary debates, media discourse and controversy mapping.

Polish Parliament

Introduction

Poland is a parliamentary democracy, with an executive branch composed of the government and President. The powers of legislative initiative belong to the Parliament, being composed of the Lower Chamber (Sejm) and Upper Chamber (Senate). Government officials are derived from the Sejm's majority political parties, forming a governing coalition. Members of the Parliament (MPs) are elected for the 4-year Terms of Office.

For this case study, the Sejm, and not the Senate, was chosen as the source of data. The rationale for this is that the Senate is not a significant player in Polish politics; its role is perceived to be more advisory and consultative. The time frame for the research encompasses two terms of office of the Sejm. The Sejm's VIII terms of office ran from 2015-2019, and the IX Sejm between 2019-2023 (henceforth Sejm VIII, Sejm IX). Both terms were characterised by the dominance of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) (Law and Justice) political party; it governed in coalition with a range of smaller parties that are popularly described as (politically) right-wing, far-right, nationalist, libertarian, populist; and espousing conservative, religious and traditional values. Among these coalition partners were Suwerenna Polska (Sovereign Poland) (prev. Solidarna Polska, Solidarity Poland), Kukiz'15, Konfederacja (Confederation), Porozumienie Jarosława Gowina (Jarosław Gowin's Agreement) (subsequently Partia Republikańska, Republican Party).

2019 and 2023 were parliamentary election years, whilst presidential elections were held in 2015 and 2020. It is therefore important to note that political and media dynamics in these years were particularly prone to controversies, be they mobilised for political gain, or the commercial interests of media conglomerates.

2015-19 (Sejm VIII) witnessed several legislative initiatives and discussions around broader aspects of gender/sexuality, such as: countering sexual violence; annual reports of the Civil Rights Ombudsman; abortion, women's rights and sex education. In 2016-2017 the bottom-up 'Black Protests' and 'All-Poland Women's Strike' protests – a wave of queer-feminist resistance against the restriction of civilian and individual rights, especially focused on abortion rights – were highly mediatised, gathering the attention of national and global media.

2019-23 (Sejm IX) witnessed several initiatives and debates around: abortion and women's reproductive rights; education; legitimacy of critical studies and disciplines; sexual education in school; and LGBT and minorities' rights. In 2020 another highly publicised wave of 'All-Poland Women's Strike' protests were held in response to anti-abortion legislation. In 2019-2021 the 'LGBT-Free zones' controversy became hotly debated and widely reported in national and international media. 2021-2023 also witnessed a debate on Polish social and political 'double standards' of hospitality, as a wave of unprecedented support for Ukrainian refugees after the outbreak of Russian war against Ukraine rendered more striking the level of active hostility towards asylum seekers and migrants from the 'Middle East' crossing the Polish-Belarusian border.

Methodology

Data sources & sampling selection

The Polish Sejm website (<https://sejm.gov.pl>), also the Sejm's public database and archive, served as the data collection point. For consistency with the other national cases studies, only transcripts of selected thematic debates (henceforth 'debates'), held during multi-day plenary sessions (henceforth 'plenaries'), of Sejm sittings (henceforth 'sittings') were collected and analysed. The full terms of office of Sejm VIII (2015-19) and Sejm IX (2019-23) were chosen, aligning with the study timeframe. Sejm IX ran until November 2023, but data collection was conducted in June-July 2023, and therefore 30.05.2023 was the effective cut-off date for the selection of Sejm's debates.

Sampling followed non-probability principles (as per all national case studies) and a multi-stage selection process. It should be noted that although clustering served as a starting point for producing and organising the Polish dataset, it quickly showed high redundancy and cross-permeability between the defining characteristics of those clusters. As this is counterproductive to the objectives set for this method, it was decided to discontinue this methodological step in all three segments (parliamentary debates, media, controversy mapping) for the Polish case study. Details are outlined in [Appendix A: Table AA19 \(PL1\) – 'Methodological steps for the Polish case study in Parliamentary Debates segment'](#).

Data coding

The sampling followed a multi-stage selection process, detailed in the [Appendix A: Table AA19 \(PL1\) – 'Methodological steps for the Polish case study in Parliamentary Debates segment'](#). The cluster themes (1-5) served as a starting point for producing and organising the dataset, but quickly demonstrated high cross-permeability given the nature of parliamentary debates. It was decided to further specify themes from these clusters within the Polish data. Therefore the analysis of the parliamentary debates commenced with seven thematic codes specific to the Polish context, finalised with respect to insights of the existing literature. A further six thematic codes were added arising from the material analysed.

TC ID	Thematic Code	Occurrence (% in N=30 of Debates)	Actors total	
			Men	Women
TC1	Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours	26 (87%)	39	
			M 24	W 15
TC2	Christian Tradition vs. Liberal Values	19 (63%)	27	
			M 20	W 7
TC3	Harming/Protecting Children/Women	17 (56.7%)	33	
			M 21	W 12
TC4	Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense	16 (53.3%)	26	
			M 13	W 13
TC5	(II) Legitimacy of Law & Delegitimization Strategies	12 (40%)	23	
			M 13	W 10
TC6	West and the EU as Threats	11 (36.7%)	12	
			M 9	W 3
TC7	Conservatism as 'True' pro-Equality Measure	11 (36.7%)	14	
			M 9	W 5
TC8	Scientific Rationality	9 (30%)	14	
			M 8	W 6
TC9	Natural Order	8 (26.7%)	6	
			M 5	W 1
TC10	Normal Family	8 (26.7%)	15	
			M 9	W 6
TC11	John Paul II and Polish Tradition	7 (23.3%)	10	
			M 6	W 4
TC12	(De)Humanising	5 (16.7%)	6	
			M 5	W 1
TC13	Nazism, 'Soviet Occupation', Genocide Analogies	3 (10%)	2	

			M 1	W 1
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Table PL1: Thematic Codes

TC ID	Thematic Code	Description
TC1	Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours	A diverse set of issues raised, and behaviours instigated 'against the other' side/speaker. Including rhetorical questions, accusations/blaming, ridiculing comparisons, shouting & speaking over, arguments <i>ad personam</i> , clapping/whistling/stomping.
TC2	Christian Tradition vs. Liberal Values	A constructed dichotomy that insists on the incompatibility and opposition of Christian/Liberal values.
TC3	Harming/Protecting Children/Women	Highlighting presumed harms to children and/or women; claims that given measures are for their protection.
TC4	Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense	Suggesting 'Christian benevolence' and paternal positioning as a 'wise one', who expresses 'common sense' and moderation between the perceived 'extremes' of left and right.
TC5	Legitimacy of Law & Delegitimization Strategies	References to national or international laws to question or empower the object of debate as (un)suitable and/or illegal; Diverse forms of delegitimising an object, person, or actions.
TC6	West and the EU as Threats	Constructing the 'West' or the EU as a threat to Polish culture, tradition, Christianity, 'natural order'.
TC7	Conservatism as 'True' pro-Equality Measure	Closely related to the 'paternalism' strategy. Stresses that conservatism is <i>the only true</i> pro-equality measure. Attempts at detaching 'equality' claims as 'liberal' only.
TC8	Scientific Rationality	Claims and references to 'science' and scientific 'evidence' (esp. behavioural psychology, biology, medicine). Stressing empiricism and (often quantitative) data as 'facts beyond interpretation'. Calls to objectivity, rationality and methodism, vs. subjectivity, emotions and perceptions.
TC9	Natural Order	Essentialising references to biology and nature, or religious command as nature-given or God-given, thus immutable.
TC10	Normal Family	Heteronormative vision of who, when, and how, counts as a 'proper' family.
TC11	John Paul II and Polish Tradition	References to the 'Polish Pope' and special place and role of Poland in European and Christian tradition and culture. Related to 'Christian Tradition vs. Liberal Values' and 'West and the EU as Threats' - but here nationalist themes and references are more clearly pronounced or are primary references.
TC12	(De)Humanising	Diverse forms of dehumanising the opponent or specific group. Or to the contrary, 'humanising' a group or an object in ways opposed to the former.

TC13	Nazism, 'Soviet Occupation', Genocide Analogies	Any references to Nazism, the post-war state socialist period framed as 'soviet occupation', or genocide. They are either implicit or blatantly direct in comparing feminism or LGBTIQ+ politics to these atrocities, framing pro-equality measures and groups as aggressors, murderers, warmongers.
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Table PL2: Definitions of Thematic Codes

Data Presentation

These methodological steps resulted in the following dataset.

	Polish Keywords	English Translation
KEYWORDS (n=34, random order, morphological base forms only)	Seksualność, Gender, Seksualizacja, Indoktrynowanie, Tęczowe rodziny, Małżeństwa gejowskie, Małżeństwa jedнопłciowe, Związki partnerskie, LGBT, Wartości chrześcijańskie, Homoseksualiści, Feministki, Homofobia, Mowa nienawiści, Pedofilia, gej, lesbijka, Poprawność polityczna, Żeńskie, Tranzycja, Tożsamość płciowa, Płeć, Dysforia, Transfobia, Transwestyci, Edukacja seksualna, Aborcja, Antykoncepcja, Transgender, Transseksualne, Wolność sumienia, Cywilizacja (śmierci), dżender.	Sexuality, gender, sexualization, indoctrination, rainbow families, gay marriages, same-sex marriages, partnerships, LGBT, Christian values, , feminists, homophobia, hate speech, paedophilia, gay, lesbian, political correctness, female, transition, gender/sex* identity, gender/sex*, dysphoria, transphobia, transvestites, sexual education, abortion, contraception, transgender, transexual, freedom of consciousness, civilisation (of death), gender (Polish phonetic transliteration).
	* 'Płeć' in Polish denotes both 'gender' and 'sex'. The distinction may be highlighted by using 'płeć kulturowa' (gender) or 'płeć biologiczna' (sex).	

Table PL3: List of Keywords

Data Item	SEJM VIII (2015-2019)	SEJM IX (2019-2023)
Total no. of Sejm's multi-day Plenary Sessions*	219 (100%)	190** (100%)
No. of longlisted, distinct Plenary Sessions	80 (36.5%)	68 (35.8%)
No. of shortlisted, distinct Plenary Sessions (final sample)	6 (2.73%)	18 (9.5%)
List of shortlisted Plenary Sessions	2016= 14, 23, 24, 26, 28. 2018= 55.	2019= 1. 2020= 10, 15, 20, 21, 23. 2021= 20, 27, 30, 33, 40. 2022= 48, 57, 59, 65, 68. 2023= 73, 74, 76.
No. of shortlisted thematic Debates	8	22

(final sample)		
* Plenary Sessions (multi-day) consist of single or multiple day sittings; each day sitting consists of multiple (thematic) debates organised under the agenda items		
** Cut-off date 30.05.2023		

Table PL4: Poland Case Study Data Set

Note: For the full list of debates and URL link access, see [Appendix A: Table AA20 \(PL2\) – ‘List of Polish Sejm’s plenary sessions selected for examination’](#).

The following breakdown shows how many instances of the coded material were contributed by a single, distinct actor in our dataset of 30 thematic debates. 70% of contributions to the data are ‘one-off’ utterances by a single actor, and 30% of actors have contributed multiple times. Of note are 3 actors (3%) who contributed more than seven coded examples. The sample demonstrates that a small number of repeatedly engaged actors deploy a wider range of discursive tropes, showcasing the complex rhetoric of anti-gender discourses.

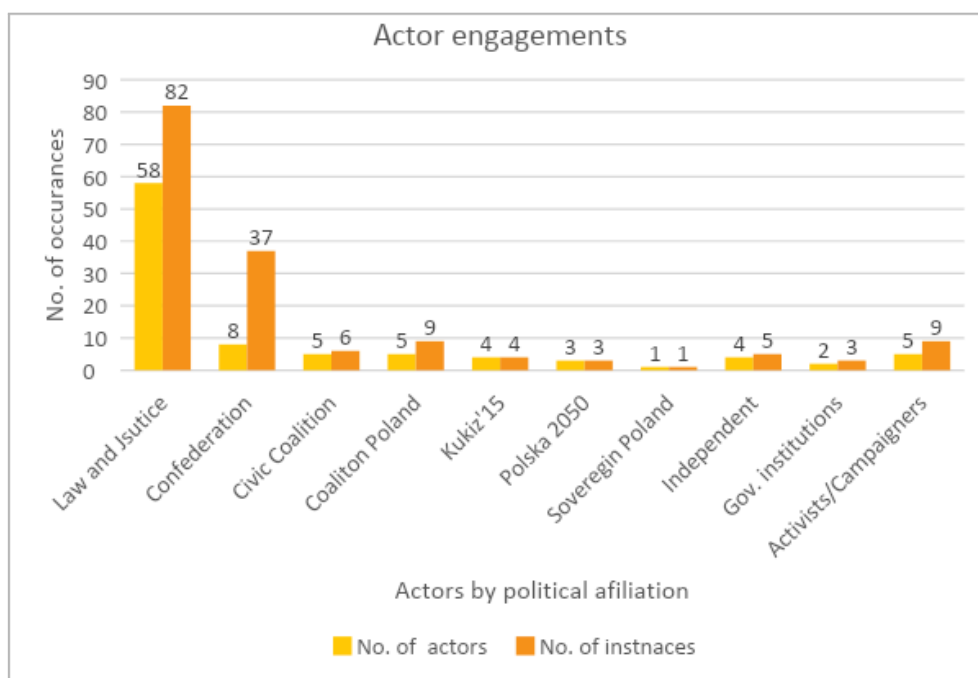


Figure PL5: Actors grouped by political affiliation or role

This graph presents a range of actors grouped by their political affiliation or role. The yellow bars show the number of actors overall, whilst the orange bars show the number of coded instances. Although the numbers of Law and Justice and Confederation parties stand out, the dominance of Law and Justice may reflect the Sejm’s arithmetic, as more speaking time is proportionately allocated to the winning party in the Sejm. A further necessary caveat is that it is a known practice for MPs in the Sejm to change their political affiliations and transfer membership during terms, which was not captured in our data.

There are several observations to be drawn from the data. Firstly, various strategies gathered under Rhetorical Tools (TC1) testify to the heated nature of the debates, exemplifying the affective

resonance of issues raised. They can be understood as examples of the parliamentary culture and habitus of presence and engagement in the parliament.

For example, in the fragment below there are accusations and derogatory names used against LGBTIQ+ communities, met by the opposition MPs with heckling and turning away from the speaker. Krzysztof Kasprzak (KK) (civil society representative):

[Zanim KK zaczął przemawiać, posłanki i posłowie opozycji zaczęli wstawać i odwracać się plecami do Prezydium i mównicy.] “Kto atakuje kościoły? Wasze lewicowe, homoseksualne bojówki. To wy weszliście w naszą przestrzeń, na nasz teren i tam od dekad urządzacie sobie harce. Takie są fakty, panowie posłowie i panie posłanki, którzy nie jesteście w stanie wysłuchać nawet tego, co mówię, bo odwróciliście się plecami. Odwróciliście się plecami do 140 tys. obywateli, bo mówię w ich imieniu. (Poseł Piotr Borys: ‘Do ciebie, bo jesteś homofobem.’) (Głos z sali: ‘Do mowy nienawiści odwracamy się plecami. Stop mowie nienawiści!’). Dziękuję za te wszystkie inwektywy.” (Sejm IX, Session 40, Day 1)

[As KK was about to take his place at the speaker’s platform, opposition MPs started getting up and turning their backs to the speaker.] “Who attacks churches? Your lefty, homosexual militant groups. It is you who marched onto our ground, and there, for decades you have been toying and playing. These are the facts, gentlemen and ladies MPs, which you cannot even listen to, as you turn away. You have turned your backs on 140,000 citizens, for I speak in their name. (Piotr Borys MP: ‘To you, for you are a homophobe.’) (Voice from the chamber: ‘We turn our backs on hate speech. Stop hate speech!’) I thank you for all these invectives.” (Sejm IX, Session 40, Day 1)

Secondly, five themes, forming 50% of the coded material – Christian Tradition vs. Liberal Values (TC2), Harming/Protecting Children/Women (TC3), Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense (TC4), (II) Legitimacy of Law & Delegitimization Strategies (TC5), West and the EU as Threats (TC6) – demonstrate a strong tendency towards dualistic and polarising constructions (same/other, religious/secular, legal/illegal, harming/protecting). Here, MPs also address this polarisation – Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense – by positioning themselves as ‘mediators’ between the artificially constructed ‘extremes’ of political left and right).

In the example below, we see how The Istanbul Convention (The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) is positioned as offensive to Polish society, ‘enforced’ by left and liberal groups. Michał Urbaniak:

“Jako partia, która poważnie traktuje swoje korzenie chrześcijańskie, nie możemy zgodzić się na to, by Polacy byli poddani kolejnej dyskryminacji ze względu na system wartości, jaki posiadają. Innym aspektem konwencji stambulskiej jest to, że nie wprowadza żadnych nowych dla polskiego prawa rozwiązań prawnych. Jej przyjęcie było aktem czysto politycznym i odpowiedzialna za to była i Lewica, i Platforma Obywatelska. Konwencja szuka źródeł przemocy w ideologii, obwiniając odmienne role społeczne płci i nadając przemocy

wobec kobiet i przemocy domowej rangę zjawiska strukturalnego wpisanego w polski model społeczeństwa. Trzeba sobie powiedzieć jasno, to jest po prostu obraźliwe dla wszystkich Polaków, niezależnie od płci. Konwencja bezpośrednio w art. 12 i 13 przewiduje zburzenie dotychczasowego modelu społecznego panującego w Polsce.” (Sejm IX, Session 27, Day 2)

“As a party that takes seriously its Christian roots we cannot support more discrimination against Poles because of the values they hold. Another issue is that the Istanbul Convention does not offer any new legal solutions to those already existing in the Polish law. Its ratification was a purely political act, for which the Left and Civic Platform are responsible. The Convention seeks the roots of violence in ideology, blaming the social roles of sex/gender. It seeks to elevate violence against women and domestic violence to the level of a structural problem inscribed in the Polish model of society. It needs to be said loud and clear, it is simply offensive to all Poles, irrespectively of their sex/gender. The Convention in the Articles 12 & 13 directly envisages the destruction of the current social model in Poland.” (Sejm IX, Session 27, Day 2)

Thirdly, seven themes, comprising one third of the coded material – Conservatism as 'True' pro-Equality Measure (TC7), Scientific Rationality (TC8), Natural Order (TC9), Normal Family (TC10), Pope John Paul II and Polish Tradition (TC11), (De)Humanizing (TC12), Nazism, 'Soviet Occupation', Genocide Analogies (TC13) – evoke different forms of universalism and a “higher order” that stand beyond the ephemeral and contemporary nature of social and cultural norms, identities, and politics. These can be tradition, religion, science, or biology, which are presented as timeless and non-subjective reference points for society. This is clearly expressed in the words of Jan Klawiter, who invokes the authority of science:

“Ja bym prosił, żeby na tej sali nie mieszać Kościoła, religii, hierarchii czy osób wierzących do tego. To nauka w sposób jednoznaczny stwierdza, że życie ludzkie zaczyna się od momentu poczęcia. (Oklaski) I o tym proszę mówić, o stwierdzeniach naukowych. Powiem jeszcze jedno. Lekarz... jeden z lekarzy, który jest bardzo, że tak powiem, przodującym aborterem w Polsce, też powiedział wyraźnie, że życie ludzkie zaczyna się od momentu poczęcia. I to jest rzecz oczywista.” (Sejm VIII, Session 55, Day 2)

“I wish that in this chamber the Church, religion, hierarchies or religious people were not stirred into that. It is science that unquestionably shows that human life begins at the moment of conception. (Clapping) Speak about that please, about the scientific evidence. And let me say one more thing. A doctor... one of the doctors, who is, shall I say, the leading abortionist in Poland, has also clearly said that human life begins at the moment of conception. And this is the obvious thing.” (Sejm VIII, Session 55, Day 2)

Similarly Jarosław Kaczyński calls upon the fundamentals of the heteronormative family:

“I wreszcie wartością, centralną wartością i podstawą organizacji naszego społeczeństwa, pewnego rodzaju fundamentem, na którym to wszystko musi się opierać, jest polska

rodzina. (Oklaski) Rodzina rozumiana tradycyjnie. Rodzina, która przybiera formy związku... (Poseł Sławomir Nitras: PiS-owska rodzina.) (Wesołość na sali) ...kobiety i mężczyzny. I w żadnym wypadku nie można przyjąć – o czym mówił premier – że marginalne zjawiska mają stanowić normę. (Oklaski) To jest, powtarzam, fundament. Fundament całej tej konstrukcji. Konstrukcji, która ma służyć sukcesom w najbliższych latach i dziesięcioleciach. Ale ma służyć także ciągłości polskiego narodu i polskiego państwa.” (Oklaski) (Sejm IX, Session 1, Day 3)

“And finally, the value, the central value and basis of our society, a form of foundation on which everything else rests, is the Polish family. (Clapping) The family understood traditionally. Family that takes the form of a relationship...(MP Sławomir Nitras: PiS-family.) (Laughter)...of woman and man. And it cannot be accepted, under no circumstances...that marginal phenomena dictate the norm. (Clapping) It is, I repeat, fundamental. The foundation of all this construction. Construction that will enable the success in the coming years and decades. And it must serve the continuity of the Polish nation and the Polish state (clapping).” (Sejm IX, Session 1, Day 3)

Two of the codes, (De)Humanizing (TC12) and Nazism, 'Soviet Occupation', Genocide Analogies (TC13) call upon life and death themselves, the nature of so-called human nature and humanity, and indeed, who or what counts as human. In this data, nonetheless, keywords such as 'communism' and 'Nazism' function as 'empty signifiers' (Laclau, 2005) that invoke the imaginary reference from the historical record, and are designed to stimulate an affective response. The speeches of Kasprzak and Sośnierz quoted below are characterised by these unapologetic comparisons, Krzysztof Kasprzak first:

“Historia zna wiele ludobójstw. Najbardziej znane jest oczywiście niemieckie z okresu II wojny światowej, błędnie przypisywane bliżej nieokreślonym nazistom. Niemcy z III Rzeszy zabili w obozach koncentracyjnych ok. 6 mln osób, a całkowitą liczbę ofiar niemieckich narodowych socjalistów historycy szacują na kilkadziesiąt milionów. Komunizm był systemem jeszcze bardziej ludobójczym, co niestety nie przebija się do świadomości ogółu społeczeństwa, może dlatego, że nawet w tym parlamencie zasiadają jego spadkobiercy wywodzący się z PZPR-u. Liczba śmiertelnych ofiar komunizmu to co najmniej 100 mln. Jednak oba te ludobójstwa, niemieckie i komunistyczne, nawet nie zbliżają się liczbą do liczby ofiar aborcji. Tylko w zeszłym roku zabito według WHO 44 mln dzieci nienarodzonych, a od ok. 1950 r. do roku 2020 zginąć przez aborcje miało od 1 mld do 1,5 mld dzieci. Świat nigdy nie widział większego ludobójstwa i zapewne nie zobaczy. Oby nie zobaczył. Polska, umożliwiając aborterom realizację ich zbrodniczej działalności, ma swój niechlubny wkład w to ludobójstwo.” (Sejm IX, Session 73, Day 1)

“History witnessed many genocides. The most known one, of course, is the German one during World War II, erroneously ascribed to some unspecified Nazis. Germans of the Third Reich murdered, in the concentration camps, about 6 million people, and the overall death count of the German National Socialists is estimated by the historians to be in the tens of millions. Communism was an even more murderous system, but unfortunately it is not well

known across society. Perhaps this is because its inheritors from the PZPR [Polish United Workers' Party] sit even in this parliament. The number of communist casualties is at least 100 million. However, even both German and communist genocides do not even approximate to the victims of abortions. Only last year, according to the WHO, 44 million of unborn children were murdered. And from around 1950 until 2020 1 to 1.5 billion children died due to abortion. The world has never witnessed a greater genocide, and probably will not witness one. Let's hope it shall not. Poland, by allowing abortionists [to continue in their] criminal activity, has its shameful contribution to this genocide." (Sejm IX, Session 73, Day 1)

Dobromir Sośnierz:

"Jeśli chodzi o odczłowieczanie w tym miejscu, to się odwołam do pani posłanki Hartwich, bo pani o tym mówiła. Ta wypowiedź prezydenta w kampanii może nie była najszcześliwsza, ale pani dobrze wie, że jemu nie chodziło o to, że osoby o skłonnościach homoseksualnych nie są ludźmi. On ten skrót LGBT rozumie nie jako ludzi, tylko jako ideologię. No i dobrze pani wie, że nie chodziło o to. (Poseł Iwona Hartwich: Niech mi pan da myśleć samodzielnie.) Ale jeśli chodzi o odczłowieczanie, to po waszej stronie są ludzie, którzy naprawdę mówią, że dziecko przed narodzeniem nie jest człowiekiem. (Oklaski) Naprawdę to mówią. To nie jest przejęzyczenie, tylko tak naprawdę uważają. Jeśli chodzi o dehumanizację, to uważałbym na słowa i odwoływanie się do nazistowskich historii, bo to nie kto inny jak właśnie akwarelista wprowadzał, jako pierwszy legalizował aborcję na ziemiach polskich." (Sejm IX, Session 33, Day 2)

[Relating to President Duda's speech during his re-election campaign, in which he described LGBTIQ+ communities as 'ideology', not people.] "On the topic of dehumanisation, let me speak to MP (Iwona) Hartwich, for you have mentioned this. This President's speech in the campaign perhaps was [a little] unfortunate, but you well know that he didn't mean that people of homosexual inclination are not people. He understands the LGBT acronym not as people but as an ideology...But when we talk about dehumanisation, it is on your side where there are people, who really say that a child before birth is not a human. (Clapping) They really say it. It is not a lapse, they truly think that. When talking about dehumanisation, I would be careful with words and calling upon Nazism. For whom else, if not the aquarellist [Adolf Hitler] introduced it, as the first one who legalised abortion on Polish lands." (Sejm IX, Session 33, Day 2)

Four codes point to nationalist tropes that evoke sovereignty, often framed as in peril, and threatened by the 'outside' of the EU/West, international law, or historical occupiers. These are (II) Legitimacy of Law & Delegitimization Strategies (TC5), the West and the EU as Threats (TC6), Nazism, 'Soviet Occupation', Genocide Analogies (TC13). For example, Agnieszka Górska below questions the Istanbul Convention, international (EU) law, and the perilous consequences of 'gender ideology' by referencing the fate of the Gender Recognition Act in the UK:

“Drugie pytanie, czy też moja prośba, dotyczy przybliżenia znaczenia treści art. 6 konwencji stambulskiej mówiącego o obowiązku podjęcia działań uwzględniających tzw. perspektywę płci społeczno-kulturowej. Te rozwiązania łączą się m.in. ze zmianą płci praktycznie na życzenie. (Poseł Barbara Nowacka: ‘Nie. Naprawdę? Na życzenie?’) Wdrożenie tego zobowiązania w różnych krajach wywołało bardzo duże problemy czy też konflikty prawne z przepisami tych państw. Np. w Wielkiej Brytanii (Dzwonek), która wprowadziła tego rodzaju przepisy dopuszczające zmianę płci u dzieci od 16. roku życia, Sąd Najwyższy tego kraju uznał je za szkodliwe dla społeczeństwa i nakazał wycofanie, gdyż zagrażają zdrowiu i życiu społeczeństwa.” (Sejm IX, Session 27, Day 2)

“My second question, or request, is to clarify the meaning of the Istanbul Convention’s Article 6, obliging [the states] to undertake actions informed by the so-called gender perspective. These solutions include, among others, change of sex/gender practically on request. (MP Barbara Nowacka: ‘No. really? On request?’) Implementation of this solution in different countries resulted in significant problems or legal conflicts with national laws. E.g. in the UK (bell rings), where such regulations were introduced, allowing for sex/gender* change of 16 y.o. children, the High Court of that country ruled that such regulations were dangerous to the society. It requested a withdrawal [of the regulations], as they are perilous to the health and life of the society.” (Sejm IX, Session 27, Day 2)

[*Polish word ‘płeć’ denotes both sex & gender].

It also needs to be noted that the Polish parliamentary discourse analysed in our dataset does not only draw from these vicious or divisive repertoires. The two codes Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense (DT4), and Conservatism as ‘True’ pro-Equality Measure (DT7), call for a conservative duty of care and the benevolence of the “wise ones”. Crucially, the claim that caring for women and minorities is not the preserve of ‘liberal’ politics is advanced here. For instance, Janusz Kowalski calls for respect for difference, uses conciliary instead of polarising language, and claims that voting for a series of anti-violence laws is done in the name of women’s safety (while gently suggesting that the liberal opposition unnecessarily aggravates the parliamentary debate).

“Szanowni Państwo! Możemy się naprawdę różnić, i różnimy się pięknie, ale nie obrażamy się. Panie mecenasie, mówię do mecenasa Szejny, te słowa były całkowicie niepotrzebne, o jakiejś broni, o Afganistanie dla polskich kobiet. My na tej sali z inicjatywy pana ministra Zbigniewa Ziobry, Solidarnej Polski i Prawa i Sprawiedliwości wspólnie przyjęliśmy ustawę, która w końcu dała tamę przemocy domowej w polskich domach. Polskie kobiety czekały na to latami. Państwo też za tym głosowali, więc możemy się pięknie różnić, ale się nie obrażamy. Mam nadzieję, że pan te słowa wycofa. One są całkowicie niepotrzebne.” (Sejm IX, Session 48, Day 2)

“Ladies and Gentlemen! We can differ, and we do beautifully, but let’s not insult each other. Mr Attorney, I speak to Attorney Szejna, these words about weapons, Afghanistan for Polish women, they were absolutely unnecessary. Upon the initiative of the Minister [of Justice] Zbigniew Ziobro, Solidarity Poland and Law and Justice, together we have voted for the law

that will finally stop domestic violence in Polish homes. Polish women have waited for this for years. You have also voted for this [law], and therefore we can beautifully differ, but let's not insult each other. I hope you will withdraw these words. They are absolutely unnecessary." (Sejm IX, Session 48, Day 2)

Unsurprisingly, considering the well-established importance of the Catholic Church in Polish politics, numerous coded examples speak to religion and a perceived clash with secularism, or call on religious authorities, God-given 'natural order' and sacredness. They were coded under Christian Tradition vs. Liberal Values (TC2), Natural Order (TC9), Pope John Paul II and Polish Tradition (TC11). For example, Mariusz Kałużny, speaks in support of the legal initiative to reinforce the so-called 'freedom of consciousness' clause as a protective measure for religious people. They are implicitly presented in the debate as being under attack by liberal-secular values and practices, exemplified by the 'gender ideology' of feminisms and LGBTIQ+ rights:

"Szanowni Państwo! Bardzo się cieszę na ten projekt obywatelski. Bardzo dziękuję tym wszystkim, którzy się pod tym podpisali. To, co budzi mój optymizm, to przede wszystkim to, że rozwiązania te bronią wszystkich religii. Okazują szacunek dla tego, co święte. Każdy człowiek, wierzący czy niewierzący, ma obszary, które w jego życiu są święte. Przodkowie, rodzina, miejsce, z którego pochodzę, to są obszary najważniejsze, fundamentalne, których się broni. Jeśli człowiek nie ma obszarów świętych, niczym nie różni się od zwierząt. Każdy człowiek ma takie obszary święte. Ludzie wierzący mają obszar religii, Pan Bóg jest dla nich najważniejszy. I tutaj nie chodzi o uprzywilejowanie jakiejś jednej grupy, ale właśnie o szacunek i obronę tego, co święte." (Sejm IX, Session 68, Day 2)

"Ladies and Gentlemen! I am very happy about this civil society project. I thank all who have signed it. What evokes my optimism is the fact that the proposed solutions protect all religions. Show respect for what is holy. Each person, religious or not, holds something in reverence. Ancestors, family, place of origin, these are the most important areas, the fundamentals that are being guarded. If a person does not hold some things sacred, they do not differ from animals. Every person has such sacred areas. Religious people have religion, God is the most important to them. Here, it is not about privileging any one group, but precisely about respect and safeguarding that which is sacred [holy]." (Sejm IX, Session 68, Day 2)

The final point is the wide-ranging complexity of the discourses in the material, which appear as occasionally inconsistent, contradictory, or incongruent. For example, deploying religiously motivated arguments as well as calling upon the objectivity of science and biology; or using highly polarising language as well as very conciliatory approaches. This apparent inconsistency is found beyond the Polish case study as a broader characteristic of the anti-gender politics and discourses.

Polish Media

Introduction

The media study occurs in a context of the ongoing process of nationalisation and state subordination of the Polish public media, which has been in process for over a decade. This process, similar to the political moves orchestrated by Viktor Orbán in Hungary (Bátorfy and Urbán, 2020), renders public television and radio subservient to the explicit and unmasked propagandist model of state-controlled media, frequently operating in the service of the ruling party (Kulpa, 2020; Żuk, 2020).

Methodology

Data selection and coding

The following press sources were chosen: two broadsheet newspapers (Rzeczpospolita (RZ), Gazeta Wyborcza (GW)), one tabloid newspaper (Super Express (SE)), and one right-wing news outlet (Do Rzeczy (DR)). Both Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza are the biggest, 'broadsheet'-type, national newspaper titles, popularly perceived as leaning towards, respectively, the conservative, right/centre-right and the liberal, left/centre-left in terms of values and politics. The tabloid title was added to offer some comparative insight for the broadsheet titles. Fakty and Super Express were considered, and since both have similar profiles, Super Express was chosen randomly. Finally, Do Rzeczy was chosen as an example of the (far) right media outlet, due to its popularity and prominence among conservative and nationalist politicians. It offers some comparative insight for the other titles as a media outlet that is self-positioned as conservative, (far) right-wing, traditionalist, pro-government, and anti-European. The data time frame spanned from the start of 01.2021 to the end of 06.2023, the final dates within the general guidelines dictated by the database article availability. The sampling followed the non-probability principles and multi-stage selection process; the Polish adaptations are detailed in [Appendix B: Table AB7 \(PL4\) – 'Methodological steps for Polish case in Media study segment'](#).

Given the focus on 'gender ideology' mentions within the time frame, the sample sizes for media titles were not weighted, and thus particular titles emerge as main contributors within the data set: Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita provide 192 articles out of 287. Data from the news outlets was coded according to the following categories, drawing from the coding template first developed for the UK study, which preceded the Polish and Hungarian data collection phases.

Coding Categories
Media Source Date Article Headline Writers Genre Position of Keyword Trigger Issues

Table PL6: Polish Media Study – Coding Categories

Further analytical codes were subsequently deployed in line with the other national case studies:

Coding Categories
'Gender Ideology' in quotation marks 'Gender Ideology' definition Provider of the 'Gender Ideology' definition Actors Organisations (all others) Organisations (pro-LGBTQ/ feminist) Organisations (primary anti-gender)

Table PL7: Polish Media Study – Additional Analytical Codes

The above methodological steps have resulted in the following dataset:

	Polish Keywords	English Translation
KEYWORDS (N=17, random order)	"ideologia gender", "ideologia LGBT", "ideologia trans", "lobby LGBT", Seksualizacja, dżender, anty-gender, antygender, transgender, trans-gender, transpłciowe, transfob, transfobia, TERF, transseksualiści, niebinarne.	'Gender ideology', LGBT ideology, Trans ideology, LGBT lobby, sexualization, gender, anti-gender, antigender, transgender, trans-gender, transphobia, TERF, transsexuals, non-binary.

Table PL8: Polish Media Study – Keywords

Media Outlet	Number of Articles
Gazeta Wyborcza (broadsheet, liberal)	88
Rzeczpospolita (broadsheet, conservative)	103
Super Express (tabloid, no clear political line)	34
doRzeczy.pl ((far)right-wing print & online magazine)	58
Total	283

Table PL9: Polish Media Study – Number of Articles per Media Outlet

Data presentation

‘Gender ideology’ is one of the key ideas in anti-gender mobilisations, and is very liberally deployed by a broad spectrum of actors. In the study, five indicators of its usage were analysed: (a) trigger issues for written articles; (b) position of ‘gender ideology’ as a keyword; (c) news genre in which the term ‘gender ideology’ features; (d) journalists and writers who employed the term ‘gender ideology’; (e) actors; (f) organisations mentioned; (g) uses of ‘gender ideology’ in quotation marks, and provision of definition.

(a) Trigger issues

The corpus of 283 articles were multi-tagged with up to 3 keywords, producing 23 trigger issues (i.e. issues that triggered writing an article). Presented below is a summary table showcasing those with ≥ 20 deployments. A full outline is available in [Appendix B: Table AB8 \(PL5\) – ‘Trigger issues for article topics’](#).

Trigger issues	Gazeta Wyborcza	Rzeczpospolita	Super Express	Do Rzeczy	Total (per keyword)
Language	4	13	3	4	24
Church and/or religion	2	15	5	5	27
World Politics: EU	6	14	1	6	27
Sex Education/Schools	10	10	5	4	29
Children	11	11	7	2	31
Social Change	14	10	-	11	35
Rights	20	11	1	8	40
Trans (issues, activism, politics)	19	19	1	7	46
Catholic anti-gender activism	13	23	10	19	65
World Politics: Poland	21	29	8	10	68
Discrimination	30	29	19	11	89
LGBT	31	26	25	29	111

Table PL10: Polish Media Study – Selected Trigger Issues

Twelve trigger issues which were tagged more than twenty times can be clustered into four broader dimensions worth further consideration:

- Gender/sexual minorities (Trans, LGBT - total 157) and broader civil rights (Rights, Discrimination - 129)
- General politics (World Politics: EU & Poland - total 95) and the role of Catholic Church (Church and/or religion, Catholic anti-gender activism - total 92)
- Children and education (Sex Education/Schools, Children - total 60)
- Broader dimensions of socio-cultural change (Social Change, Language - total 59)

(b) Position of 'gender ideology' as a keyword

The second measure of 'gender ideology' deployment was to examine its position in the article (title, highlight, lead, body). The body of the article is the most frequent place of occurrence of the 'gender ideology' keyword. Less frequent usages of 'gender ideology' in the positions of prominence may suggest that it is not regarded as centrally important in capturing readers' attention to the issues.

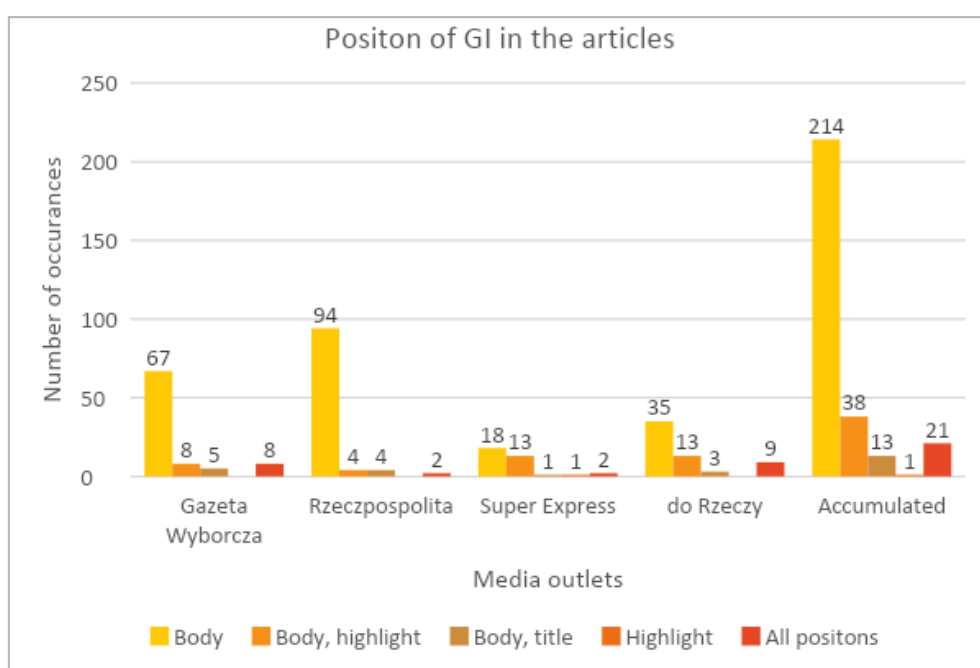


Figure PL11: Position of 'gender ideology' in Articles

(c) News genre in which the term 'gender ideology' features

The third measure of deploying 'gender ideology' was the article genre. At the sample construction stage, over 860 articles were selected and categorised by genre. To normalise the dataset with other national case studies, all articles tagged in 'letters', 'interviews' and 'commentary' genres were kept, but the most numerous category of 'news' (over 600 entries) was restricted to a maximum of 100, with equal distribution across the titles. While minimal in scope, an interesting potential parallel exists here between the otherwise radically different Gazeta Wyborcza and Do Rzeczy: they published readers' letters on the topic, suggesting that both liberal and (far) right-wing outlets may have similar aspirations to come across as 'voice of the people'.

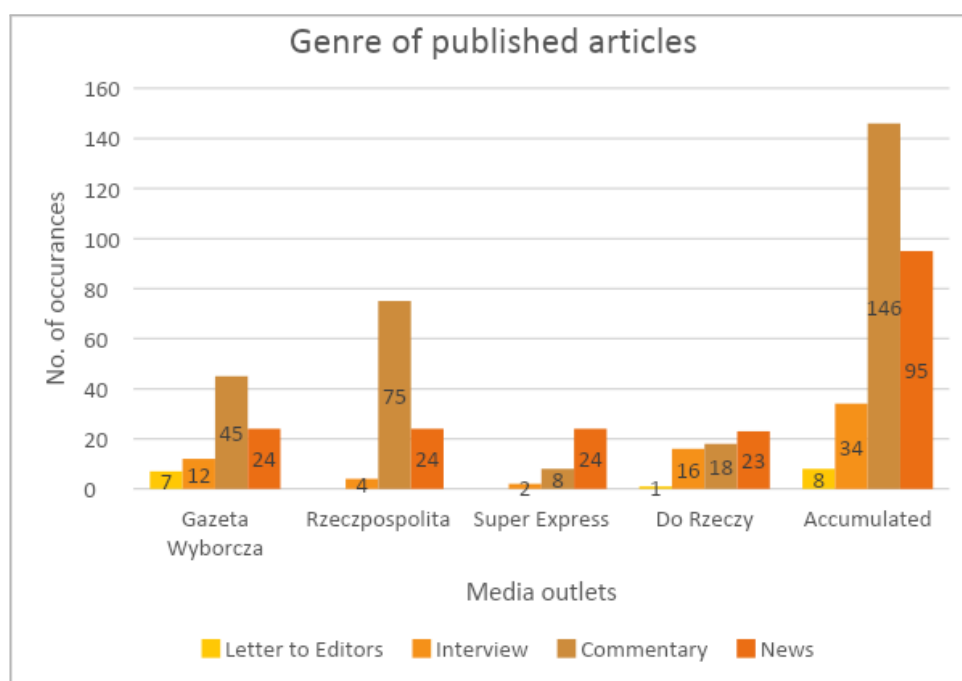


Figure PL12: Genre of Published Articles

(d) Journalists and writers who employed the term ‘gender ideology’

There are 146 writers and journalists in our sample, the majority of whom – 96 – authored only one article. A significant number of articles are co-written by editors, and there are only four individuals who authored five or more articles, all from Rzeczpospolita newspaper (See [Appendix B: Table AB9 \(PL6\) – ‘Overview of the article authors in the dataset’](#)). Three of these authors (M. Adamski, A. Bartkiewicz, M. Szuldrzyński) present a generally favourable and liberal outlook on gender- and sexuality-related social changes, and tend to condemn conservative (far) right-wing politics and the Catholic Church for producing moral (sex) panics. Tomasz Terlikowski is a well-known journalist, commentator, (self-described) Catholic activist, and highly controversial figure among both conservative and liberal audiences. He has collaborated with a range of conservative (and far-right) media outlets and has negatively written about feminism and LGBTIQ+ issues. However, it would be misleading to present his profile as uniformly anti-gender, as Terlikowski has also produced supportive and reflective journalism in defence of gender and sexual minorities and against discrimination. His articles in the dataset present supportive arguments in relation to gender and sexuality matters.

(e) Actors quoted or mentioned in articles

Across the dataset of 283 articles, 435 unique actor entries were created, of which the vast majority are mentioned only once or less than five times (401), 24 were mentioned five to ten times, seven were mentioned 11-20 times, and three were mentioned in 20 or more instances (in 23 articles no actors were identified).

The chart below presents a selection of the actors that occur most frequently across the article sample (full list in [Appendix B: Table AB10 \(PL7\) – ‘List of identified actors’](#)). Those who were identified ten times or more are leading politicians of the ruling coalition government (J. Kaczyński, P. Czarnek, A. Duda, Z. Ziobro, M. Morawiecki, E. Witek), and also, notably, queer-feminist activists (Małgorzata Margot Szutowicz, Bart Staszewski), who have actively engaged in highly mediated pro-queer-feminist campaigns during this period. Consequently, they were frequently politically condemned by ruling – conservative, right-wing – government officials, or supported by opposition leaders. Also identified is a figurehead of the Polish anti-gender and heteroactivist groups, Kaja Godek, and opposition politicians such as Donald Tusk and Rafał Trzaskowski. The list is completed by the Catholic Church figures John Paul II and Archbishop M. Jędraszewski, which shows the full spectrum of most influential actors appearing in discussions when issues of gender, sexuality, abortion, and bodily self-determination were treated in Poland in the time frame of this analysis.

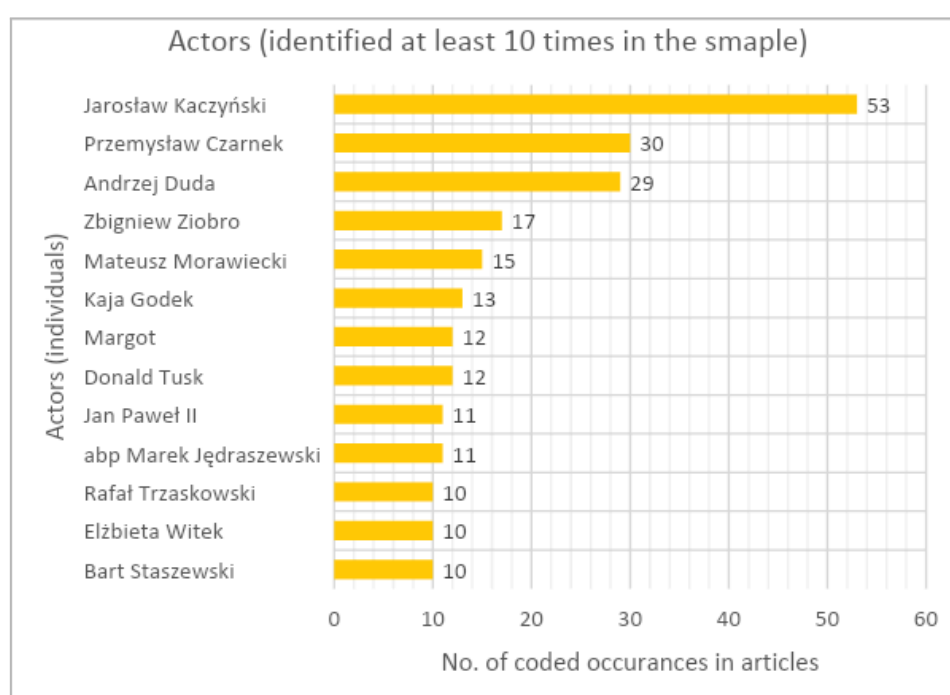


Figure PL13: Actors who occur most frequently across the Article Sample

(f) Organisations mentioned

Groups, organisations and institutions were categorised in three groups, depending on how writers presented the organisations in their article, as either: (1) pro-LGBTIQ/feminist (directly involved in reported issue/event, overall 48 actors); (2) organisations opposing progressive gender/sexuality politics (directly involved, 90 actors); (3) all other organisations mentioned in the articles (142 actors).

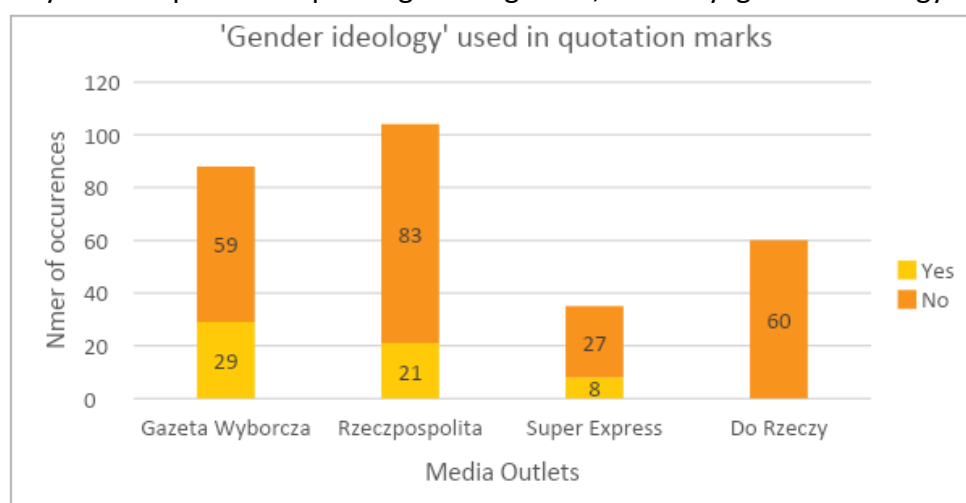
The table below presents a selection of the most frequently mentioned (\geq five) organisations (For the full list, see [Appendix B: Table AB11 \(PL8\) – ‘Overview of pro-LGBTIQ/feminist organisations’](#), [Table AB12 \(PL9\) – ‘Overview of anti-LGBTIQ/feminist organisations’](#), and [Table AB13 \(PL10\) – ‘Overview of all other identified organisations’](#)).

Mention Count	List of Pro-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations
6	Parada Równości
7	OKO.press, Kampania Przeciw Homofobii
8	Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza
12	Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet
14	Nowa Lewica
Mention Count	List of Anti-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations
5	Metropolia Krakowska, Kremlin, Republican Party (USA), Suwerenna Polska
6	Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Fidesz, Forza Italia, DoRzeczy.pl, Radio Maryja, Małopolskie Kuratorium Oświaty,
7	StopLGBT
8	Fratelli d'Italia
9	Solidarna Polska, TV Trwam
10	Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia
12	Konfederacja
15	Fundacja Życie i Rodzina
18	Zjednoczona Prawica
19	Fundacja Instytut na Rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris
20	TVP
21	Catholic Church
103	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość
Mention Count	List of all other organisations/institutions mentioned
5	World Health Organisation, Koalicja Obywatelska, TVN, PRL, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, NATO
6	PSL
7	European Parliament
9	European Commission, Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki)
12	Platforma Obywatelska

Table PL14: Overview of Organisations

(g) Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not, definition or not

As illustrated in **Figure PL15: 'Occurrences of 'gender ideology' in quotation marks, grouped by media outlet'** below, the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* used 'gender ideology' in quotation marks in one third of the coverage, the conservative *Rzeczpospolita* in only one fifth of its articles, while in the tabloid *Super Express* it featured in one quarter of the articles, and never in *Do Rzeczy*. The higher instance of quotation marks in liberal outlets indicates that they approach the idea with critical distance. *Do Rzeczy* stands out as a title that has not used any quotation marks, a naturalised usage in keeping with its (far) right-wing profile and values. It must be noted that in Polish there are other linguistic and semantic ways of marking distance and the critical deployment of any term, beyond the quotation marks, for example the abbreviation 'tzw' – 'so called' – is popular. It is also usually very clear on a semantic level, if the author actually uses 'gender ideology' to describe discussed phenomena, or if they refer to 'gender ideology' only as part of the reported coverage (e.g. covering a story about a politician speaking about gender, whereby 'gender ideology' was used).

**Figure PL15:** Occurrences of 'gender ideology' in quotation marks, grouped by Media Outlet

Examples of deploying 'gender ideology' in quotation marks:

“Krysiak jest gejem i twierdzi, że wypowiada się w imieniu osób homoseksualnych. W rzeczywistości szerzy ultrapravicowe poglądy i rozpowszechnia fałszywe stereotypy na temat osób LGBT+. Tropi „ideologię gender”, „ideologię LGBT”, „ideologię neomarksistowską”. Szydź z feministek, „Gazetę Wyborczą” określa antysemitckim mianem „Gazety Bez Napletka”. (Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16.06.2020)

*“Krysiak is gay and claims to speak in the name of homosexual people. In reality, he spreads ultraright views and untrue stereotypes about LGBT+ persons. He hunts ‘gender ideology’, ‘LGBT ideology’, ‘neomarxist ideology’. He ridicules feminists, and labels *Gazeta Wyborcza* with*

the antisemitic description ‘Newspaper Without a Foreskin.’” (Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza, Gazeta Wyborcza, 16.06.2020)

And without:

“Nasze portfolio projektowe jest bardzo bogate, a wyniki naukowe mogą po prostu boleć tych naukowców, dla których ideologia gender jest ważniejsza od rzetelnej nauki. W mojej ocenie stąd ta zawiść.” (Michał Sopiński and the Editors, Do Rzeczy, 15.04.2023)

“Our project portfolio is wide, and the scientific achievements will make those scholars jealous, for whom gender ideology is more important than reliable [diligent] science. In my opinion that is the source of [their] envy.” (Michał Sopiński and the Editors, Do Rzeczy, 15.04.2023)

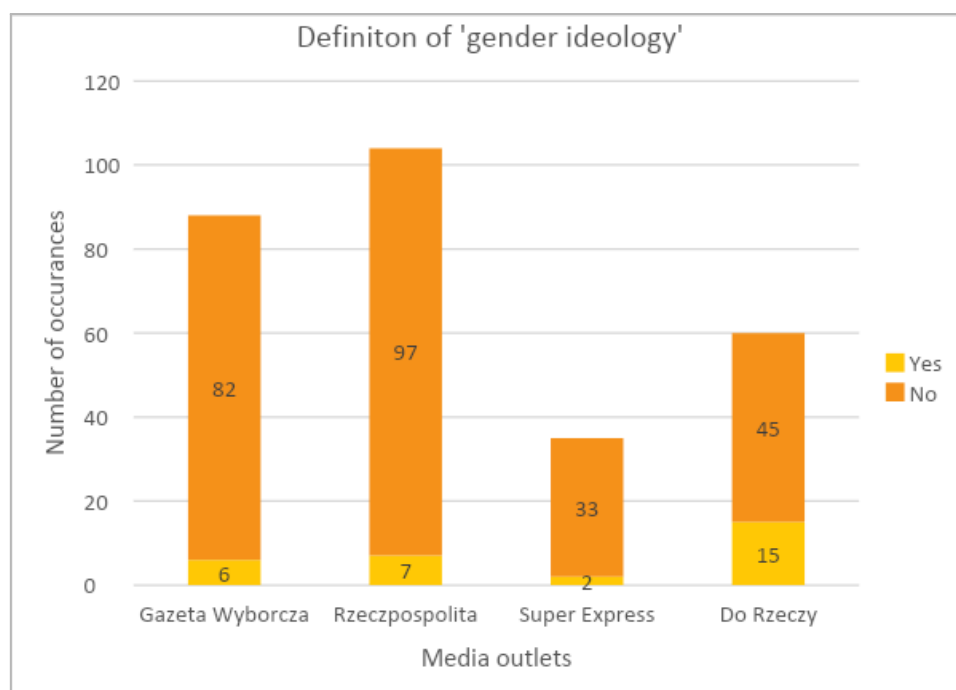


Figure PL16: Occurrences of the definition of ‘gender ideology’, grouped by Media Outlet

In the Polish dataset there is a clear tendency to deploy ‘gender ideology’ without any clearly marked explanation or definition. Articles featuring a definition of ‘gender ideology’ comprise just 7% in Gazeta Wyborcza, 7% in Rzeczpospolita, 6% in Super Express, and 25% in Do Rzeczy. The higher frequency and proportion of definitions in the (far) right-wing Do Rzeczy magazine can be explained by their disparaging nature, as they are consistently linked to a broader spectrum of anti-gender activities (see Polish Controversy Mapping observations).

The following quote illustrates the discourse in Do Rzeczy. It is taken from the article featured in the portfolio of materials produced on the occasion of the anti-gender event organised by Do Rzeczy. The event was framed as “the conference on the legal defence of the family against LGBT ideology”:

“Ideologia LGBT sprowadza się do tego, że nie ma już płci, że ludzkość nie dzieli się na dwa rodzaje – męski i żeński, ale dzieli się na wiele genderów, które są płynne, które są pewnymi konstrukcjami społecznymi” – podkreślił filozof. – „Płeć biologiczna jest rugowana z języka publicznego, z humanistyki, a także z prawa i jej miejsce zajmują owe gendery” – dodał. Profesor Legutko zwrócił uwagę, że ideologia LGBT jest jednym z najważniejszych elementów politycznych w Parlamencie Europejskim. – Niemal każdy dokument zawiera odniesienia do ideologii LGBT. Ostatnio zostało przygotowane sprawozdanie na temat szkodliwości azbestu i proszę sobie wyobrazić, że tam również znaleziono jakiś związek między szkodliwością azbestu a LGBT. Proszę nie pytać jaki, bo nie wiem, ale jakiś z pewnością jest, bo inaczej odwołania do LGBT by nie było – powiedział. W swoim wystąpieniu europoseł PiS zauważył również, że ideologia LGBT to „dziwny mariaż neomarksizmu i liberalizmu”. – Neomarksści rozwinęli starą teorię walki klas o walkę ras i walkę płci czy genderów i w związku z tym zaroilo się od mnóstwa grup prześladowanych. [...] Z drugiej strony liberalizm zaoferował to, co ma najcenniejszego, czyli koncepcję praw.” (Tomasz Kolanek, Do Rzeczy, 21.11.2023)

“‘The LGBT ideology boils down to the fact that there is no more sex/gender, that humanity no longer divides into two types – male and female – but splits into many genders** that are fluid, that are social constructions’, the philosopher emphasised. ‘Biological sex is being eliminated from the public language, from the humanities, and from the law, and its place is taken by these genders,’ he added. Professor Legutko pointed out that LGBT ideology is one of the most important political elements in the European Parliament. ‘Almost every document contains references to LGBT ideology. Recently, there was a report on the harmfulness of asbestos, and imagine that there too, some link was found between the harmfulness of asbestos and LGBT. Please don’t ask what it is, because I don’t know, but there certainly must be one, otherwise there would be no reference to LGBT,’ he said. In his speech, the Law and Justice MEP also noted that LGBT ideology is ‘a strange marriage of neo-Marxism and liberalism’. Neo-Marxists have developed the old theory of class struggle [to include] the struggle of the races, and the struggle of the sexes or genders, and as a result, a multitude of persecuted groups swarmed in. [...] Liberalism, on the other hand, has offered what it holds most valuable, that is, the concept of rights.” (Tomasz Kolanek, Do Rzeczy, 21.11.2023).*

[*Polish ‘płeć’ denotes both sex & gender; ** MEP Legutko uses grammatically polonized, plural English word ‘genders’, which in this context has clear ridiculing and parodical tones to the Polish reader].

Polish Controversy Mapping

Introduction

The final section examines the case study event that generated political, social, and media debates. It showcases the complexity of discourses and strategies on a broad left-to-right spectrum of socio-political and cultural attitudes and perspectives on issues of gender, sexuality, and national politics.

Background to the case study controversy

The 'Margot controversy' erupted in the summer of 2020. Margot at the time was a student at Warsaw University, a non-binary queer activist, and a member of the self-organised collective Stop Bzdurom! (Stop Bullshit!) who helped to galvanise public discussion about a series of events centred on citizens' freedoms, and human rights, including trans peoples' rights.

In 2019-2020 there was a build-up of events and controversies around abortion and LGBTIQ+ rights. In February 2019 the Mayor of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski, signed a declaration supporting LGBTIQ+ rights. In response, the heteroactivist Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia (FPPZ) launched a public campaign bus - colloquially referred to as 'Homofobus' - displaying slogans against sexual education and featuring references to the "sexualisation of children" and the "LGBT lobby". In September politicians and the activists of the Ordo Iuris group initiated their infamous campaign for "LGBT-free zones", and accompanying legislation. From early 2020, LGBTIQ+ activists responded by mapping the legalised development of these zones in what they called the 'Atlas of Hate'.

The summer of 2020 was the period of direct trigger events involving Margot, the Stop Bzdurom! Collective, and the police. Between June and August a series of key events took place. Margot and Stop Bzdurom! organised diverse actions and events, such as stopping and vandalising the 'Homofobus' and 'decorating' public monuments with rainbow-coloured decorations, including religious ones. After public denouncement of these acts, an arrest warrant was issued, which incited an organised public gathering in support of Margot. Eventually, Margot, as well as other activists, were arrested on the 7th of August in what was widely reported and documented as a violent, abusive and coercive police operation. Consequently, 07.08.2020 is now often referred to in public discourse as "The Rainbow Night", an analogy to the Kristallnacht Nazi pogrom in November 1938. After being arrested, Margot was placed in an all-male prison, while a wave of LGBTIQ+ marches in support of Margot and against police brutality swept across Poland.

A number of (conservative & liberal) politicians responded vocally in the media to the events. Zbigniew Ziobro, Minister of Justice, who also holds the office of the Prosecutor General, became actively and personally engaged with the case. Left and liberal MPs issued a series of Parliamentary Interpellations to the public institutions into the events, but were largely ignored. Eventually, the District Court in Warsaw ruled that the police detentions of the LGBTIQ+ activists and participants

were unjustified. Stop Bzdurom! dissolved in 2021. The legal battles that commenced in this period finally reached a conclusion in May 2023. Activists of Stop Bzdurom! were found guilty of vandalism and hooliganism and sentenced to 6 months of community service. These charges had been brought by Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia, Ruch Narodowy, and Ordo Iuris.

Methodology

In choosing a controversy to map, the 'Margot Controversy' was selected as it allowed for an analysis of developments in narratives, strategies, actions, and representations in a timespan of over 2 years; highlights the evolution of, and impact on, the 'liberal' side on the political and social spectrum of attitudes, not only those in the register of anti-gender mobilisations; demonstrates the intersecting links and dependencies between feminism, LGB, and trans politics in Poland.

The dataset of N=50 articles was built through a purposive selection aiming to balance a range of diverse sources, including community, mainstream liberal and conservative media, and right/far-right outlets. In line with the chosen methodology, a pilot test of Issue Crawler and Gephi visualisations tools was conducted, however the lack of sufficient organisational references in the data resulted in this step being discontinued for this case study. The final methodological steps are described in [Appendix C: Table AC10 \(PL11\) – 'Methodological steps for Polish case in Controversy Mapping segment'](#).

The 50 articles were located using the following search keywords: Margot, aresztowanie Margot (arresting Margot), Małgorzata Sz., Stop Bzdurom. They were drawn from the following media outlets:

- Established right wing profile: Gazeta Polska (GP) (1 article); Fronda (2 articles); Klub Jagielloński (5); wPolityce.pl (6); doRzeczy.pl (7);
- Established left/liberal profile: Krytyka Polityczna (KP) (2 articles); Codziennik Feministyczny (CF 3 articles), OKO.press (3 articles); Gazeta Wyborcza (GW) (7);
- Unaligned political orientation: Tygodnik Powszechny (TP) (1 article); Vogue Polska (2 articles); Newsweek (4); Rzeczpospolita (RZ) (7).

In selecting a range of media outlets to scope for actors and discursive tactics of writing about the 'Margot controversy', it was important to work across a sufficiently broad spectrum of newspapers, magazines and outlets, to better understand the diverse and complementary perspectives that all together form a more complex understanding of the chosen case.

Data presentation

Actors (individuals & organisations) and writers

The article sample produced a range of writers, where 41 authors contributed one article a piece, four authors wrote two articles, and five articles were signed as editorials. As with the media study

data, all actors mentioned in the sample were grouped into three broad categories: (1) pro-LGBTIQ/feminist; (2) anti-LGBTIQ/feminist; (3) other positions. The “pro- and anti-LGBTIQ/feminist” description is not suggested as a definite categorisation of actors, but a denotation of how actors are positioned vis-à-vis gender non-binary activists Margot and the Stop Bzdurom! Collective, according to the article authors. The pro-LGBTIQ/feminist actor most frequently mentioned was Marta Lempart (6 mentions) who is a leader of the Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet – All-Poland Women’s Strike – which received 4 mentions and is a prominent movement against curtailing the right to abortion; Kampania Przeciw Homofobii (4 mentions) is one of the most prominent Polish LGBTIQ+ organisations; and Bart Staszewski (3 mentions), who initiated one of the campaigns against the so-called ‘LGBT-Free Zones’. The central appearance of these actors in the data confirms their public standing as important pro-LGBTIQ/feminist actors in political, media, and civil society arenas. See [Appendix C, Table AC11 \(PL12\) – ‘Actors and organisations \(pro-LGBTIQ/feminist\)’ for the full overview of actors.](#)

Of the anti-LGBTIQ/feminist actors (see [Appendix C: Table AC12 \(PL13\) – ‘Actors and organisations \(anti-LGBTIQ/feminist\)’](#)), the most frequently noted were Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia (7 mentions) and Instytut na Rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris (4 mentions), followed by Police Poland (13 mentions) and Zbigniew Ziobro, the Minister of Justice and also General Prosecutor (4 mentions). These four actors were directly involved in pursuing actions against Margot, and as already documented in the parliamentary and media data, are also well-known as anti-gender individual and institutional actors.

Ordo Iuris and Fundacja Pro are also those who emerged as the most fully involved in anti-gender politics; these well-established organisations have been campaigning against LGBTIQ+ and women’s rights for a long time, and thus were well placed to actively engage in the ‘Margot controversy’ events in this period.

The third grouping is most numerous as it comprises mentions of actors who were not directly involved in the controversy. [Appendix C: Table AC13 \(PL14\) – ‘Actors and organisations mentioned’](#) presents a wide range of individuals and organisations, and includes actors critical and supportive of Margot and Stop Bzdurom! (such as Rafał Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw, who is publicly sympathetic to LGBTIQ+ rights). Several mentions are made of Catholic priests and institutions such as the Catholic University Lublin (KUL), which created a controversy within a controversy when father Alfred Wierzbicki decided to quit the university after publicly defending Margot and subsequently receiving harsh public criticism and treatment by many right-wing public figures and institutions, including his own alma mater.

Of note is the appearance of a Brazilian organisation in the data (Sociedade Brasileira de Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade), which points to the links between Polish and international heteroactivist groups which have also been observed in other contexts and studies (Browne and Nash, 2020; Datta, 2021; Möser, Ramme and Takács, 2022). While NGOs and civil society groups are central actors, it is also significant that several media outlets actively contribute to the

controversy beyond mere coverage of events. These outlets were very active in the controversy and their discourse is analysed below: the (far) right-wing print and online magazine *Do Rzeczy* (dorzeczy.pl), the Polish national TV broadcaster TVP (which is dominated by the interests of the then-governing coalition), and *PCh24.pl*, which, while positioning itself as a news and content creation outlet, is a subsidiary of the religious organisation *Polonia Christiana*, which also features on our list.

Discursive media tactics

The most common discursive strategies and tactics that authors use when writing about the ‘Margot controversy’ were gathered. The hostile and demeaning nature of the discourse is reflected in the finding that the most common practice is the ‘deadnaming/misgendering’ of Margot or other activists (26 instances), supplemented by ‘ridiculing and making jokes’ (17), and followed by a ‘call to action’ (15), and framing ‘the West’ as a threat (12).

DMT ID	Tactic	Frequency		Definition
DMT1	Positioning East as Threat	R: 0 L: 1 U: 0	T: 1	Presenting and framing the ‘East’ (or more specifically Central-Eastern Europe) as too traditionalist, not progressing liberal reforms fast enough, as lagging behind the explicit or implied Western ‘progress’ in terms of gender/sexuality rights. A liberal reflection of the conservative trope of the ‘West as Threat’.
DMT2	Misinformation	R: 1 L: 0 U: 0	T: 1	Purposeful creation and dissemination of misleading or false information, blurring the factual with personal opinion, misinterpretation of scientific information.
DMT3	Admirable Examples	R: 1 L: 3 U: 0	T: 4	A broad category pointing to a diverse range of idealised and admired examples (people, organisations, solutions, styles of governing, etc.), used by actors across the full spectrum of political affiliations and values.
DMT4	Humour	R: 1 L: 2 U: 1	T: 4	Using humour and satirical language for a diverse range of purposes, such as showing the ‘anti-hero’ of the story in an unfavourable light, undermining reader’s trust in the person/ideas/activities described. In contrast to ‘Ridiculing’, it is less direct, more ambiguous, less spiteful, and operates more often at a structural & stylistic level.
DMT5	Scapegoating	R: 4 L: 2 U: 3	T: 9	Blaming a person, institution/organisation, an event or a process, for being a root cause of the (perceived) negative situation in which the writer finds themselves. Mostly unfounded in systemic and reliable argumentation and facts.
DMT6	Worst Case Scenarios	R: 5 L: 1 U: 3	T: 9	Speculative writing that produces ‘what if’ scenarios of the consequences for a given situation/event/problem. The alternative and imaginative setups are not only negative but

				also often hyperbolic. Often accompanied by other tactics such as 'Public call to action' or 'Scapegoating'.
DMT7	Positioning West as Threat	R: 10 L: 0 U: 2	T: 12	As in the parliamentary data, this tactic constructs the 'West' as threatening to Polish culture, more 'generic' tradition, Christianity, 'natural order' (vide DT6).
DMT8	Public call to action	R: 4 L: 6 U: 5	T: 15	Rhetorical and symbolic 'call to duty' in the name of certain values and ideas; or more concrete and material call for mass mobilisation (e.g. to take part in a protest, or perform other action) in order to stop something from happening or conversely, to enable a change.
DMT9	Ridicule/Joke	R: 14 L: 0 U: 3	T: 17	A clear strategy of antagonising the reader against the person/organising/event, using parody, hyperbole and other rhetorical tools to ridicule the target. Compared to 'Humour' described above, it is a rather unambiguous, clearly negative strategy that aims at polarisation and aggravation.
DMT10	Amplifying Specific Voices	R: 5 L: 11 U: 7	T: 23	A tactic that aims at magnifying the existing arguments, voices, positions. On one hand, it serves as a symbolic platform to elevate given voices/ arguments/ perspectives/ that are seen as perhaps underplayed, or conversely, as important and thus deserving even more attention.
DMT11	Deadnaming / Misgendering	R: 19 L: 2 U: 5	T: 26	A clearly cruel tactic that purposefully and consciously targets and undermines trans and gender-diverse persons self-determination and bodily autonomy. It deploys names and sex/gender as assigned at birth rather than those with which a person identifies and uses, against the publicly well established will of the person targeted.
	Total	R: 65 L: 28 U: 29	T: 121	

Table PL17: Overview of the Discursive Media Tactics (DMT)

Note: Abbreviations used: R – right-wing media; L – liberal/left media; U – unaligned (politically) media; T - total.

Not recognising Margot's – and other people's – preferred gender identification, and referring to them by their birth names (sex/gender assigned at birth), is a widely observed practice of actors who are hostile to trans and non-binary peoples' rights. It is often followed by ridicule, and a purposefully perplexing use of linguistic forms of address that exploit the rigid system of Polish gendered grammar. Consequently, it is not surprising that these two strategies occur frequently in relation to each other in the sample.

One can also observe that the selection of identified controversy tactics are similar to those identified across the parliamentary debates and media segments. For instance, Positioning the West as Threat (or its liberal reversal, Positioning the East as Threat) corresponds to the West and the EU as Threats in parliamentary discourse, and Humour, Ridicule/Joke, and Scapegoating can also be found among the parliamentary Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours. Notably, calling upon

biology, nature, and science, also identified in Parliamentary discourses, were not central to media coverage of ‘Margot controversy’.

Campaign tactics & strategies

In the second stage of the research, an examination of websites, and supporting documents, such as published reports or documented articles was carried out, to identify the range and scope of tools that go beyond the rhetorical tactics identified in the media articles. The graph below helps visualise the proportions between different tactics and strategies.



Figure PL18: Example counts of Campaigning Tactics & Strategies

The definitions of Campaigning Tactics & Strategies (CTS) offered below shed more light on the complex strategies and tools deployed by the Polish anti-gender actors.

ID	List Of Tactics & Strategies	Examples (N=77, 100%)	Description
CTS1	Complaint against media orgs & individuals	1 (1%)	Consists of formal & informal complaints against media-related institutions or people working in media.

CTS2	Transnational cooperation	1 (1%)	Forms of cooperation and collaboration between Polish and other national or international organisations or groups.
CTS3	'Gender Critical' Event (conference)	3 (4%)	An event (mostly conferences, seminars, talks) framed or promoted as “gender critical”, using this particular phrasing.
CTS4	Complaint against judicial/legal system & individuals	3 (4%)	Formal and informal complaints made against legal institutions or people working in them.
CTS5	Launching media & information sources	3 (4%)	The provision of information services, such as radio, TV, online news outlet, etc.
CTS6	Training (webinars, courses, videos etc.)	3 (4%)	Various forms of training for mobilisation and awareness.
CTS7	Complaint against education institution & individuals	4 (5%)	Formal and informal complaints against educational institutions or people working in them.
CTS8	Complaint against health institution & individuals	6 (8%)	Formal and informal complaints made against health institutions or people working in them.
CTS9	Organisation of conferences & talks	6 (8%)	Organisation of events (e.g. conferences, seminars, talks, festivals). Similar to CTS3, but broader in format and scope.
CTS10	Support (official) from public institutions	6 (8%)	Giving or receiving formal support (incl. financial, material, or symbolic) from public institutions and bodies, e.g. through grants and awards, nominations, proclamations. Related to CTS12.
CTS11	Attending events (manifestation of strength, intimidation)	7 (9%)	Popular tactic used to intimidate and invoke a ‘freezing effect’; for instance, where a large group of Ordo Iuris activists attended court hearings in Margot case. Similar to CTS14 and CTS17.
CTS12	Support (informal) from public institutions	7 (9%)	Giving or receiving informal support (incl. financial, material, or symbolic) from public institutions and bodies. This could be e.g. through pseudo-competitive grants and awards, where awarding decisions were made in an arbitrary mode, or not by an independent panel. Related to CTS10.
CTS13	Provision of materials and templates	10 (13%)	Created materials such as leaflets, guidelines, blueprints and templates, for using and reusing by audiences and other organisations.
CTS14	Legal threat & intimidation	11 (14%)	Popular especially among Ordo Iuris thinktank activists,. examples include legally-binding requests (e.g. of information, from public bodies), or legal notifications that use legal jargon and references. They aim at the intimidation of individuals who may not be familiar with the legal (in)consequences of these documents and procedures. They also aim to create a freezing effect among institutions and individuals. Similar to CTS14.

CTS15	Public & advertising campaign	11 (14%)	Diverse forms of advertising, incl. outdoor posters, radio and TV, internet portal, cruising cars with placards and recorded megaphone messages, etc.
CTS16	Financial & crowdfunding support	12 (16%)	Fundraisers for institutions or individual campaigns.
CTS17	Protests & counter-protests	12 (16%)	Diverse forms of marches and protests arranged for a cause; or conversely, against feminist/LGBTIQ-related events. Related to CTS11.
CTS18	Political Lobbying (petitions; letters to politicians)	15 (19%)	Actions aimed at mobilising political support at national or local levels, for an anti-gender agenda. Also civic legislative initiatives.
CTS19	Discourse-shaping & twisting narratives	18 (23%)	A diverse set of rhetorical and discursive strategies aiming at shaping perceptions and impressions. Related and often leading to CTS20.
CTS20	Misinformation	19 (25%)	Purposeful creation and dissemination of misleading or false information, blurring the factual with personal opinion, misinterpretation of scientific information. Often a consequence of CTS19.
CTS21	Legal, organisational & cross-institutional support	24 (31%)	This is a structural strategy of cross-organisational support and cooperation, whereby resources are shared (e.g. offices). Or where specific individuals are engaged in activities across several organisations/institutions. Related to CTS10,12 and 16.
CTS22	Public call to action	26 (34%)	Rhetorical and symbolic ‘call to duty’ in the name of certain values and ideas; or more concrete and material call for mass mobilisation (e.g. to take part in a protest, or perform other action) in order to stop something from happening or conversely, to enable a change.
CTS23	Statement on Website	30 (39%)	Take a clear stance on an issue, problem, event, a person, etc.

Table PL19: Campaigning Tactics and Strategies (CTS) - Definitions

The two most popular tactics, “statement on website” (CTS23, 39%) and “public call to action” (CTS22, 34%) rely on the nature of the website as a medium to proclaim one's own position and rally the audience to action consistent with this position. These are supplemented by Misinformation (CTS20, 25%) and Discourse-shaping & twisting narratives (CTS19, 23%), underlining the importance of discursive, symbolic, and information-driven spaces to these ideological battles. These tactics operate at a general level, targeting mass audiences, rather than honing in on individuals in their particular position. Indeed, as the graph above shows, the strategies aimed at individuals, such as complaints against people or workshops and training, occur less frequently.

Legal, organisational & cross-institutional support (CTS21, 31%) is an interesting case of cooperation between organisations who aim to support each other through structural means, such as sharing infrastructure and resources. An important element of this setup is the engagement of individual actors in the work of several organisations, and this supports and facilitates the flow of expertise, skills, and information between groups. This third most frequently identified tactic closely ties in with three others: Financial & crowdfunding support (CTS16, 16%), Support (informal) from public institutions (CTS12, 9%), and Support (official) from public institutions (CTS10, 8%).

Another observation concerns strategies that interrelate actions against the perceived ‘others’ – protests & counter-protests (CTS17, 16%) or Legal threat & intimidation (CTS14, 14%) – and forms of support offered to one’s own side politically, such as training and resources (webinars, courses, videos, CTS6, 4%). While the strategies deployed against others may be more visible in media coverage due to their often controversial or confrontational nature, the importance of actions designed to share support, cooperation and resources between identified groups should be noted.

Finally, while there is an identifiable form of backstage cooperation between identified groups, this is not as evident in the public-facing front stage of websites and campaign materials. Thus, when practices of link sharing, or disseminating the toolkits and materials of other groups were examined, only seven instances of such direct linkages were identified, without any evidence of link reciprocity: five links to Instytut na Rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris, and one reference to the following: Collegium Intermarium, Instytut Wiedzy o Rodzinie i Społeczeństwie, Klub PCh24.pl, Polonia Christiana, Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej im. Piotra Skargi, Fundacja Życie i Rodzina.

Ordo Iuris is, again, prominently positioned among these actors, reinforcing its importance in shaping Polish anti-gender mobilisations, discourses, and politics. Nonetheless, this infrequency suggests that (online) cross-liaising between organisations is not a common practice.

Polish Case Study Findings

Introduction

Poland is often presented in public discourses as an example of a conservative and populist political regime that makes intensive use of gender and sexuality-related topics to instigate a range of ‘moral panics’ discourses, often for political gain (Žuk and Žuk, 2020). It is also frequently discussed in the context of the anti-gender mobilisations in Central and Eastern Europe (among others: Kováts and Põim, 2015; Žuk and Žuk, 2019; Graff and Korolczuk, 2021; Norocel and Paternotte, 2023).

This report not only highlights similarities and re-confirms the existing scholarship, but goes beyond the state-of-the-art by offering a consolidated set of data that illustrates how anti-gender politics are produced and circulated, using a corpus of parliamentary, media and civil society sources. It evidences synergies between actors and strategies, and builds a complex understanding of the social, economic, and political entanglements of bodies, genders, and sexualities in Poland. There is some evidence of cooperation between global anti-gender actors and Polish ones, and the strong symbolic presence of the geopolitical referents in anti-gender narratives. The report is enmeshed in the dynamics of locality and globality, as the international thread reappears across all three segments of the Polish study, in both anti-gender and liberal counterparts.

Polish Parliament Findings

The first segment of the Polish case study focused on the Polish Sejm (Lower Chamber of the Parliament), its last two Terms of Office (VIII: 2015-2019; IX: 2019-2023), and examined the parliamentary debates which prominently featured topics of genders and sexualities.

- The parliamentary data is drawn from a relatively wide spread of actors who have engaged in various thematic debates in the Sejm. While Law and Justice, the largest party in Sejm, dominate the data, politicians from across all political groups on the centre to right spectrum have exhibited attitudes and produced narratives from which a notable range of discursive anti-gender strategies emerged. This may indicate that one available strategy is to use parliamentary time - which is assigned proportionally according to the number of votes held by political groups - to create a profusion effect and maximise the exposure of ideas through frequent repetitions by numerous actors.
- The preponderance of anti-gender interventions in parliament that are repeated engagements beyond one-off contributions are produced by a relatively small number of actors. This indicates a complementary strategy whereby a narrower number of key actors drive anti-gender political rhetoric and emerge as spokespersons for their political parties, consistently claiming that they speak for broader groups of people that they assert identify with them.
- The distribution of actors by gender shows the predominance of (cis-)men and the majority (68%) of parliamentary actors deploying discursive anti-gender strategies were (cis-)men

([Cis-]women provided 32% with no actors self-declaring other gender/sex identities). This observation is not surprising, as the political sphere in Poland is dominated by (cis-)men, thus this ratio reflects the broader composition of the socio-political scene in Poland. The Sejm is also dominated by (cis-)men: Sejm's VIII & IX gender breakdown for MPs shows an almost identical gendered distribution to that observed in this breakdown of contributing actors (2/3 to 1/3). This not only reconfirms predictable gender patterns, but also highlights that in the debates on gender and sexuality, Polish parliamentary space is not one that is welcoming to a diversity of voices, especially those belonging to social groups whose fate is being discussed. This was observed across a range of examined debates, from women's right to safe abortion and inclusive healthcare, to young adults' rights to reliable and informed (sexual) education based on scientific knowledge (rather than religious morality), to non-heterosexual peoples' right to not be discriminated or prosecuted on the basis of their sexual orientation.

- Nevertheless, anti-gender tactics and strategies are not the exclusive preserve of the most notorious political actors. They exist on a spectrum of political views and attitudes that goes beyond the typical dichotomy of "conservative vs. liberal" or "authoritarian vs. democratic". For example, political actors representing the opposition parties (Civil Coalition, Polska 2050, and Polish People's Party) and self-identifying as liberal/centre-liberal were also identified in our dataset (albeit to a significantly lesser extent).
- The scale and frequency of contributions creates a volatile and highly charged atmosphere in the Sejm, when issues of gender and sexuality are of concern. This is exemplified by e.g. personal attacks on, or accusations between MPs – tactics that were gathered under one of the most popular thematic codes: Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours. While this is not atypical for Polish Sejm and can be observed in debates on a range of topics, it may also be interpreted as another anti-gender strategy. Such a charged atmosphere helps to (over)dominate the debate and set the tone at affective registers that compel or even force more liberal actors to defend and correct the often malicious and misinformed anti-gender claims. Therefore, less time is potentially dedicated to presenting arguments, which go beyond firefighting the inflammatory anti-gender narratives, but strive to build a more positive and welcoming space of public debate, one that reliably informs, educates, and builds respectful democratic mechanisms of viewpoint exchange.
- There is an extensive interoperability that characterises the anti-gender approaches in Poland. Both sampling and thematic coding of the gathered parliamentary debates (and also to a notable extent, in the Media, and Controversy Mapping segments) quickly showed a high permeability of topics and keywords, whereby one selected keyword yielded debates on diverse topics, and whereby the debates on one given topic were arrived at through different keywords. For instance, 'sexualisation' brought forth debates about trans people's rights to bodily-autonomy and self-determination; feminist critiques of gendered social roles in education; LGBTIQ+ activism; sexual education; parents' movements & rights; women's rights.

- The extensive plasticity of the anti-gender strategy is a notable finding linked with the above one, whereby maintaining high flexibility of what, how, when, and in response to what is being said remains as unconstrained as possible, therefore allowing a manoeuvring field for anti-gender actors to espouse anti-gender narratives where and when needed.

Polish Media Findings

This segment of the Polish case offers a quantitatively-oriented content analysis from the four popular media outlets: *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, and supplemented with *Super Express* and *Do Rzeczy*. The first two titles are country-wide broadsheets, the third is a tabloid, and the last one a far-right magazine. Examination focused on the descriptions of uses, and the identification of popular anti-gender actors.

- *Do Rzeczy* (DR) has positioned itself as an explicitly politicised ‘campaigning media’ through active anti-gender discourse and content production. The prevalence of *Do Rzeczy* also in the next segment (Controversy Mapping) allows a certain level of confidence to state that *Do Rzeczy* is one of main anti-gender actors, a keen platform voicing and creating outspokenly anti-gender media narratives. Additionally, it is also an active contributor of other, non-discursive tactics, which is discussed below in the next section.
- Two main Polish ‘broadsheet’ newspapers *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW) and *Rzeczpospolita* (RZ), have well-established, country-wide profiles as (respectively) left-liberal oriented, and more conservative and centre-right leaning. The differences in their coverage of anti-gender topics are not, however, strongly pronounced despite different profiles. While it is very clear that *Gazeta Wyborcza* takes much more supportive and advocacy positions in support of various queer-feminist issues and *Rzeczpospolita* remains more restrained in this respect, *Rzeczpospolita* also offers a critique of outspoken anti-gender strategies and tactics used by key civil society and political actors. Thus, in the contexts of anti-gender mobilisations and mainstream, broadsheet titles, arises a need for a more nuanced and complex understanding of the media ecosystem, one that does not polarise as easily and densely around the dialectical ‘liberal vs conservative’ stances.
- The longstanding presence of ‘gender ideology’ debates in Poland creates the ‘taken for granted’ effect around some of the key phrases and words, when gender and sexuality are focal. Following the examination of different uses of ‘gender ideology’ (and ‘LGBT ideology’, both of which are oftentimes used interchangeably in Polish context by anti-gender actors) it is clear that its uses suggest socially settled, presumed familiarity that results in a lack of either definition or other demarcation with quotation marks.
- There is a concentration effect among Polish anti-gender actors, both organisational and individuals. Across Media and other segments of this study, a limited number of repeatedly engaging actors were observed, cutting across activism, politics, media, and popular culture. This shows the pervasiveness of anti-gender mobilisations that penetrate across

different spheres of influence with a relatively small set of actors (and tools, as the next point suggests).

- The international dimension of Polish anti-gender strategies is clearly pronounced in this media study. Frequent mentions of the foreign politicians were observed, and who are presented as figures of authority and admiration due to their outspoken position on gender, sexuality, migration, the EU, and minorities. The list consists of countries such as Russia, Hungary, France, USA, Italy, and persons such as Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orbán, Marine Le Pen, Donald Trump and Giorgia Meloni). On the other hand, these also serve as objects of condemnation and warning used in the liberal anti anti-gender discourses. This finding on Polish anti-gender politics, while definitely expounding its own, national(istic) flavours, thus neatly links to broader global dynamics of anti-gender mobilisations.
- The EU stands as an important reference point to both anti-gender and pro-LGBTIQ+/feminist actors alike. Frequent mentions recall the observations made in the Parliamentary Debates segment, where the thematic code 'West and/or the EU as threats' proved to be popular discursive theme among the Polish conservative and (far)right-wing politicians (and for the liberal actors as a positive symbol of change and pro-LGBTIQ+/feminist initiatives). The embeddedness of the EU (and more broadly of the idea of 'Europe' and the idea of 'the West') in the Polish imaginary, when issues of gender and sexuality emerge in media (vide: Kulpa, 2020), shows the consistent importance of real and idealised geospatial imaginary that guides Polish anti-gender mobilisations (as well as the liberal 'anti anti-gender' counter politics).

Polish Controversy Mapping Findings

The third segment of the Polish study focused on actors and tactics implicated in the events of summer 2020 around the arrest of Margot, a non-binary activist, of the Stop Bzdurom! Collective, and other queer-feminist activists. The analysis of sources in the 'Margot Controversy' segment led to the identification of a range of anti-gender actors and strategies. The analysis demonstrates persisting levels of transphobia in Poland, and tokenistic use of trans and non-binary peoples in public discourse, who are (too) easily fetishised in public discussion as symbols for debates about Polish democracy and society. The intensive media and political coverage of the 'controversy' around Margot stands as another example of fluctuating discourse and representations - from scarcity to over-abundance of interest - of trans and non-binary people in Poland (Dębińska 2020, pp. 75-83). As Dębińska (2020) shows, too often the lives of trans and non-binary peoples are instrumentalized for diverse purposes, while at the same time their lived experiences are obscured.

- There was an intensification of involvement among the state institutions (and by implication, political parties and groups), such as ministries or police forces. For instance, at a number of occasions, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, or the Office of General Prosecutor were actively engaged in spinning the anti-gender agenda into their political competences, drawing from or using the 'Margot Controversy' events as pretexts

and rationale for the proposed solutions. These ranged from considerations of restricting certain freedoms (most notably of assembly) at the pretext of preventing 'social order', to infusing the national pedagogical curriculum with disinformation about gender and sexual minorities or medical state-of-arts about pregnancy termination.

- The most active and present anti-gender organisations in our dataset (Ordo Iuris, Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia) were the key actors in leading charges and providing evidence for the prosecution of Margot and the Stop Bzdurom! Collective. This shows that anti-gender mobilisations in Poland are actively driven by politics and politicians who seem to work 'hand in glove' with the anti-gender and heteroactivist actors of the civil society. One of the consequences of this is the polarisation and division of civil society along 'good vs. bad' lines, according to political affinity with the governing actors. Additionally, his strategy of formal and informal cooperation between the above mentioned groups of actors contributes to the development of highly discriminatory media-political ambiance, and in consequence facilitates the rise of transphobic and homophobic discrimination and hate crimes (Makuchowska, 2021, pp. 32–46).
- A significant number of organisational actors in the orbit of politics, media and queer-feminist issues were mapped during the analysis of anti-gender strategies. The pattern that emerged shows that the density is concentrated around a distinctly smaller number of organisations under each of the three groupings. Consequently, it was observed that anti-gender strategies for building actor-base resources operate similarly across different, but closely related, fields of influence (politics, media, civil society organising).
- There is evidence of resource preservation and boosting, enhanced by intra-group cooperations and exchanges. This shows the mobilised nature of anti-gender politics in Poland. Information gathered in our research about Ordo Iuris, one of the most notorious anti-gender actors on the Polish scene, well exemplifies the synergies among organisations (for example, that the same people sit on the boards of allied, but distinct organisations) that can work as a catalyst for creating a resourceful network among anti-gender actors.
- Do Rzeczy (DR) is a proactive media platform that constructs and shapes anti-gender tactics and plays a significant role in the Polish media-political-activist landscape. The outlet recycles a plethora of transphobic, homophobic, and anti-feminist discourses and activities that build the core of anti-gender tactics in Polish context. These include: various forms of discourse circulation, (thematic diversity, frequency and a range of skewed arguments); the deployment of misinformation (arising through a lack of factual checks, journalistic carelessness that allows for incorrect information to slip in and leads to misunderstanding arising among audiences); disinformation (active and purposeful deployment of the incorrect information to influence the readership); organisational involvement in 'knowledge creation' events (conferences, seminars).
- There are synergies and a saturation process happening across the political-media landscape. The scope and range of anti-gender tactics and strategies in the Controversy Mapping shows that they are similar to those identified across the Parliamentary Debates

and Media segments in the Polish case. For instance, Positioning West as Threat (or its liberal reversal tactics Positioning East as Threat) corresponds to the West and the EU as Threats in Parliamentary analysis; Humour, Ridicule/Joke, and Scapegoating can also be found among the Parliamentary Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours. It is also clear that Dehumanising is a popular anti-gender tactic; it is clearly oppressive and erases a person's lived experiences, and disrespects individual self-understandings by denying bodily and identity autonomy. For instance, not recognising Margot's (and other people's) preferred gender identifications and referring to them by birth names and assigned at birth metrics, or calling LGBTIQ+ people 'an ideology', is a widely observed practice among actors who are unsupportive of LGBTIQ+ rights. These are often complemented with a tone of ridicule (also identified in the Parliamentary Debates segment) and oftentimes purposefully perplexing use of odd linguistic forms of address, exploiting a rigid system of Polish gendered grammar.

- Knowledge creation and public claims are important anti-gender tools. While in the Parliamentary data (ab)uses of knowledge in the emerging forms of ideological 'scientism' discourse were observed (use of 'scientific' arguments as supposedly irrefutable 'evidence', often calling upon 'biology', 'nature', and 'science') in the Controversy Mapping data, the focus on knowledge creation and the recognition of its importance manifests through activities such as organising conferences, and inviting and hosting (national and international) anti-gender figures of authority.
- Anti-gender narratives have the strategic effect of polarising the (broadly defined) liberal side of the spectrum within and against itself. The research unveiled examples of increased support for the (broad) inclusion of trans people, while at the same time also occasional refusal or limited agreement to use preferred gender forms of address. This shows there are multiple challenges to anti-gender mobilisations that offer polyvocal perspectives among the liberal actors about the role of gender and sexuality as the markers of contemporary democratic societies.

Chapter 6 - Switzerland

Swiss Parliament

Introduction

This case study report presents the data and analysis undertaken with the aim of understanding the diverse manifestations of anti-gender politics in Switzerland. The report is organised in three parts. In the first segment, it presents the data pertaining to anti-gender discursive repertoires as well as associated actors and tactics in the Swiss parliament. The period of time addressed by this report comprises the debates which took place within a completed four-year parliamentary term (2019-2023), complemented by an additional year from the previous term (2018). In the second section the report presents data and analysis of anti-gender discourses in the media coverage. The third part discusses two controversial events - one in German-language sources, and one in French - that took place in the public domain in order to see how diverse actors and networks respond to the wider circulation of anti-gender discourses produced in politics and in the media. Both media and parliamentary data collected for this study reveal the persistence of contestations around gender and sexual equalities in Switzerland.²¹

Switzerland has a unique and decentralised political system characterised by its federal structure, where the 26 cantons have considerable autonomy, including the authority to legislate on matters not explicitly assigned to the federal level. In the context of the present report, this information is necessary to understand certain aspects of the parliamentary debates, for example a lack of discussion on school education, due to the fact that overseeing school education is a cantonal responsibility in Switzerland. Another important aspect of the Swiss political system is its commitment to direct democracy, where citizens have the right to participate in decision-making through referenda and popular initiatives. The optional referendum is a tool to contest a new law that has been passed by parliament. 50,000 signatures are required to trigger a popular vote. The optional referendum has been used to contest parliamentary decisions on gender and sexual equalities.

The Swiss bicameral parliament – Swiss Federal Assembly – consists of two chambers: the National Council (lower house) and the Council of States (upper house). Members of the National Council are elected by proportional representation, while each canton sends two representatives, and each half-canton sends one, to the Council of States. Switzerland is a multi-party system with the following major parties: Swiss People's Party (SVP), the Social

²¹ A recent Hate Crime Report (2023) published by the four largest Swiss LGBTIQ+ organisations, suggests a possible association between an increase in anti-LGBTIQ+ attacks and discrimination in Switzerland in 2022 with what they identify as a growing hostility in politics and media, especially towards transgender and non-binary persons.

Democratic Party (SP), the Free Democratic Party (FDP), and the party Die Mitte (The Centre), which was founded with the merger of the former Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) and the Conservative Democratic People's Party (BDP) in 2021. Following the federal elections in 2019, the two green parties, the Green Party of Switzerland and the Green Liberal Party of Switzerland, made significant electoral gains, taking 13.2% and 7.8% of the vote respectively, which was reported in the press as a “green wave” (Romy, 2019 swissinfo.ch). At the same time, the right-wing conservative Swiss People's Party (SVP) remained the most significant party. In the 2023 elections, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) regained some of its seats it had lost in 2019 (+9), while the green parties lost in total 12 seats (Green Party -7, Green Liberal Party -5).

The composition of the Federal Council (Swiss government) is characterised by proportional representation: SVP, FDP and SP have two members each, the party Die Mitte has one representative in the Federal Council (hence, 2 leftist seats and 5 centre/right seats). This has an impact on the direction of policy changes, including those related to gender and sexual equalities, as it requires cooperation and compromise among the different political parties to advance legislative changes.

Methodology

Data sources & sampling selection

The transcripts of Swiss parliamentary debates are available at parliament.ch. A two-step process was used to collect the debates. The first step searched for debates related to the five cluster themes (outlined in the Methodology chapter) by using sets of associated search terms, focusing on terms most likely to appear in the titles of the debates. The goal was to gather and group a corpus for analysis by theme, i.e., an issue will feature in the title of a debate, or the headline of an article. Below is a quantitative overview and a breakdown of the thematic category distribution across the sample.

In the following table, debates are listed under the relevant Thematic Clusters along with the debate title, sitting date, and the initial search terms used.

Number of Debates	Sitting Date Time Period	Search Terms/keywords
Step 1: 37 debates were found and distributed among five cluster categories	28.02.2018 – 17.01.2023 Plus 1 debate from 16.06.202017	<i>Initial search terms:</i> Same sex marriage Gender equal language LGBTIQI Rights incl. Hate Speech Gender Transgender Third gender Sexual education

		Sex, reproductive rights, race, religion, headscarf migration/migrants
Step 2: 30 additional debates were found based on a broadened key-word search. The additional keywords were derived in the process of coding of the initial corpus.	28.02.2018 – 17.01.2023	<i>Additional keywords:</i> Sexual Woman Gender-ideology

Table CH1: Quantitative Overview of Debates

Cluster	Debate Count	Debate Title	Search Terms
1: Targeting Gender	3	Respect for the rules of the French language is more important than ideology. 11.03.2021	Gender equal language
		No gendering at federal universities and research institutes. 29.09.2022	Gender equal language
		Does the federal government want to abolish the mother? 01.12.2021	Gender
2: Debating Trans Lives	11	Change of gender in the civil status register. 15.06.2018	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 11.06.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 24.09.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 01.12.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 07.12.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 10.12.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Change of gender in the civil status register. 16.12.2020	Civil registry of gender
		Exponential rise in medical treatment of young trans people. Will Switzerland regulate the controversial practices? 16.12.2021	Transgender

		Introduction of a Third Gender Identity. Consequences for the legal system 17.09.2018	Third gender
		Third gender in civil status register Postulate Arslan Sibel. 17.09.2018	Third gender
		Legitimacy of puberty blockers, hormone treatments, and surgical procedures on minors. 14.12.2022	Transgender
3: Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	10	Optimization of information and counselling activities for women with problem pregnancies. 05.05.2020	Sexual and reproductive rights
		Motion WBK-N. Fulfil desire to have children, legalise egg donation for married couples. 13.09.2022	Sexual and Reproductive rights
		"Hey You". The unfit and not level appropriate sex education booklet for children 12 years and older. 15.06.2018	Sexual education
		Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all. 16.06.2017	Same sex marriage
		Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all. 03.06.2020	Same sex marriage
		Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all. 11.06.2020	Same sex marriage
		Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all. 01.12.2020	Same sex marriage
		Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all. 09.12.2020	Same sex marriage
		State money for a masturbation campaign? 17.12.2020	Sexual education
		Children produced by sperm donation should have the opportunity to meet their biological father from the age of 4 years. 30.09.2021	Sexual and Reproductive rights
4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics	4	Does the referendum bill also protect podophile tendencies? 11.06.2019	LGBTIQ

		Accepting Contra Position on Marriage for All as Career Risk? 18.06.2020	Same sex marriage
		Prohibit and criminalise conversion measures on LGBTQ people. 12.12.2022	LGBTIQ
		Is the Swiss Post violating political neutrality by issuing a "marriage for all" event stamp? 21.09.2022	LGBTIQ
5: Attacking feminism and gender equalities	9	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. 17.03.2017	LGBTIQ
		Violence against women. An end to false tolerance! 11.09.2019	Racism
		Family reunification of second wives? 28.02.2018	Racism, religion
		Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. 25.09.2018	LGBTIQ
		Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. 25.09.2018	LGBTIQ
		Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. 28.11.2018	LGBTIQ
		Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. 03.12.2018	LGBTIQ
		No children's headscarves in schools and kindergartens. A question of equality, child protection and not religion. 16.12.2022	Racism, religion
		Swiss Centre for Islam and Society in Fribourg. Examine stop of funding by public money. 17.06.2021	Racism, Religion

Table CH2: Overview of the Distribution of the initial Corpus of Debates across Thematic Clusters

Note: For a full list of debates with URL links, see Appendix A:

[Table AA13 \(CH1\) – ‘Cluster 1: Targeting Gender’](#)

[Table AA14 \(CH2\) – ‘Cluster 2: Debating Trans Lives’](#)

[Table AA15 \(CH3\) – ‘Cluster 3: Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education’](#)

[Table AA16 \(CH4\) – ‘Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ lives, experiences and politics’](#)

[Table AA17 \(CH5\) – ‘Cluster 5: Attacking feminism and gender equality’](#)

[illegible]

Figure CH3: NVivo word frequency query results visualisation

174

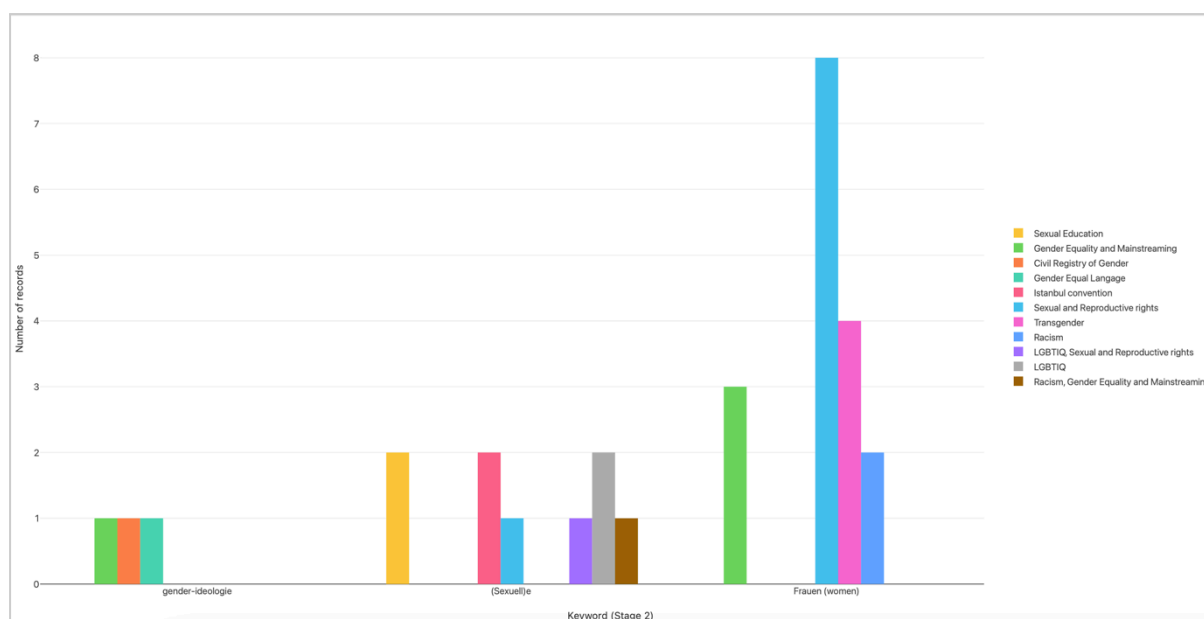


Figure CH4: Thematic distribution of Additional Debates

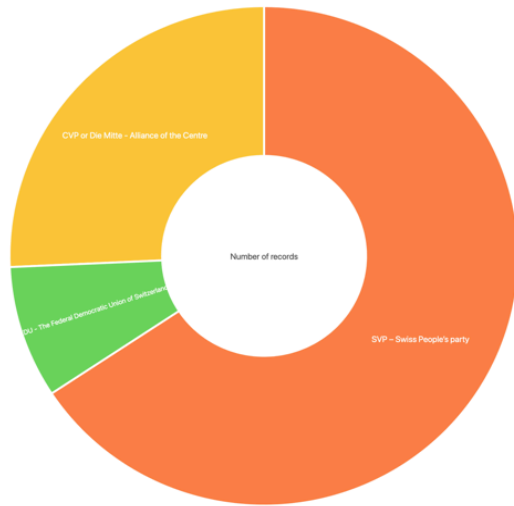
As this illustration shows, the search term ‘woman’ produced the largest number of debates, with the majority of them focusing on the issue of sexual and reproductive rights, trans issues, as well as topics related to racism.

The phrase ‘gender ideology’ does not appear frequently within the examined Swiss parliamentary corpus, it is present in only 3 instances within the studied timeframe. However, it reveals three broad areas of contestation where anti-gender politics is active in the Swiss parliament: gender equality and mainstreaming, gender-inclusive language and legal gender reassignment.

Data coding

The first set of code columns for the Swiss parliamentary debates record descriptive characteristics. The following eight fields were recorded for every debate: Debate Title; Term; Sitting Date; Language(s); Hyperlink to debate file; Keywords; Notes. The second set of codes are generic, in that they allowed us to search for common information across debates regardless of cluster theme; they laid the basis for the analysis of tactics and strategies by focusing on the distribution within debates of political and civil society actors, and particular forms of widely distributed actions: Actors; Organisations. Actor mapping was also central to the Swiss case study. An actor field was linked to each of the codes, allowing the researcher to log utterances and correlate them to specific actors. Logging actors gave an overview of the specific debates they have taken part in, the frequency of interventions and the actual arguments.

The representation of actors by party is visualised in the pie-chart below. Please note that this representation is made based on the frequency of interventions within the corpus of sampled debates.



As this graph illustrates, the highest frequency of contributions in the coded data is by the members of the right-wing conservative Swiss People's Party (SVP) 66%, followed by Die Mitte (the Centre) 26%, and EDU – The Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland 8%. Although the SVP appears as the major actor driving anti-gender mobilisation, contestations of gender and sexual equalities stretches beyond right-wing politics.

Figure CH5: *Distribution of Actors by Party*

The third set of codes is analytical. The data analysis entailed a close and reflexive reading and thematic coding, as well as grouping of the texts (while interlinking with the other coding categories outlined above). For this purpose, the computer-based qualitative data analysis software NVivo was used. With the help of NVivo, specific thematic categories were attributed to sentences or sections of the texts. The table below, shows the coding categories which were created via this inductive coding process and illustrates them through examples:

TC ID	Thematic Codes	Description
1	Biology and Sex	Explicit statements as to the factuality of the sex binary, the nature of womanhood/manhood, tending towards supportive statements for 'sex-based rights'
2	Debating Concepts	Questioning, debating, or defining concepts, such as gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual identity among others.
3	Anti-immigration, Islamophobia, Racism	Statements and claims pertaining to migrants, religious and racial minorities within the wider anti-gender context
4	Threat to children/ Protecting children	Highlighting harm to children; or claims that given measures are for their protection.
5	Gender-inclusive Language	Statements or arguments aiming to diminish the importance of, ridicule or explicitly object to the need for gender-inclusive language
6	Swiss National Context	Statements containing references to the specificity of the Swiss context, for example the Swiss Constitution, or the competencies of state-funded institutions

7	Trans Issues/Activism	Statements and arguments that question, limit or attack trans rights, freedoms or activism
8	Bureaucratic Empathy	Statements conveying understanding for keeping certain administrative or bureaucratic tasks unchanged; related to 'bureaucratic hurdles' to legal gender recognition.

Table CH6: Coding Categories, created via Inductive Coding Process

The following examples illustrate the types of statements that were coded in the categories above.

TC1 Biology and sex

Biology- and sex-based arguments surfaced regularly in statements by actors opposing same-sex marriage. The arguments were grounded in fears that should "Marriage for All" be introduced, lesbian couples would have access to donated sperm. This would mean that there would be yet more children raised without fathers.

"The paternal bond must be manufactured by culture, by institutions and by law, because nature has created an injustice to men that babies always come out of ladies' wombs, but never out of gentlemen's. And this was true at the time when Eugen Huber wrote the civil code; it is still true today, nothing has changed. Do not enter into this project. It is a societal life change: marriage for all, surrogate motherhood and parents for none. Eugen Huber, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing!" (Yves Nidegger 13.407, 13.12.2018)

TC2 Debating concepts

The quotes in this category were numerous and occurred across debates on various topics. Most frequently, however, they occurred in debates where the introduction of new categories to existing legal provisions was on the agenda:

"Now, if sexual orientation is a notion that must be understood as – and I take the liberty of quoting the opinion of the Federal Council in French – 'the attraction felt by a person for other persons with reference to the biological sex' – I insist on the words 'to the biological sex' – and that it 'designates heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality', the notion of gender identity is much more difficult to define. The Federal Council explains in its opinion that "the notion of gender identity is much vaguer, since it corresponds to an individual and profoundly intimate feeling that is – completely – 'independent of biological sex, marital status and sexual orientation' – as it is defined." Philippe Bauer, 13.407, 25.09.2018

The anti-gender narratives in this category are particularly hostile towards the notion of gender identity. They convey the idea that by undermining sex as a legal/social category, the

earlier achieved protections based on the established binary system are at risk. The impact of introducing new terms to existing legal or social protection mechanisms is presented as a threat, particularly in relation to cis women, but also to certain rights achieved for LGBTIQ+ individuals. Such narratives, according to existing research, are a pronounced element of transnationally used anti-gender tactics (Rowlands 2023).

TC3 Anti-Immigration, Islamophobia

Debates in this category were found based on the additional search terms. Although not numerous in the overall sample, they revealed certain narratives, such as discussions around Muslim girls' clothing at public schools, or the assumed association of violence against women by "migrants". For example, an SVP politician argued that it is time to put an end to "false tolerance" and protect women from violence:

"Effective measures against violence against women have so far been taken under the pretext of false tolerance towards other cultures and religions." Amaudruz Céline 19.3995, 11.09.2019

TC4 Threat to children/protecting children

There were three major types of narratives pertaining to this trope. One revolved around the rights of children in the context of reproductive issues (such as the right to know a father), a second around sexual education campaigns (and fears that children are being taught inappropriate materials), and lastly, around minors and gender reassignment. Below is an example of the latter narrative:

"A climate sometimes dominates in medical and educational circles that encourages minors to undergo sex reassignment surgery - even though the long-term consequences are devastating and can be irreversible." Andreas Gafner, 22.4422, 14.12.2022

TC5 Gender inclusive language

There were several debates in this category. Some of them insisted on protecting the language in terms of grammar and legibility, while others feared the misuse of language for "ideological" purposes:

"If social conditions change, this is reflected in the language. Language debates are therefore always political debates as well. They are always about cultural dominance and power. That's why Gendering doesn't belong at a university - because teaching should be as apolitical as possible." Schläpfer Therese, 22.475, 29.09.2022

Targeting gender-inclusive language at Universities and state institutions appears as a part of the same tactic. In this context, researchers studying anti-gender forces in Switzerland

noted as early as 2015 the efforts of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) to abolish gender equality offices in various cantons (Maihofer, Schutzbach 2015).

TC6 Swiss national context

This category emerged, for example, in relation to same sex marriage, where the opponents of marriage for all argued that to allow same-sex couples to marry, the Constitution would need to be amended. Arguments about what is considered permissible in Swiss society are also made:

“We are clearly of the opinion that the current constitutional term refers to marriage between a man and a woman. In our opinion, we cannot simply remove and discuss this at the legislative level and say: Yes, now it's just different! In our opinion, there is no public discourse today that indicates that an open concept of marriage has crystallised in Switzerland since the adoption of the constitution. This public discourse has not existed and does not exist on a broad scale. That is why we want this constitutional question to be settled first. We want a discussion at the constitutional level about what we in Switzerland understand by the term ‘marriage’.” Primir Schwander, 13.407, 13.12.2018

TC7 Trans issues/activism

Statements in this category mostly focused on fears around minors and gender reassignment, as well as on the content of sexual education campaigns:

“The topics of transsexuality and sexual diversity are given disproportionate prominence.” Verena Herzog, 22.3734, 16.06.2022

According to a recent ILGA Europe report (2021) narratives that allege that children are being encouraged to become trans or non-binary, and that emphasise pressure from society, schools and medical institutions, is a wide-spread anti-gender tactic used in Europe and globally.

TC8 Bureaucratic empathy

This emerged as a trope related to the fears that certain legal or administrative procedures would encounter difficulties as a consequence of the introduction of certain gender equality measures, particularly in relation to the concept of “gender identity”:

“To believe that no one changes their gender just like that was and is probably a bit too naïve, especially since in the future the requested change in the civil status register does not have to be in connection with hormonal therapy or surgery. Or to put it another way: The present law represents an important and correct relief for people who feel

born in the wrong sex - however, it is not completely thought through to the end, especially when it comes to abuses." Bregy Philipp Matthias, 19.08.1, 16.12.2020

Swiss Media

Comparative newspaper analysis

For the German-language sample, the following newspapers have been selected:

1. Die Weltwoche (German for "The World Week") is a right-wing weekly magazine founded by Manuel Gasser and Karl von Schumacher in 1933. Modelled on French weeklies, the magazine positioned itself as anti-communist, and was initially positive toward the Front Movement, National Socialism, and fascism (Tobler, 13:01:2017, tagesanzeiger.ch). Until 2001 the magazine positioned itself as centrist-liberal. It is currently privately owned by a member of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), Roger Köppel.
2. Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) is an established centre-right daily, one of the oldest newspapers in Switzerland, founded in 1780. It is known nationwide and is counted among the leading media in the German-speaking world. Politically, the newspaper has been positioned close to the Liberal Free Democratic Party of Switzerland.
3. WOZ (Die Wochenzeitung) is a left-wing Swiss German-language weekly newspaper, founded in 1981.

For the French-language sample (Romandie), the papers covered are:

1. Le Temps is a national mainstream newspaper published in Lausanne and Geneva. It was founded in 1998 and is generally considered centre-right. On January 1st, 2021, it was bought by non-profit foundation Aventinus, after being owned by the press group Ringier Axel Springer Suisse.
2. La Tribune de Genève is a regional daily newspaper founded in 1879. It is usually considered centre-right and owned by private media group Tamedia.

For the German-language and French-language samples:

20 Minuten and 20 Minutes Romandie have been chosen for both French- and German-language newspapers in Switzerland. They are free daily newspapers entirely funded by advertisement and mostly consisting of short articles. They have been in circulation since 2006 as an offshoot of the "20 Minutes" brand founded by Norwegian publisher Schibsted in 1999. They have counterparts in Spain and France.

Data collection

In the first step how the ideologically loaded and politically disputed idea of 'gender ideology' was reproduced in news coverage and opinion/comment was examined, as well as the issues it was associated with, and how it was defined and characterised.

A search through the newspaper databases SwissDox (for the German-language newspapers) and Europresse (for French-language newspapers) for all articles featuring the phrase ‘gender ideology’, including its German and French variants, was conducted. Further used search terms such as ‘transgender’ and ‘woke’ were used to complement the database with additional articles pertaining to anti-gender politics.

Article Count	Time Period Sampled	Media Sources
Total for all search terms = 163	01.01.2021 - 08.03.2023	Die Weltwoche: 63
		NZZ : 37
		20 Minuten: 21
		Le Temps: 18
		La Tribune de Genève: 10
		WOZ: 8
		20 Minutes Romandie: 6
Total number of articles using the search term ‘gender ideology’ = 58	01.01.2018 - 08.03.2023 Longer period for ‘gender ideology’ search:	NZZ : 19
		Die Weltwoche: 14
		La Tribune de Genève: 9
		WOZ: 7
		Le Temps: 6

Table CH7: Quantitative Overview of collected Media Data

The chart below illustrates the distribution of articles across newspapers, found using all search terms. As shown, Die Weltwoche (63 articles or 39%), NZZ (37 articles or 23%) and 20 Minuten (21 articles 13%) yielded the most results.

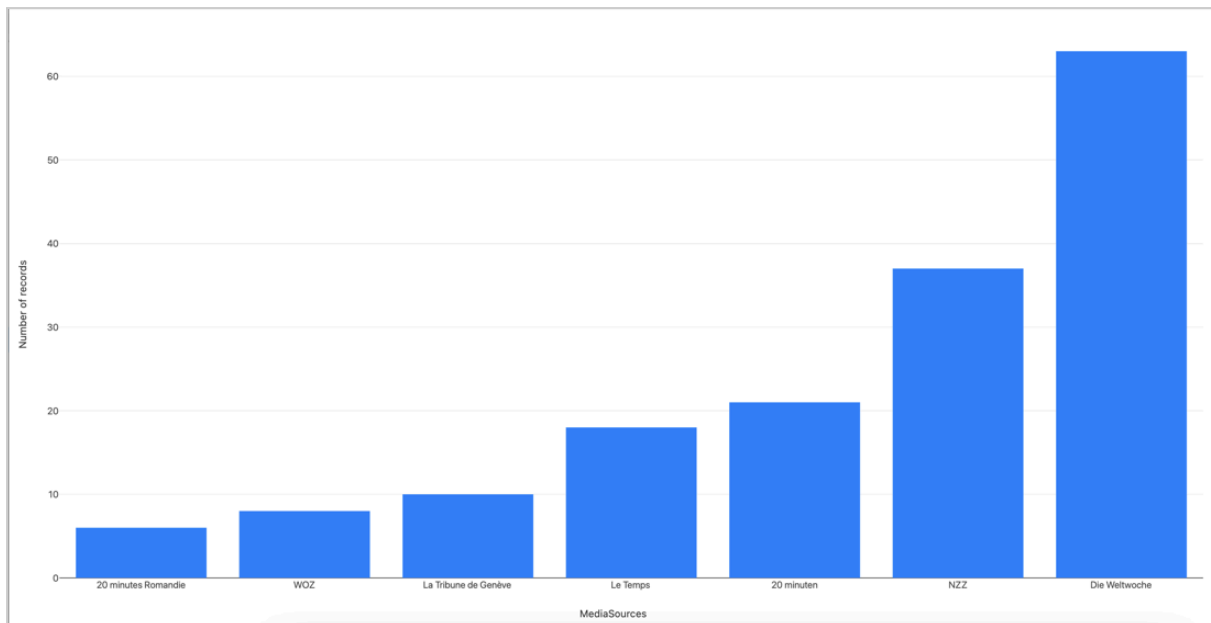


Table CH8: Distribution of all Articles across newspapers

The next chart illustrates the distribution of articles by newspapers, using only one search term 'gender ideology' in both its French and German variants.

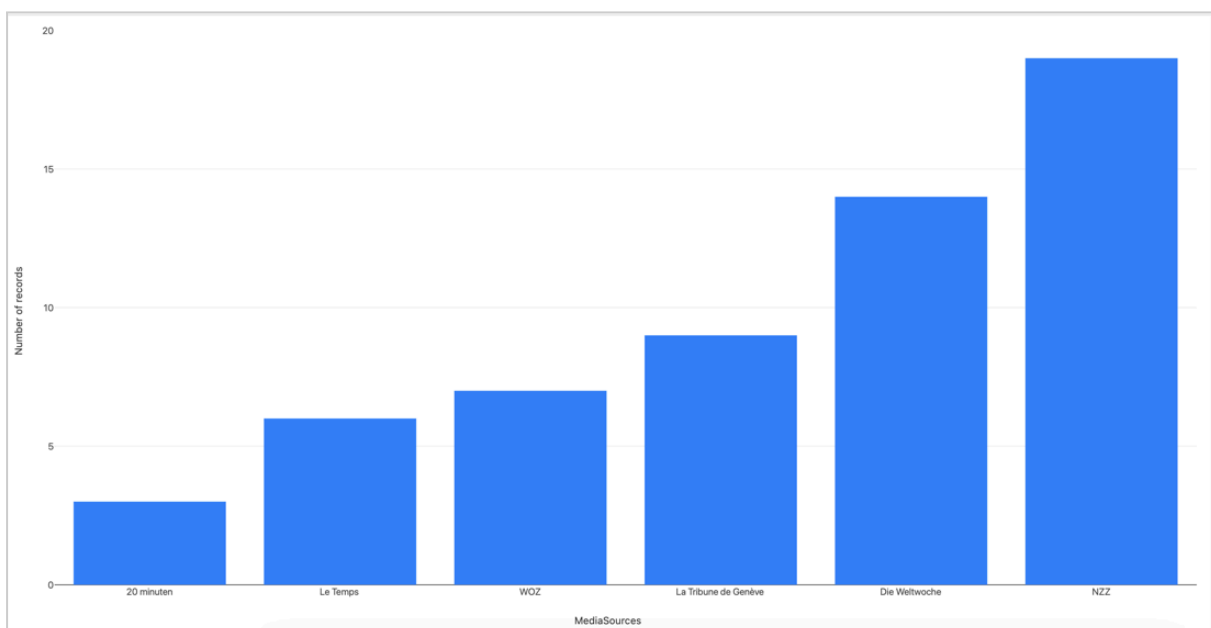


Table CH9: Distribution of Articles obtained via search using 'gender ideology' Search Term

As seen above, the term 'gender ideology' appeared most frequently in 19 articles published by the NZZ, followed by Die Weltwoche with 14 articles, and Le Tribune de Geneve with 9 articles.

Data coding

Data coding used the same categories as the other case studies in this report.

Data presentation

Trigger issues across all newspaper articles containing the term 'gender ideology'

In the chart below, the distribution of articles containing the phrase 'gender ideology' is presented according to 'trigger issues' for all seven newspapers.

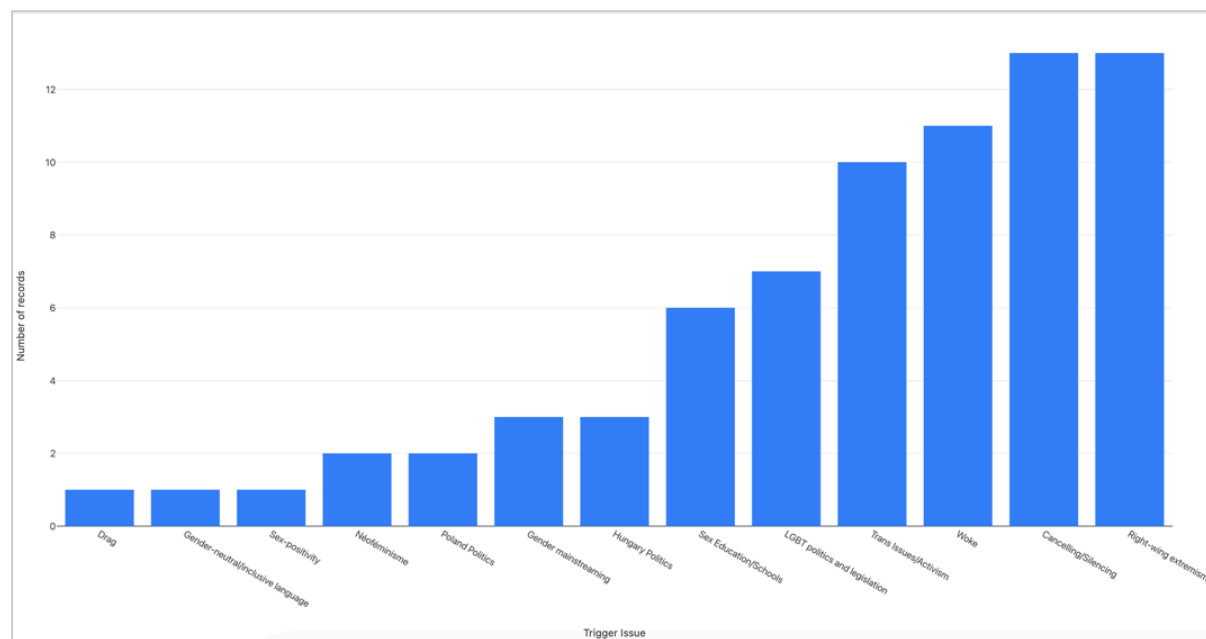


Table CH10: *Trigger Issues across all newspapers containing the Search Term 'gender ideology'*

As seen, the three most frequent trigger issues in our entire sample of Swiss German and Swiss French language articles with the term 'gender ideology' are 'right-wing extremism' (13 articles), 'censoring/silencing' (also 13 articles) and 'woke' (11 articles).

In the Swiss German-language press, the most prevalent trigger issues in articles containing 'gender ideology' are: 'right-wing extremism' (12 articles), 'censoring/silencing' (7 articles) and 'woke' (5 articles) (see [Appendix B: Table AB1 \(CH7\) – Trigger issues in the German-language press, containing the phrase 'gender-ideology'](#)).

Trigger issue association analysis (when articles focus on more than one trigger issue) shows that the issues related to 'censoring/silencing' are most frequently associated with 'woke' in the Swiss German-language media discourse. The next most frequent association is between 'trans-issues/activism' and 'sex education/schools', as well as 'trans-issues/activism' and 'LGBT politics and legislation'.

Trigger issues by newspaper

Examination of the trigger issues by newspapers provides a more nuanced understanding of how trigger issues are correlated with the usage of the phrase 'gender ideology'.

A focused examination of the distribution of trigger issues in die Weltwoche demonstrates the overall dominance of two equally large themes – 'woke' (4 articles) and 'cancelling/silencing' (4 articles), followed by 'sex-education at schools' (3 articles).

The top three trigger issues in the NZZ are 'right-wing extremism' (5 articles); 'cancelling/silencing' (3 articles) and 'LGBT politics and legislation' (2 articles).

The top trigger issue in WOZ is 'right-wing extremism' (5 articles); with other issues equally distributed (1 article each).

In 20 Minuten, 'gender ideology' was mentioned only in articles with 'right-wing extremism' as a trigger issue.

Trigger issues in the Swiss French-language press

There were fewer articles pertaining to anti-gender politics in the Romand press over the period, with aggregated data presented below:

The first two trigger issues for anti-gender articles in the selected French-language press are 'woke' (or 'wokisme') (6 articles), 'trans-issues/activism' (5 articles), and 'cancelling/silencing' (5 articles).

Trans politics are associated with 'cancelling/silencing' (4 articles) and 'woke' (1 article), mostly in the context of covering protests against transphobic events in Romandie.

See Appendix B: Table AB2 (CH8) – 'Trigger issues in the German-language press, containing the phrase 'gender-ideology''

Position of 'gender ideology' as a keyword

94% of articles cite 'gender ideology' in the article body of the German-language and French-language newspapers. In 3.5% of all mentions, 'gender ideology' appeared both in the headline and article body.

Some sample headlines from Die Weltwoche illustrate the different ways in which the term is reproduced. Frequently, the term is used as a matter of fact, as if it has a status and coherence as an 'ideology' that will be readily legible for readers:

Die Weltwoche, 26.01.2023 "Sex like an earthworm: a taxpayer-funded theatre play brings trans and gender ideology to school, for kids aged five and up. A theatre visit with clueless young children" (Gut, 2023, Weltwoche.ch).

Die Weltwoche, 30.06.2022 "What is a woman? Gender ideologists claim that gender can be chosen. I can reassure you: Sexual biology is very clear on this issue" (Kutschera, 30.06.2022, Weltwoche.ch).

Die Weltwoche, 26.11.2020 "Gender-ideology is confusing an entire generation. In a very short time, transgender has gone from being a marginal phenomenon to a trend. Abigail Shrier warns of devastating consequences. Her exposé book is suppressed in the USA" (Urs Gehrig, 26.11.2022, Weltwoche.ch).

The NZZ and WOZ exclusively use 'gender ideology' in the article body.

Occasionally, the term 'queer-ideology' surfaced among the search results; some noteworthy examples have also been entered into the database. Eg:

NZZ, 01.12.2022: "Big danger to girls: Feminist Alice Schwarzer warns us about Queer-Ideology" (Claudia Schwartz, 01.12.2022, NZZ).

In the Romand press database, the terms 'idéologie du genre' or 'théorie du genre' are never in the title of the article itself, but always in the body of the text. Note that 'idéologie du genre' appears only once in the sample, in an article describing a German-Swiss protest (Boris Busslinger, 22.10.2022, Le Temps). It is fair to hypothesise that for the Romand mainstream press, 'idéologie du genre' might read as too ideological or too aggressive, while 'théorie du genre' appears more neutral.

News genres in which the term 'gender ideology' features

The overall breakdown demonstrates a relatively high percentage of comment/opinion pieces, representing 41% of the distribution, followed by news CH: 25%, editorial: 10%, feature: 10%, and news international: 8%.

The dominance of domestic comment and opinion pieces in which the phrase 'gender ideology' is used is significant in the German-language Swiss press, representing 48%. The

distribution of other genres is as follows: news CH: 18%, feature: 13%, news international: 9%, editorial: 7%.

In the French speaking press in Switzerland the 'news CH' genre is prevalent at 41%, followed by comment/opinion: 26%, and news US: 15%.

Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term 'gender ideology'

(See [Appendix B, Table AB3 \(CH9\) – 'Top \(by writer\) mentions of 'gender ideology'](#))

As seen, Anabel Schunke has contributed the highest number of articles in this sample (4 articles in die Weltwoche), followed by Christoph Mörgeli (2 articles in die Weltwoche) and Tamara Wernli (2 articles in die Weltwoche).

Below are some titles of the articles by the above-mentioned writers:

Tamara Wernli: Drag-Queen Lesson with the Kids, "Wokeness Glossary" (Wernli 2021, 2022, Weltwoche.ch)

Anabel Schunke: "Controversial" Truth: May I state that there are only two sexes?, "Role model for women" (12.10.2022 die Weltwoche)

Roger Köppel: Love is stronger than biology (die Weltwoche, 11.03.2021)

Actors quoted or mentioned in articles

In our entire corpus, Eric Marty is one of the most frequently mentioned actors in our sample of German and French speaking press combined (5 mentions), followed by JK Rowling (4 mentions), co-authors Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff (4 mentions each), and Abigail Shrier (3 mentions). (See [Appendix B: Table AB4 \(CH10\) – 'Top \(by newspaper\) actors mentioned in articles \(for all search terms\)'](#))

In the Swiss German media sample, the four most frequently mentioned actors are JK Rowling, Abigail Shrier, Viktor Orbán, and Alice Schwarzer. Viktor Orbán is frequently featured in die Weltwoche; some articles review Orbán's speeches, such as his speech in Dallas, or at the conference of American conservatives in Texas.

In Die Weltwoche, the three most frequently mentioned actors are: JK Rowling (23%), Abigail Shrier (17%), and Viktor Orbán (12%).

In NZZ, Alice Schwarzer was mentioned most frequently, in 14% of cases.

In WOZ, the most frequently mentioned actors are linked to discussion of increasing right-wing extremism in Switzerland, such as Brandy Butler and Manuel Corchia.

In the Romand press, most noticeably, nearly all mentioned actors are French rather than Swiss. Eric Marty, Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff were centrally involved in the UNIGE talks controversy (see below), while Jean-Michel Blanquer was controversial conservative French Education minister during the studied period.

Presentation of 'gender ideology' - quotation marks or not, definition or not

The review of our entire sample of the German-language and French-language Swiss press combined, shows that in only 34% of instances are quotation marks used when 'gender ideology' is mentioned. (See [Appendix B: Table AB5 \(CH11\) – 'Quotation mark usage by newspaper'](#)).

Die Weltwoche uses the phrase 'gender ideology' without quotation marks in all newspaper articles within our sample. 'Gender ideology' in quotation marks presented itself mostly in WOZ (36%), NZZ (27%), and Le Tribune de Geneve (22%).

Examples from die Weltwoche and NZZ of 'gender ideology' without quotation marks:

Die Weltwoche, 21.01.2021: "What a shame! Really? Switzerland was late in introducing women's suffrage. There is no reason to be ashamed of it."

"After all, it is men who are more willing to accept the burden of leadership positions. That there may even be biological differences in this respect is a somewhat bold statement in the climate of extremist genderism-ideology. But men are biologically programmed to win over the opposite sex through performance - that is, by being better than the competition."

NZZ, 04.11.2022: "Gender debate now even reaches the guideline plan. The needs of women are not taken into account enough, finds a Green Liberal - the SVP speaks of a 'madness of ideology'."

"The proposal is another example of the madness of gender-ideology. It's like the gender language, everywhere it has to be pointed out artificially that there are different groups, apparently this is now supposed to be clinched in every other area of life."

A note: this article criticises Zurich's Green Liberal politician Carla Reinhard for her planned submission of a motion to the Zurich city parliament, requesting that the authorities give more consideration to gender issues in urban planning.

Die Weltwoche, 20.10.2022: "Zollikon's non-binary primary school pupils"

"The teacher in question must have learned gender-ideology at the Pedagogical College. Because she consistently uses the gender star in the booklets. At some point, the order of the alphabet may also be rewritten. Instead of ABCDEFG, it will be LGBTIQA+."

The author talks about 'the woke-madness', which has, in the author's view, taken hold of elementary schools in the canton of Zurich, because the children were given an option of indicating a third gender.

Die Weltwoche, 05.02.2023: "Role model for women. Why the boycott of 'Harry Potter' author J. K. Rowling is wrong."

"The Rowling case is evidence of the misogyny and totalitarianism of gender ideology."

"No, what I want to write about is the destruction of a female success story that could not be more anti-feminist and misogynistic. The Rowling case is not just another case of woke-madness and cancel-culture. It is unique evidence of the inconceivable misogyny and totalitarianism of gender-ideology, which has not only set out to make women linguistically invisible, but to make those of them who dare to resist it disappear as individuals along with their accomplishments."

NZZ, 13.09.2022: "What does 'sexual identity' actually mean? Gender activists are vehemently turning the language upside down. It is intentional that they want us to lose perspective. Guest commentary by Rieke Hümpel."

"In truth, it is about the right attitude. More than against heterosexuals, 'queer' demarcates against the critics of gender-ideology. What disappears from the language - the gays, the lesbians, even the women in the meantime - can no longer be protected".

Exceptions include the following examples of uses with quotation marks:

NZZ, 16.12.2020: "Poland is not Chechnya, but...Gays and lesbians no longer want to hide - the culture clash between tradition and modernity reaches the Polish province"

"One of the driving forces behind this socio-political shift to the right is the Ordo Iuris think tank. The organisation has excellent contacts to PiS and sees itself internationally as the spearhead of the fight against 'gender-ideology'. It perceives the departure from a purely biological concept of gender as a danger to traditional role and family models.

NZZ, 12.10.2022: "Interview with a historian Damir Skenderovic"

“They [the Swiss neo-nazi group Junge Tat] hope that the discussion will escalate and that their discriminatory ideas will be widely echoed. That people who share their criticism of the alleged 'gender ideology' will also adopt their hostility towards queer people”.

WOZ, 08.07.2021: “Holy Shit!”

‘Record heat in Canada, forest fires in Siberia, plus exploding corona case numbers in the UK: There is no shortage of bad news. And as if these were not depressing enough, a Catholic clergyman has now joined the debate about 'identity politics' and other current sensitivities. In the ‘NZZ am Sonntag’, theologian Martin Grichting offered a few pious thoughts on the right-wing trendy topics of ‘gender-ideology’ and ‘climate fanaticism’.

WOZ, 29.11.2022: “Through the month with Hannes Rudolph (Part 5). Why is there so much cosmetic surgery? How neoliberal capitalism affects self-perception. Why trans people seek help earlier today than ten years ago. And what Hannes Rudolph was particularly happy about at the anniversary of HAZ - Queer Zurich.”

"First and foremost, we must effectively counter the discursive slide to the right. In the five weeks we've been talking, there has been a dramatic increase in transphobic media articles. It is devastating that right-wing rhetoric and terms like ‘transgender lobby’ and ‘gender-ideology’ are being used to stoke fears about people who are particularly vulnerable and have precisely no lobby in terms of financial resources. The human rights of trans people are non-negotiable”.

In the French-speaking press, the terms ‘idéologie du genre’ and ‘théorie du genre’ are mostly not used in quotation marks either (73.5%).

Examples:

“One gets the impression that those who rejoice seeing gender theory assigned at school found in this an opportunity to revive their fight in the media” (La Tribune de Genève, 31.08.2018, commenting on Pope Francis’s mildly compassionate declaration about gay teenagers).

“You no longer hear proponents of gender theory, who usually bore us by affirming that the masculine and feminine are just ‘feelings’” (Le Temps, 30.03.2022, in an article wryly commenting that the war in Ukraine displaced “wokism” with a real issue)

Exceptions include the following examples of uses with quotation marks (notably referring to events or debates not in Romandie):

“...the moral panic that had shook French public debate in the 2010s concerned ‘gender theory’, an expression then brandished in order to oppose gender studies” (Julie Rambal, *Le Temps*, 21.10.2021, in a measured article dedicated to the spectre of “wokisme”).

“In this same video posted a few days after the facts, a group of nine men prepares for action before swooping down on the Tanzhaus, the site of the conference located in Zurich, preventing access to its entrance by deploying a banner ‘Family rather than gender ideology’, with Bengal lights in hand.” (*Le Temps*, 26 October 2022, in an article about the far-right Junge Tat in Zurich).

Within the entire sample of the German-language and French-language press, ‘gender-ideology’ was defined only three times, including twice within the French-language sample. As the graph below shows, in only 3% of all instances, ‘gender ideology’ is offered a definition. See [Appendix B: Table AB6 \(CH12\) – ‘Overview of the frequency of ‘gender ideology’ definitions in texts’](#).

Definitions of gender ideology by newspapers

The phrase ‘gender ideology’ is used in most texts without any definition. Only three articles in our sample contained definitions of the term.

Examples:

Die Weltwoche, 05.02.2023: “Vorbild für Frauen: Warum der Boykott von «Harry Potter»-Autorin J. K. Rowling falsch ist.”

“...misogyny and totalitarianism of gender-ideology, which has not only set out to make women linguistically invisible, but also to make those of them who dare to resist it, disappear as individuals along with their accomplishments. [...] An ideology that seeks to tarnish and destroy the legacy of women like J. K. Rowling on the basis of absurd accusations is the opposite of progressive and modern.” Definition by Anabel Schunke, journalist, *die Weltwoche*.

In the French press, definitions are rarely provided in the explicit form of “théorie du genre is X”. Some periphrastic formulas can be considered definition-like, although the object defined can vary.

In a *Tribune de Genève* article entitled “Qu’est-ce que le genre ?” (13.12.2022), the author suggests “théorie du genre” consists in confusing grammatical gender with gender relations and masculine domination.

Conversely, an article in Le Temps entitled “Le wokisme, obsession contemporaine” (21.10.2023), “théorie du genre” (used with quotation marks) is defined as a “moral panic” characteristic of 2010s France.

Swiss Controversy Mapping

Controversy 1: Drag Story-Time

The youth neo-Nazi group Junge Tat disrupted a drag story-time for kids in Zurich, chanting homophobic slogans and holding a banner that read "Family instead of gender-ideology". This event caused heated debates within the Zurich city council, received wide coverage in press and social media across the country and triggered response by anti-gender and anti-anti-gender actors.

"Drag Story Time" is a playful book-reading programme for kids aged 3-8, created by activist/educator/art performer Brandy Butler (drawing on Butler's personal webpage). Launched in 2019, and hosted in Zurich Tanzhaus, the programme has been popular among kids and parents. According to the description on the website, the idea behind the programme is to allow children explore and engage in a playful way with such topics as diversity, identity and gender.

In October 2022, members of a young right-wing extremist group - Junge Tat - infiltrated and disrupted the event. According to various reports, at first the right-wing radicals had mingled with the audience and wanted to unfurl a banner during the show. However, the event team was able to prevent this. More people were waiting outside; with their faces covered, they were standing in front of the building, chanting discriminatory slogans, using smoke petards, and holding a banner "Family instead of gender ideology". Following the action, Junge Tat posted photos and video commentaries on their social media pages. Although police interfered, no legal case could be opened against Junge Tat, "due to absence of a legal precedent" according to police. "I was told to get myself a baseball bat", Brandy Butler said in her Instagram post.

The disruptive action of Junge Tat caused a heated debate in Zurich Parliament. The discussion was preceded by two separate parliamentary group statements, following which Davy Graf (the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SP)) condemned the incident in the strongest possible terms on behalf of all parties, except for the SVP (who refused to join in condemning the action), and expressed full solidarity with those affected. The SVP member Samuel Balsiger accused the other parties of hypocrisy, citing that left-wing members of the council had earlier spoken out against SVP's demand for more police stations, yet then called for more police. In turn, Tanja Maag (Alternative List (AL)), a left-wing parliamentarian, accused the SVP of providing the right-wing extremists with ideas.

The SVP fraction in Zurich's municipal council constantly diverted public attention from the real issue, namely the homophobic, transphobic and racist nature of the attack by neo-Nazis

and the danger they pose to 'drag story-time' itself, by arguing that it is what happens inside those classrooms that should be up for debate.

On October 26, the City of Zurich SVP councillors Samuel Balsiger and Stephan Iten submitted a proposal to the city council to stop the financing of 'drag story-time for kids' and close the programme. Junge Tat celebrated this action of the SVP to close the 'radical feminist drag shows' as soon as possible (Scherrer, NZZ, 27.10.2022).



Figure CH11: Screenshot of a tweet reading "Activism works", in response to SVP's proposal

Junge Tat also released a video, a week after their disruptive action, where they stated that the scandal should not be about their action, but about "Drag Story Time" itself. Furthermore, they put Brandy Butler into the spotlight, as a person responsible for "Drag Story Time", and characterised her as a "Gender-ideologische Persönlichkeit/links-dogmatische Persönlichkeit" ("as a person with gender-ideological/left-wing dogmatic views ") (quoted from their video, available online).

Who is Junge Tat?

Junge Tat (English: Young Action) is a newly formed right-wing extremist group. The Federal Intelligence Service (FIS) responsible for early detection and combating of violent extremism mentioned Junge Tat for the first time in their 2021 Security Policy Situation Report, describing it as a group 'with an increased potential for violence' (FIS Report, 2021:

54). It discriminates against minorities and propagates traditional gender roles and relationships. Their members are young, fans of martial arts and hiking, and are social media savvy, marketing themselves through video clips (ibid.). They are connected with similar groups internationally, such as Junge Revolution from Germany, who visited them in the Swiss mountains in the summer of 2020. Earlier in 2022, they organised a protest against pandemic-related measures in Bern and tried to disrupt an LGBTIQ+ church service at Zurich Pride events in June the same year.

In terms of their image, Junge Tat represents a generational change within the neo-Nazi scene. They market themselves through a healthy lifestyle; they are young and hip. In terms of ideology, they are just as radical as the classic neo-Nazis of the past, most of whom appeared with a bald head and Springer boots. With its new image and professional well-shot propaganda videos, the Junge Tat has managed to make right-wing extremism seem attractive to young people again.

Methodology

The first step in each controversy was to gather a wide sample of opinion pieces, interviews or qualitatively selected news coverages. We collected 27 articles that allowed us to map an initial overview of the issues related to the controversy.

We also traced social media links that have been referenced by journalists in the articles within our sample.

Actor mapping

The second step involved actor mapping. Actors that emerged in the articles were entered into the database. We extracted seed URLs for the individual actors and organisations mentioned in our media and controversy mapping corpus, in reference to the above events. On the basis of selected Seed URLs, we were able to perform issue mapping in the issue-crawler. (See [Appendix C: Table AC7 \(CH13\) – ‘Swiss German case study seed URLs’](#), and [Appendix C: Figure AC8 \(CH14\) – ‘Network Mapping’](#))

The results present themselves as a rather disjointed actor map, with most activity happening on social media, including the Red Youtube Circle, the YouTube channel of Junge Tat. Weltwoche.ch, the right-wing newspaper which allegedly inspired Junge Tat to this action - via critical opinion pieces about “Drag Story Time” - also appears (see [Appendix C: Table AC9 \(CH15\) – ‘Romandie case study seed URLs’](#)).

By visiting the web-pages of these actors, a database of tactics and strategies publicised online was collected. The most frequent anti-gender tactics used by the actors mentioned in

connection to the present case study are: 'Statement on the website', 'political lobbying', 'provision of materials and templates'. 'Statement on the website' includes, for example, Junge Tat's active webpage, where 'gender ideology' is named as a key threat to Swiss society:



Figure CH12: Screenshot from the website of Junge Tat

In the left column, under their ambitions, it says: "Gender ideology and radical feminism serve a globalist agenda, targeting the smallest but strongest collective in the state: the family! We are committed to effective measures to promote and protect Swiss families."

An example of 'political lobbying' is a petition initiated by CitizenGO Switzerland on their website, addressed to Zurich's Director of Education Dr Sylvia Steiner, calling to stop the 'drag story time'.



Figure CH13: Screenshot of the petition to stop the financing of the Drag Story-time, launched by CitizenGO

This petition states that "children are being read gender-ideological content" with the goal to "confuse them about their gender identity" and calls to stop state financing of the program. At present, they have collected about 7,000 signatures.²²

²²CitizenGO Switzerland, petition:

<https://citizengo.org/de-ch/fm/209324-nein-zu-dragqueen-vorlesestunden>

Controversy 2: Protests over controversial talks at UNIGE

On April 19th and May 17th, 2022, two talks denigrating trans experiences and aspirations were successively protested by queer and trans activists at the University of Geneva. The controversy that ensued in the French-speaking Swiss press and media focused on dangers to free speech, with little mention of the contents of the talks in question.

Story outline & timeline

On Friday April 19th, 2022, a talk on trans identity was to be held at the University of Geneva. The lecture, organised by the Centre de Psychanalyse de Suisse Romande, was aimed at presenting the book *La fabrique de l'enfant-transgenre* by Caroline Eliacheff and Céline Masson, two French psychoanalysts who question the validity of gender transitions and denounce gender-affirmative care for young people. Activists, including members of the CRAQ (Collectif Radical d'Action Queer), burst into the room where the lecture was to start, arguing that "transphobes are not welcome at the University". The talk was called off.

Masson and Eliacheff's book criticises medical gender transitions initiated before legal adulthood (the subtitle of her book is: "How to protect minors from a health scandal"). The authors describe trans identity as "part of an ideological subculture that is contagious via social networks, and in many ways resembles cultish influence". Consequently, activists have described the book as transphobic. These two authors are also known for being the originators and co-directors of the Observatoire de la Petite Sirène, a conservative group stemming from the Manif pour Tous (the organisation that led the early 2010s marches against same-sex marriage in France), which seeks in particular to hinder access to transition for trans minors.

On May 17th 2022, a second guest lecture was interrupted at the University of Geneva. The talk was to be held by Eric Marty, a professor of contemporary French literature at the Université Paris-Diderot, and his book *Le Sexe des Modernes. Pensée du neutre et théorie du genre*.

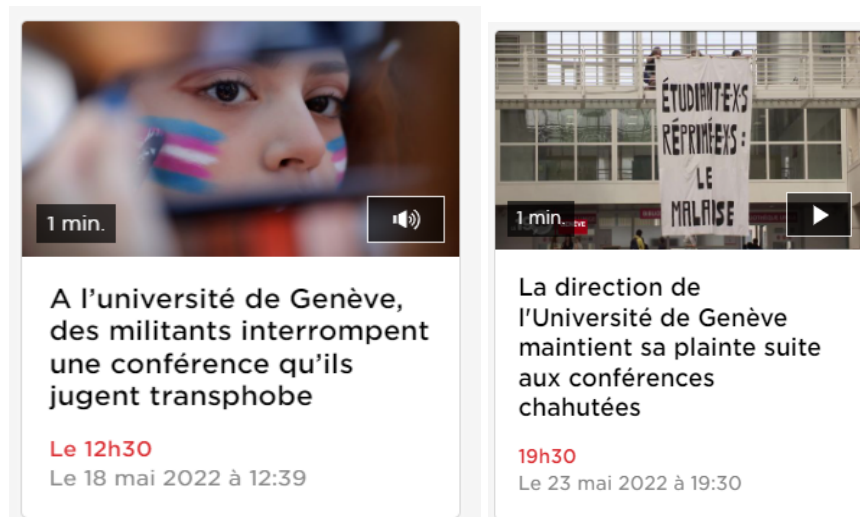


Figure CH14: Screenshot of RTS website, the public television service for Romandie

Different versions of the incident circulated. UNIGE claimed that the activists once again refused to engage in dialogue and were aggressive, and that “altercations took place, and the guest's notes were torn up” (RTS, 2022). However, the activists denied having resorted to or initiated a physical altercation, and declared that on the contrary, the violence was directed at them. The University of Geneva decided to take stricter measures after a second such event. Yves Flückiger, the university's rector, denounced that “academic freedom is being undermined” (Forum, 2022), and the university decided to lodge a complaint for coercion and trespassing.

The Conférence Universitaire des Associations d'Etudiant-e-x-s (CUAE) called on the University to refrain from pressing charges. More specifically, it asked UNIGE to stop, in general, using administrative, police and judicial repression as a means of responding to protests within the university” (Léman Bleu, 2022). For them, UNIGE should instead tackle the fight against transphobia in academia and recognize that it exists at a structural level, whether in teaching or research (ibid., 2022). In the end, the University did not press charges. A dialogue between the CUAE and the rectorate ended with a “joint declaration that reaffirms the values of the institution” (Renversé, 2022). UNIGE’s communiqué states that it favours dialogue and takes the trans issue to heart, leaving activists perplexed.

GENÈVE

Un syndicat étudiant demande à l'UNIGE de renoncer à porter plainte

23.05.2022 11h08



Figure CH15: Screenshot of RTS website, the public television service for Romandie

Op-Eds about UNIGE transphobia controversy

15 opinion pieces and interviews were selected from actors who made interventions during the controversy. From there, URLs were selected for organisations publicly involved in the controversy and their repertoires of tactics were listed. Tactics deployed by various actors in this Romand controversy have varied from information to protest, although the most frequent ones appear to be “statement on website” (21.1%), “provision of materials and templates” (15.8%), and “written contributions to the debate” (15.8%).

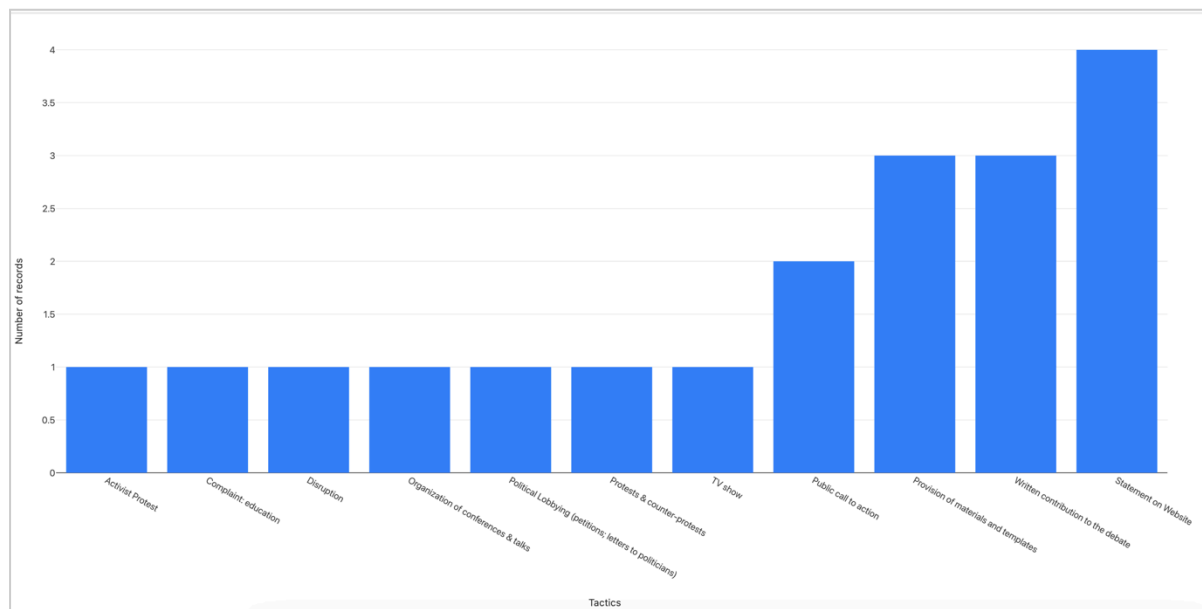


Table CH16: Tactics deployed by various Actors in Romand Controversy

Note: See [Appendix C: Table AC9 \(CH15\) – ‘Romandie case study seed URLs’](#) for the list of Seed URLs for UNIGE transphobic talk controversy.

In order to map the controversy on Issue Crawler, 20 URLs were selected pertaining to organisations and actors that contributed to or commented on the controversy, located on different sides of the issue. See [Appendix C: Table AC9 \(CH15\) – ‘Romandie case study seed URLs’](#).

Network mapping

We ran the mapping on Issue Crawler based on these 20 URLs, with a Crawl Depth of 2, co-link analysis by page, and privilege starting points off.

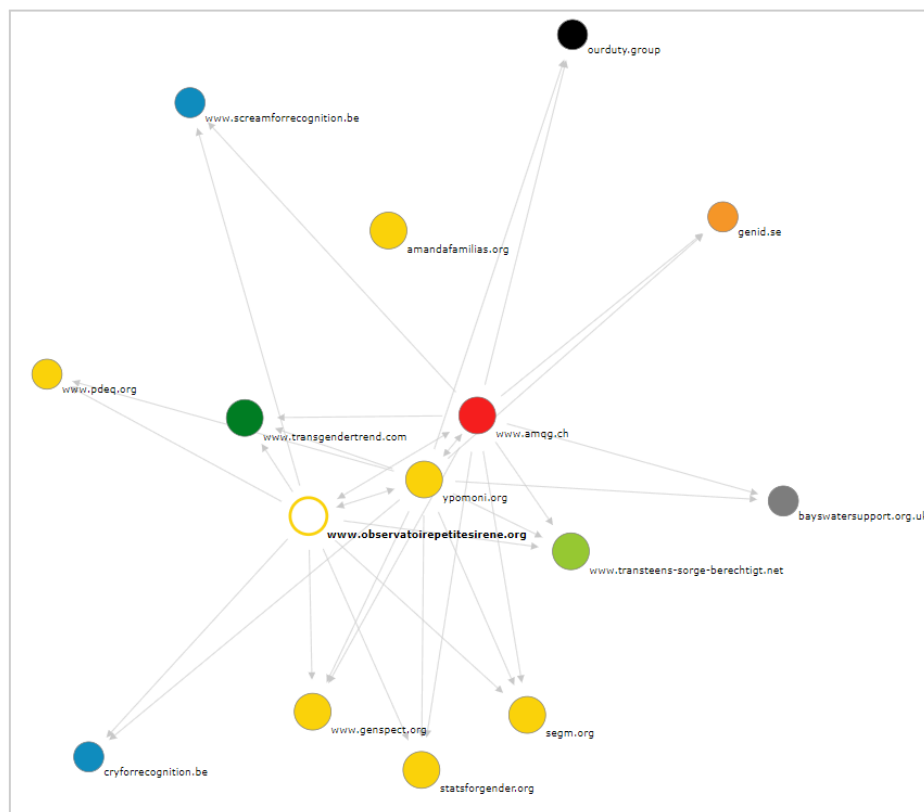


Figure CH17: Actor Network produced with the help of Issue-crawler

AMQG, the association for a ‘measured’ approach to gender issues among youth (Association pour une approche mesurée des questions de genre chez les jeunes), is the only Swiss organisation present in the network. It is strongly connected with French counterpart organisations such as L’observatoire de la petite sirène (founded by Masson & Eliacheff among others) and Ypomoni (For an Ethical Approach to Gender Issues). It also displays links to the German blog Transteens Sorge Berechtigt as well as to UK-based Transgender Trend (whose motto is “No child is born in the wrong body”), Swedish organisation Genid (Gender Identity Challenge Sweden), and global organisations SEGM (Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine) and Genspect (a gender-critical international organisation promoting “A healthy approach to sex and gender”).

The UNIGE controversy renders visible ties between anti-gender activism in France and Romandie and in general the transnational dimension of anti-trans activism. It illustrates the

centrality of the theme of children in anti-trans activism as well as the argument of free speech for justifying anti-gender discourse.

Swiss Case Study Findings

Swiss Parliament Findings

Introduction

It is important to note that the period included in this study is characterised by several important legislative changes in the realm of gender equality in Switzerland. In **December 2018**, the anti-racism article in the criminal code was extended to include a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation (Article 261 bis) after an optional referendum triggered a popular vote in 2020. In **December 2020**, the Swiss federal government and parliament approved the opening of civil marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. After an optional referendum triggered a popular vote in 2021, the Swiss electorate voted with a large margin (by a nearly two-thirds majority) in favour of amending the marriage laws.

Since **January 2021**, transgender persons or persons with a gender variance can change their official gender record and first name quickly and without bureaucratic complications. In **December 2022**, however, the Swiss government contested the introduction of a third gender option or no-gender option for official records. The statement on the government website, announced that “The social conditions for the introduction of a third gender or for a general waiver of the gender entry in the civil status register do not currently exist. A change to the binary gender model would also entail numerous amendments to the constitution and federal and cantonal laws” (portal of the Swiss government, 21.12.2022).

Political debates relating to these legal changes were therefore dominant in the data. Additionally, the report considers a range of other relevant debates focusing on or touching upon issues related to gender and sexuality. As mentioned previously, the majority of contributions that oppose or criticise gender and sexual equalities are made by MPs of SVP (66%), followed by the Centre (26%), and EDU (8%). The thematic clusters identified from the Swiss parliamentary debates revealed that the majority of contestations around gender and sexual equalities emerge through technocratic and legalistic discourses. Openly hostile or inflammatory written and oral contributions exist but are the minority. This demonstrates that opposition against gender and sexual equalities does not have to come in the form of emotionally charged and pronounced ideological discourses. The main findings from the parliamentary data analysis (corpus spanning 2018-2023) are the following:

- **The reification of sex as a biological category is a consistent reference point in debates.** This was particularly evident in the use of evidence from medical sciences by MPs from across the political spectrum. Polemic statements that made reference to ‘gender ideology’, served as frequent asides in debates and sought to call-out an unscientific departure from naturalist understandings of gender and sexuality.

- **Medical discourses, especially psychiatric and psychological discourses, remain central to transgender discussions, and are drawn on by both proponents and opponents of trans rights.** In debates around gender recognition, the introduction of gender identity as a protected legal category, or the creation of an administrative third gender, biology and "medical facts" are claimed as a legitimate basis for jurisdiction and bureaucratic processes, while "ideology", personal feeling or "fashionable ideas" are discounted as arbitrary and dangerous for the "natural" order. Verena Herzog (Swiss People's Party) argued, for example, "To ensure legal certainty, the change of gender must be based as far as possible on biological and medical facts and realities. In order to prevent arbitrariness and bureaucracy, a change of gender in the civil status register must not only be made according to personal feeling." (18.3696, 15.06.2018)
- **Legalistic and bureaucratic arguments operate as important vehicles to oppose LGBTIQ+ rights and policies.** For example, the creation of two posts that specialise in LGBTIQ+ politics within the government were flagged as too expensive. Moreover, the discourse of potential system abuse framed the debate surrounding the simplification of the process to change the assigned "sex". Scenarios of potential system abuse are mentioned by some MPs in relation to pension age and military service, as Philipp Mathias Bregy (The Centre) notes: "We are of the opinion that abuse cannot be ruled out. We would like to emphasise that we do not believe that abuse will occur among those who are actually affected, but rather among those who use this regulation to abuse it" (19.081, 07.12.2020)
- **The figure of the vulnerable child** emerges through multiple recurring tropes in the Swiss parliament and is particularly linked to the discourse of **sexualisation** and the **promotion of non-normative gender and sexual identities**. Although the Swiss parliament does not deal with questions relating to school curricula as this falls under the responsibility of the cantons, sex education emerges as a theme in relation to publicly funded national sexual health and sex education campaigns. The government is called upon by Verena Herzog (Swiss People's Party) to answer for the content of its funded campaigns that are seen to promote inappropriate and immoral sexual practices and behaviours to children. In addition to this sexualization trope, the same campaign is problematised for promoting non-normative gender and sexual identities of children.
- **Gender-affirming care is positioned as a threat to minors and this furthers the focus on the figure of the vulnerable child.** This trope is advanced by MPs from the Centre and the SVP. These voices make reference to an "exponential increase" in young people seeking medical gender reassignment. It is postulated that young people are animated to transition by the medical establishment irrespective of the "proven" dangers of gender affirming care for minors. The Swiss government is framed as lagging behind other countries that have already recognized "the dangers" of gender

affirming care and that have reacted appropriately with bans and mandatory psychotherapy in lieu of affirming services. It is suggested that the medical establishment and intellectual circles are actively promoting trans-identities and treatments to young people while it is asserted that “even” trans organisations call for more caution, as the following interpellation submitted by Benjamin Roduit (The Centre) illustrates:

“In view of the sharp increase in the number of young patients in recent years and the negative and irreversible consequences of the treatments (cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, infertility, higher risk of cancer and thrombosis), countries such as England, Sweden and Finland are in the process of adapting their guidelines. Even the World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH), which is also in the process of revising its recommendations, is calling for restraint.” (21.4506: 16.12.2021)

- Children’s rights are mobilised to justify opposition to lesbian couples’ access to assisted reproductive technologies (ART). Opponents use a rights-based discourse to suggest an inherent **contradiction between lesbian parents’ rights and their children’s rights**. In lieu of a child’s right to know its origins, it is insisted that children have a right to be raised by their biological parents. This argument suggests that (biological) filiation is necessary for desirable parenting and the wellbeing of children:

“(Y)ou always talk about equal rights, and only about equal rights for adult, homosexual couples. But you always forget the weakest in our society, namely the children, who can neither defend themselves nor say anything about it. Where are the equal rights and especially the rights of children to mother and father in this bill?” (Martina Geissbühler, SVP, 13.468, 13.06.2020)

- **Linking homosexuality with paedophilia** (although not explicitly conflating the two terms) has also been observed in various statements by two members of the Swiss People’s Party. Homosexuality in association with pedophilia particularly surfaced in the context of the debates devoted to the extension of the scope of anti-racism laws to include discrimination based on sexual orientation. Anxiety that protecting people from homophobic statements might inadvertently provide protection to pedophilic offenders is based on the assumption that the scope of what sexual orientation includes can potentially be very broad. Some MPs expressed their concerns with regard to the extension of the anti-racism legislation in the following manner: “And do other socially ostracised sexual practices such as necrophilia or zoophilia or the consumption of pornography also qualify under the new offence?” (Barbara Steinemann, SVP, 19.5318). In a similar vein, another SVP politician anticipates the scenario where the European Court would condemn Switzerland because of the confusion that the introduction of the new term (sexual orientation) would cause in courts: “(courts) have to decide whether pedophilia, bisexuality, gerontophilia, necrophilia, fetishism, zoophilia, and so on – human creativity in this area being

inexhaustible – are sexual orientations which must be protected or which must not be. We are facing new condemnations by once again using terms that are ideologically very trendy, but as trendy as they are undefined” (Nidegger Yves, SVP, 13.407, 25.09.2018). Placing of homosexuality in close proximity with the “socially ostracised practices” contributes to discursive reproduction of homosexuality as a “threatening” or “deviant” practice.

- A small number of debates also sought to place **natalist discourses** in the debate. They were exclusively put forward by members of the Swiss People’s Party and failed to spark larger debates. They sought to make access to assisted reproductive technologies (18.4021, 28.09.2018) more accessible to women and to foreground information on the medical risks of abortions in abortion consultations (20.3301, 05.05.2020).
- Opposition to equalities was often mediated through the idea that they go “**too far**”. Into this category fall political arguments that claimed that going “too far” with a proposition would either lead to a loss of support by political actors or the people or that they would torment the legal system, and lead to a multiplicity of problems. In relation to a potential introduction of the legal category of gender identity, Karl Vogler (The Centre) argues:

“An extension to include the concept of gender identity threatens a total collapse of the bill, a total collapse (...). However, the concerns – which incidentally coincide with those of the Federal Council – that interpretation problems could arise with the criterion of the concept of gender identity, which was previously unknown in Swiss law (...)” (13.407, 03.12.2018)

- Related to this idea of equalities going too far and tormenting the system was also the idea that **equalities are a top-down, undemocratic, “socialist” tool** that aims to reorganise society. Although this argument did not take centre stage in the debates, it served as a trope in the background:

“This understanding of steering and control is fundamentally presumptuous and completely illiberal. My understanding of democracy is different. Society shapes, directs and legitimises the state and not the other way round. This postulate makes radical socio-political demands, and these demands are to be imposed on society in an almost socialist manner. Just as we should be cautious about the state influencing language, we must not open up the law to extreme socio-political demands. Instead, we and the Federal Council should concentrate more on the core tasks of the rule of law - the security, freedom and independence of our country - and address the main concerns of the population, such as constantly rising health insurance premiums or the safeguarding of social security systems. To this end, we should present

concrete solutions.” (Verena Herzog, Swiss People’s Party, 18.3690, 13.06.2019)

Notable here is also the reference to “real” material problems, to point to the allegedly excessive character of what is framed as symbolic/immaterial debates.

- Opposition to gender-inclusive language, which emerges as a site of mobilisation among both German- and French-speaking MPs, is one such example. Language, in this sense, exposes the persistence of heteronormative supremacy and the mechanisms of power and domination associated with it, hence it is opposed so fiercely. The excess, in this case, concerns the inclusion of non-binary gender identities in language. "Readability and comprehensibility are to be given higher weight than ideology. This is by no means to prevent the feminization of certain words in the sense of promoting more equality" (Benjamin Roduit, The Centre, 21.3143, 11.03.2021). This focus on language, pointing to excess in immaterial/symbolic debates, appears as a strategy to diminish the importance of the issue and actors advocating for gender justice. There were various attempts in the examined period where MPs tried to enforce a ban on gender inclusive language in order to halt the spread of ‘gender ideology’ through national institutions. While one parliamentary initiative aimed at banning inclusive language at the nationally funded, universities (22.475, 29.09.2022) with the argument that gender inclusive language confuses students, another motion sought to ban inclusive language in official documents of the Government (21.3143, 11.03.2021)
- Related to this was the idea that **publicly owned institutions are to remain politically neutral**. The Swiss post was problematized by one MP for issuing a stamp in celebration of the adoption of marriage equality (22.7763, 21.09.2022).
- An intersectional examination of the data illustrated that **gender inequalities were disproportionately associated with Muslim minorities**. MPs from the Swiss People’s Party and the Centre associated Muslim communities in Switzerland with increased domestic violence. MPs from the Swiss People’s Party and the Centre sought to table debates about the child headscarf (22.4559, 16.12.2022; 19.3049, 06.03.2019)
- Another trope that was put forward in relation to asylum seekers was the idea of asylum seeking women giving birth in order to **manipulate the asylum process** (17.3930, 29.09.2017) and asylum seekers transitioning in order to claim asylum based on their trans identity (18.4014, 28.09.2018). Both issues were tabled by an MP of the Swiss People’s Party.

Swiss Media Findings

The second step of the Swiss case study focused on mapping the circulation of anti-gender discourses in the national media. For this purpose, five newspapers were chosen that cover the conventional political spectrum. For the Swiss German case study, Die Weltwoche (German for "The World Week") was selected as a right-wing oriented weekly magazine, Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) as an established centre-right daily, and WOZ (Die Wochenzeitung) as a left-wing Swiss German-language weekly newspaper. Papers covered in the French-language sample (Romandie) include Le Temps, a national mainstream newspaper published in Lausanne and Geneva and La Tribune de Genève, a regional daily usually considered centre-right and owned by private media group Tamedia. Additionally, 20 Minuten and 20 Minutes Romandie have been chosen for both French and German-language newspapers in Switzerland. They are free daily newspapers entirely funded by advertisement and mostly consisting of short articles.

The comparative newspaper analysis, comprising 162 articles, revealed the following insights:

- The German-language right-wing newspaper Die Weltwoche has the highest number of articles in our sample (almost 40% of the corpus). This illustrates that in the Swiss German right-wing media discourse, topics related to all used search terms, namely 'gender-ideology', 'transgender' and 'woke' are popular and constitute a significant area of coverage.
- The phrase 'gender-ideology' (in its German and French spelling variants, including "*théorie du genre*") appeared significantly more frequently in the selected German-language press (40 times) than in the French-language press (15 times) over the period. Given its fairly wide circulation in the German-language press, the phrase 'gender-ideology' appears to have established itself as a recognizable and legitimate concept in German-speaking Switzerland. In Swiss French media, the concept is used significantly less frequently and mostly as an explicitly polemical expression. "*Théorie du genre*" is used to convey a similar, however less controversial and more naturalised meaning.
- Right-wing extremism appears to be the dominant trigger issue in all German-language Swiss newspapers, except for the right-wing newspaper Die Weltwoche. A focused examination of the distribution of trigger issues in Die Weltwoche demonstrates that in our corpus 'gender ideology' is never featured in the articles addressing right-wing extremism: instead it is featured in the context of commenting topics such as 'woke' politics, 'cancelling/silencing' and 'sex-education at schools'. In contrast, 'gender ideology' in WOZ is mentioned in almost 60% of instances in the context of right-wing activism.

- The dominant trigger issues in the French-language press are ‘woke’, followed by ‘trans issues/activism’ and ‘cancelling/silencing’. The convergence of two historical contexts can account for such dominance. First, the period of the sample was when the French word ‘wokisme’ adapted from the English ‘woke’, came to replace previous expressions used to denigrate progressive politics, such as “*islamo-gauchisme*”, “*intersectionnalité*” or “*néo-féminisme*” in the French media sphere and that of French-speaking regions of Switzerland and Belgium. The notion of a “*théorie du genre*” (gender theory) had been especially widespread in the early 2010s during protests against marriage equality in France (which eventually came into law in 2013) (Carnac 2014). However, it subsequently receded from a stand-alone issue to being gradually embedded within a broader denunciation of progressive politics encapsulated by the term ‘wokisme’ and its derivatives. Since the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020, French and Swiss uses of the term alike also increasingly encompassed racial justice (Mahoudeau, 2022). Second, a significant proportion of 2022 newspaper articles in the sample about anti-gender politics in Romandie pertained to the controversy over anti-trans talks at the University of Geneva (see controversy findings, below). Protests over the talks were almost exclusively described by the French-language mainstream and conservative press as an importation of cancel culture into Switzerland, hence the common association of trans issues with cancelling and silencing in the media sample.
- Whenever more than one trigger issue is dominant in a newspaper article, it is a combination of ‘cancelling/silencing’, ‘trans issues/activism’ and ‘woke’ for both the Swiss German and the Swiss French media. In the French-language media, such associations of issues are mostly present in the context of covering protests against transphobic events in Romandie. ‘Cancelling/silencing’ in association with ‘trans issues/activism’ is mostly present in the articles of La Tribune de Genève, whereas in the Swiss German media, these issues are discussed together exclusively in coverage by Die Weltwoche. This clearly shows the newspapers’ discursive strategies when constructing gender-ideology as a problem.
- The distribution of newspapers by genres, demonstrates that the discussions around ‘gender ideology’ in the German-language press prevail in Comment/Opinion (60%) pieces as well as news CH (17%). In the French-language press, the dominant genres in which the phrase ‘gender ideology’ are mentioned are News CH, and Editorial (20%). Such a high percentage of opinion pieces and domestic news coverage indicates that the newspapers/journalists are trying to situate gender ideology as a relevant issue in Switzerland.
- Mobilising key celebrities, i.e. established figures advocating anti-gender positions, appears to be a feature of the Swiss right-wing and conservative press. Transnationally known anti-gender actors are frequently featured in the news or mentioned in the comments/opinion pieces. In our sample of German- and

French-speaking media combined, such transnationally established figures in anti-gender politics as Éric Marty, JK Rowling, Céline Masson, Caroline Eliacheff, Abigail Shrier, and Viktor Orbán are mentioned across the sample. In contrast, the left-wing newspaper WOZ predominately mentions domestic actors, commonly in light of concern over the increasing right-wing activism.

- The examination of the term ‘gender ideology’ reveals that in two thirds of all articles in our entire sample, the term is used without quotation marks, implying its discursive deployment is chiefly naturalised. ‘Gender ideology’ in quotation marks presents itself mostly in WOZ (36%), NZZ (27%), and La Tribune de Genève (22%). In many instances, the use of quotation marks might be seen as a way of taking critical distance from a term (‘gender ideology’), however linguistic conventions might have a contributing role as to the usage of quotation marks, therefore this finding is qualified.
- The Swiss German language newspaper Die Weltwoche occasionally features the phrase ‘gender ideology’ in the titles of the articles. However, in all other newspapers in our sample it emerges predominantly in the article body. Here is one example of such a title: Die Weltwoche, 30.06.2022, “What is a woman? Gender ideologists claim that gender can be chosen. I can reassure you: Sexual biology is very clear on this issue”. The prevalence of ‘gender ideology’ in the titles of Die Weltwoche indicates that the term is well-understood by the newspaper's readership.
- Definitions of ‘gender ideology’ are rarely provided in an explicit form. In some cases, periphrastic formulas can be considered definition-like, in others the meaning is diffused in the context. Such fluidity and lack of definition of the term allow it to move and morph. But mostly, ‘gender ideology’ is used within texts as a matter of fact, as if it has a status and coherence as an ‘ideology’ that should be readily legible for readers.

Some qualitative insights help illustrate the quantitative findings above by showing the key themes in which the phrase ‘gender ideology’ was problematized in different media outlets. The following narratives frequently emerged in Die Weltwoche.

- Gender ideology in Die Weltwoche is often reported as a threat to the legacy of women or to the advocacy for women’s rights:

“What is a woman? For Ulrich Kutschera, the author of our cover story, sexual biology provides an unambiguous answer: contrary to the claims of gender ideologues, the female ovaries define a woman. Everything that constitutes visible ‘womanhood’, right down to the fat-padded curves of the body, is controlled by these primary sexual organs. He is convinced that the rights of those women who feel their womanhood is something natural are threatened by the increasingly intrusive gender ideology.” (Weltwoche, 30.06.2022).

Grounded in biological essentialism, this article argues that the sex-based understanding of gender roles is necessary “for those women who feel their womanhood” in order to maintain it.

- Trans issues in general and, in the context of children in particular, are often discussed in hostile and sensationalist ways. For example, an article, with the catchy title “Gender-ideology confuses an entire generation” constructs gender ideology as a threat because children are regularly exposed to “transgenderism” in educational and medical institutions.

“The situation has changed dramatically in recent years. Girls in particular are subject to a transgender trend. Author Abigail Shrier speaks of “transgender madness.” A whole network of educators, psychiatrists, teachers and doctors pushes young people to consider transgender as a normal life option, with irreversible damages [...]. Anyone who asks critical questions is hushed up or pilloried, as Shrier has repeatedly experienced.” (Urs Gehrig, 26.11.2020)

A similar narrative, about educational and medical institutions encouraging gender reassignment, although as a separate incident, has also presented itself in our corpus of parliamentary debates.

- ‘Gender ideology’ is often discussed as a threat to freedom of speech. In an article from 13.10.2022 Anabel Schunke writes:

“As if the linguistic discrediting from the left-wing was not enough, the so-called ‘hate crime’ came into play. Anyone who contradicts the woke ideology is spreading ‘hate and incitement’ - and must be punished. [...] In the process, the corridor of what can be said is narrowed further and further, and the catalog of what counts as ‘hate speech’ is expanded at will.”

According to the author, freedom of speech, which is already being restricted by “left-wing cancel culture”, is being further compromised by the expansion of the Article 261 bis (referring to the anti-racism legislation which was expanded to include protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation).

- Providing a platform for transnationally recognized anti-gender actors is another feature of Die Weltwoche coverage. They frequently feature the active actors of the categories mentioned above, inviting them as guests, publishing their articles and interviews with them, promoting and reporting on their events, and picturing them as reliable experts. For example, Abigail Shrier is featured in the context of “transgender madness”.
- ‘Gender-ideology’ presentation in the centrist newspaper Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), reveals a mixed sample of opinions and discussions in which the term is used. A significant number of NZZ articles in our corpus discuss ‘gender ideology’ in the

context of right-wing extremist tendencies, namely that they gain momentum by appropriating the topic of gender. At the same time, there is an equally significant number of articles, containing the phrase 'gender ideology', which to a large extent echo the narratives of Die Weltwoche. For example, in an article from 07.03.2023, Giuseppe Gracia talks about:

"gender extremists": "who deny nature, ignore scientific findings and engage in ideological linguistic confusion".

Gender extremists in the author's view are as dangerous to society as anti-racism and climate extremists:

"When it comes to racism, the future should also be about standing up for the values of liberalism as a majority society, for the equality of all before the law. But the problem should not be left to the radicals, who are proclaiming a new, woke racism with their doctrine of original sin for whites."

Gender, anti-racism and climate activism are recurrently discussed in NZZ as involving 'totalitarian politics'. Some authors even suggest practical solutions to stop their spread:

"It is important to counter tendencies that demand totalitarian allegiance, whether on climate, gender or other issues. The non-admission of entire social movements to debates and forums. The tendentious selection of talk show guests and the erroneous idea that relevant, unpopular opinions can be excluded and politics can be bypassed", according to Ralf Schuler, NZZ, 16.01.2023

- The left-wing newspaper WOZ presents a strikingly different narrative to the other two newspapers. The phrase 'gender ideology' was mentioned most frequently in the context of increasing right-wing extremism. In many instances, the authors critically engage with the right-wing arguments of the other media outlets. For example, in an article from 27.10.2022, Anna Jikhareva problematizes the tendency by some media outlets to discuss the left-wing and right-wing protests as "two extremes", such relativism, in the author's opinion, leads to the "trivialization of right-wing violence":

"Interesting point about those who equate right-wing violence with radical left-wing politics - true to the 'horseshoe theory' - also contribute to the trivialization of right-wing violence. A current example is a 'Tagesschau' report from Sunday, in which an anti-fascist demonstration in Bern is contrasted with the Tanzhaus attack. Thus, the events appear merely as two 'extremes' to which the 'reasonable' centre remains at equidistance - with the consequence that the concerns of neo-Nazis are ultimately legitimised."

Swiss Controversy Mapping Findings

In its third step, the Swiss case study focused on examining two different episodes of anti-gender mobilisations. Both events unfolded in 2022, one in the French- and the other in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The Swiss German analysis focused on examining the media coverage of a “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich, which was violently disrupted in October 2022 by a young neo-Nazi group. This controversy reveals how gender-related issues, particularly in relation to children, are appropriated by diverse actors as a strategy to engage the public in anti-gender politics. It also sheds light on the role of the right-wing media and politics in contributing and encouraging such events. The Swiss French case study analysed the media coverage of the cancellation of two transphobic talks at the University of Geneva in April and May 2022, unveiling the transnational dimension of anti-trans activism as well as the argument of free speech for justifying anti-gender discourse. Both controversies illustrated the centrality of children in anti-gender and anti-trans activism.

Swiss Controversy 1: Junge Tat disrupting “Drag Story Time” event for kids in Zurich

- Right-wing extremists gain momentum by appropriating the topic of gender. The right-wing media as well as political campaigns against gender topics have been widespread lately, allowing the far-right extremist groups to jump on board and claim that they are saying what others are saying. Such co-optation of gender topics can be seen as a tactic to gain more public support.
- Right-wing and conservative media have capitalised on the event, by shifting attention towards the discussion of the supposed danger of “(trans)gender ideology” to children and society in general. Some opinion pieces and news articles invited their readers to critically engage with the danger of such lessons to children. For example, an NZZ article alarmed: “Reading lesson with the drag queen. The gender obsession is making its way into pedagogy.” (Brigit Schmid, 10.11.2022) Die Weltwoche published several news articles and opinion pieces comparing open conversations with kids about diversity and inclusion to a sect, more specifically a “transgender sect”:

“Above all, however, intransigence towards ‘heretics’ who use biological facts to reduce the transgender sect to absurdity characterises the religious dogmatism of this ideology. We know from reports that children who grow up in the sects become dependent and anxious adults. It would be advisable to prevent this social trend.” (Elena Louisa Lange, Weltwoche.ch, 20.05.2022)

- Furthermore, the discourse in the Swiss German right-wing media sparked by the Junge Tat demonstration at “Drag Story Time” was as much about delegitimizing trans and LGBTIQ+ lives as it was about legitimising a range of politics —neo-Nazis, far right, the extreme centre. An example of this is Die Weltwoche article, titled: “The New Self-Congratulation: Drag Queen story-time for Children, like the ones currently taking place in Zurich, are the New Favorite Hobby of a Complacent ‘Left-Wing Bourgeoisie’.” A quote from die Weltwoche:

“Once a subculture of nightlife and partying, a new generation of drag queens are making themselves available as state transgender representatives. The audience consists of parents in creative and academic professions who squeeze themselves and their offspring into Fjällräven backpacks, dutifully state their pronouns, always have their FFP-2 masks to hand and insult anyone walking on the cycle path as a ‘Nazi’.” (Elena Louisa Lange, Weltwoche.ch, 20.05.2022)

Striking in this example is the collective delegitimization of the actors promoting diversity and inclusion, who are characterised as left-wing bourgeois representatives of intellectual and creative professions. On the opposite spectrum the newspaper argues that people who do not support these liberal ideas are therefore vulnerable to being labelled “Nazi”.

In a similar vein, Die Weltwoche justifies the refusal of the SVP to join other political parties in condemning the actions of Junge Tat. In an article from 03.11.2022, Die Weltwoche author Christoph Mörgeli writes:

“A few right-wing extremists disrupted the drag queens' story hour. The parties represented in the city parliament wanted to condemn this in a joint statement. The SVP refused this request. Rightly so.” (Weltwoche, Christoph Mörgeli, 04.11.2022).

According to the author, this decision of SVP is justified because it is their right:

"to reserve the freedom to oppose the early sexualization of children. And to engage critically with the LGBTQ movement. Because the others want to enforce nothing other than the following view: Anyone who disagrees with gender ideology and claims that there are two biological genders is a Nazi".

- Another technique of the right-wing media is to question the appropriateness of investing taxpayers' money in such activities as drag story-time for kids. For example, Joyce Küng in Die Weltwoche, suggests:

"Parents can decide for themselves whether they want to send their children to attend a story-time with pompously disguised men in women's dresses. But if they want it, they should pay for it. And not the taxpayers" (Weltwoche, Joyce Küng, 23.09.2022)

This argument echoes the narrative which surfaced in the parliamentary discourse in relation to the content of sex education brochures, pointing to the synergies in some media and political anti-gender narratives.

- Another feature characterising the coverage of the Swiss German controversy is the predominant focus on actors and practices rather than knowledge. Although most articles have condemned the actions of Junge Tat, for example Schaffhauser Nachrichten (27.10.2022) asks: "Where is the outrage when Nazis march?", much less attention has been given in the press to criticism of other actors advancing the same ideas. There are occasional articles by liberal media outlets discussing the implication in this controversy of some Swiss political parties, for example an article in tagesanzeiger.ch (27.10.2022):

“This is how the SVP helps the neo-Nazis. The other Zurich parties condemned the action of the neo-Nazis at the Tanzhaus, the SVP pressed around - and supported the concerns of the extremists. Why is this dangerous?”

- Left-wing media, on the contrary, emphasised that the ideas spread by the right-wing and conservative outlets, as well as right-wing politicians, were active contributions to the Junge Tat attack on the drag story-time event for kids:

“ The fact that the neo-Nazis seem to feel safe in urban areas is not least thanks to a public that makes their way of thinking acceptable. The physical attack on the reading lesson was preceded by a verbal one: ‘Activist ideologues will stop at nothing’, wrote Weltwoche at the end of September. The NZZ also hardly misses an opportunity to demonise ‘gender ideology’. Add to this a retiring Federal Councillor who provokes with his statements against ‘woke culture’, or a candidate for office who declares war on the ‘transgender craze’” (Anna Jikhareva, WOZ, 27.10.2022).

- “Name Calling” as a tactic to make queer activists and events publicly known was mentioned in different media outlets: Daniel Binswanger, an author for the liberal republik.ch wrote in 20.05.2023:

"In 'Weltwoche daily' this week, Köppel not only declared ‘Drag Story Time’ to be an attack on traditional family values, but also named the time and place of the event - a repeat of the implicit incitement to violence in the style of Glarner.” (referring to Andreas Glarner of the SVP).

Another article in the NZZ, published on 02.12.2022, also mentioned "public naming" as a tactic used by Junge Tat (referring to the video where young neo-Nazis named and declared Brandy Butler an enemy). (NZZ, Giorgio Scherrer 02.12.2022)

Swiss Controversy 2: Protests over controversial anti-trans talks at UNIGE

The Swiss Romand controversy that erupted in the spring of 2022 over the protests held against controversial talks at University of Geneva inaugurated a intense period of anti-trans expression in the media and public discourse, especially around access to gender-affirmative care for trans minors, detransitioning (rts.ch 02.03.2023), and as broader negative discourses about the excesses of “wokisme” (French transliteration) and “cancel culture” (English expression used in French).

- A defining feature of the 2022 Geneva events was their instantiation of the transnational circulation of gender debates and anti-gender discourse, in this case the influence of French debates and French political and intellectual actors over the Romand discussion. All three controversial speakers invited to give talks on UNIGE premises (Co-authors Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff on the one hand, and Eric Marty on the other) came from Paris or had been active in the Paris intellectual

scene, with books by French publishers (*Les Editions de l'Observatoire*, and *Les Editions du Seuil*, respectively).²³ *La fabrique de l'enfant transgenre* had already been promoted by French anti-trans organisations such as the Paris-based Observatoire de la Petite Sirène (founded by Masson and Eliacheff) and Marty's book had been discussed in Parisian media and intellectual spaces. Versions of the Geneva talks had already been given across France.

- Conversely, critical accounts of both the events and the books by Geneva student union activists also found inspiration in contemporaneous interventions within the French discussion.²⁴ For example, their analysis of Marty's book made wide use of blog articles in online media *Médiapart* by Antoine Idier, a French cultural historian and critic.²⁵ On October 22nd 2022, Geneva students seeking intellectual support invited Paris-based Alex Mahoudeau, author of the recently published *La Panique Woke* (Textuel, 2022), to speak alongside local scholars and activists.²⁶ In addition to its in-house editorials, the Romand conservative press mainly outsourced the most incendiary comments on the controversy to interviewed intellectuals from France, such as media pundit Peggy Sastre²⁷ (who is "interested in gender from a biological angle") or the book authors themselves,²⁸ whereas more moderate Swiss interviewees, commentators and op-ed authors were mostly recruited among local politicians, such as Alexandre de Senarclens (PLR, centre-right) and Dorina Xhixho (LGBTQ representative for the Geneva Socialist Party, centre-left), or university officials (such as UNIGE president Yves Flückiger).
- A second feature of both mainstream and conservative coverage of the UNIGE controversy was its notable circumvention of a substantive discussion of contents, in favour of a focus on what were reductively presented as threats to free speech in Swiss academia. Thus, Nathalie Piégay, director of the department of Modern French, who had invited Eric Marty, explained after the protest:

"As far as I am concerned, I am keen to maintain a peaceful work atmosphere, open to contradiction, without intimidation. I think controversy is necessary to intellectual and democratic life. By definition it has all its place in academia.

²³ Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff, *La Fabrique de l'enfant-transgenre*. Paris : Editions de l'Observatoire, 2022; Eric Marty, *Le sexe des Modernes. Pensée du Neutre et théorie du genre*. Paris: Seuil, 2021.

²⁴ CUAÉ, "Répression à l'université et autres histoires de transphobie," Renversé.co, July 7th, 2022.

²⁵ À propos du Sexe des modernes et d'un problème plus général : la critique «de gauche», blogs.mediapart.fr, it published on May 17th on the very day of Marty's Geneva talk; and Le livre homophobe et transphobe de Marty, la critique culturelle et la psychanalyse, published on blogs.mediapart.fr on May 30th about two weeks after Marty's Geneva talk.

²⁶

<https://cuae.ch/enregistrement-de-la-conference-transphobie-et-repression-retour-sur-une-polemique-reactionnaire/>

²⁷

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/353800979-l-uni-de-geneve-la-liberte-attaquee-par-des-activistes-lgbtiq>, May 19th, 2022.

²⁸ <https://www.lepeuple.ch/le-prof-attaque-a-geneve-regle-ses-comptes/>

I'm ready to meet and dialogue with members of the trans community, who in return have to admit that one should also be able to hear discourses with which one does not agree.”²⁹

On the online website, watson.ch, speaking with less nuance about student activists, Peggy Sastre declared: “they make me think of 1920-1930s Fascists.” The article featuring an interview with her, written by Antoine Menuisier, mentioned what it considered a local precedent with the non-inclusion of cis-men in a feminist assembly organised by the UNIGE student union in 2021³⁰ while connecting the current protests with all of two examples of “previous intimidations” in French universities over the past years.

In Marty's Swiss interview over the controversy, given exclusively to the conservative newspaper *Le Peuple* (which is led by a self-described “Christian and independent” editorial team)³¹, the author of *Le sexe des modernes* condemned student protesters as “pseudo-trans” who refused “dialogue” and decried a “Fascist behaviour,” by “petty-bourgeois [youth], only able to imitate what is being done elsewhere.”

This overall circumvention of contents and the absence of discussion about transphobia itself prevented the public from judging the legitimacy of the protests based on their substance, and instead allowed commentators to exclusively frame the protested speakers as victims of “cancel culture.” “We are stigmatised, accused of being reactionary”, explained Céline Masson³² on Swiss evening TV news *Le 19h30* on April 20th, 2022. Conversely, Swiss Tabloid *Blick*, was the only one in the mainstream press to publish an editorial in support of student concerns (“It's a good thing we don't let transphobes have their say in academia”³³, by Amit Juillard). Commenting ironically on the ubiquity of conservative actors invited to express themselves in the vast majority of news outlets and public arenas to claim that they could no longer speak their minds, it was also one of the only outlets to delve into the substance of the subject. For example, it amplified the voice of Romand trans care specialists refuting Masson & Eliacheff's claim that 90% of youth beginning a transition at age 15 regret it at age 20 (the actual figure in peer-reviewed scientific studies is 2%) and questioned the double standard allowing transphobic discourse in the name of free speech:

²⁹

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/973817390-coup-de-force-lgbt-a-l-uni-de-geneve-nous-ne-nous-a-utocensurerons-pas>

³⁰

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/femmes/892314651-a-l-unige-les-hommes-exclus-d-une-assemblee-feministe>

³¹ A caption under Eric Marty's photograph specifies “Fed up, Eric Marty decided to speak only to our newspaper.” <https://www.lepeuple.ch/le-prof-attaque-a-geneve-regle-ses-comptes/>

³² 19h30, RTS, April 20th, 2022, <https://www.rts.ch/play/tv/emission/19h30?id=105932>

³³ Heureusement qu'on ne laisse pas les transphobes s'exprimer à l'université <https://www.blick.ch/fr/news/suisse/polemique-a-l-uni-de-geneve-heureusement-quon-ne-laisse-pas-les-trans-phobes-sexprimer-a-l-universite-id17574327.html>

“If those talks had been racist or antisemitic, who would have been offended to see the authors of the books be denounced or getting roughed up? If the books presented had been written by white people seeking to control the life of Blacks deemed incapable of self-determination, would you have shed a tear on the altar of Voltaire?”.

While denouncing “repression” by university administration, on the left-wing Romand news website *Renversé* student union CUAE also offered a long rebuke of both books, attempting to refocus discussion on transphobia³⁴, directing readers to a section of its own website providing a lengthy “*Dossier sur la transphobie d’Eric Marty*” dated June 2022.³⁵



Figure CH18: Photograph of banner unrolled on the premises of UNIGE Uni-Mail building, June 2023

- Finally, a third key trope of the coverage of the UNIGE controversy was the framing of gender issues as opposing a camp of reason and science to a camp represented by activists and “extremism.”

This dichotomy already lay at the core of the discourse of the AMQG, a Geneva-based association founded in the spring of 2021 initially by parents hostile to their teenagers’ wish for gender transition, and calling for a “measured approach to gender questioning” against what they considered transgender activism.³⁶ AMQG promotes applying the “precautionary principle” to gender dysphoria in children, shunning any form of gender-affirmative care (presented as unsafe and ideological) in favour of “exploratory psychoanalysis” aiming instead to treat the suffering caused by dysphoria without doing anything about it until adult age.

One form taken by the dichotomy during the Geneva events was that of an opposition between invited speakers open to intellectual discussion and protesters

³⁴ “Répression à l’université et autres histoires de transphobie,” July 7th, 2022, <https://renverse.co/analyses/article/repression-a-l-universite-et-autres-histoires-de-transphobie-3617>

³⁵ <https://cuae.ch/quelques-ressources/>

³⁶ <https://www.amqg.ch/>

“refusing dialogue” or “opposed to debating” and “not constructive.” Thus, UNIGE communication officer Marco Cattaneo’s statement after the incidents objected that, although the talk (by Céline Masson and Caroline Eliacheff) was not organised by the university, whose premises had been rented by a psychoanalytic society, “... the refusal of dialogue expressed by this group of activists is totally contrary to the academic approach, we cannot endorse it.”³⁷ Chastising what he considered violent methods, he declared:

“We cannot tolerate such behaviours against academic freedom and insist on making a distinction between the fight against transphobia, which the university sticks to, and the activist elements of Tuesday night.”³⁸

As it happens, contrasting UNIGE opposition to student protest is framed as ‘foolish’, with its stated rational support for Gender Studies and EDI policy key to the university’s discourse over the events:

UNIGE is “engaged in the fight against transphobia through its equality and diversity office, thanks to research carried out by the Centre Maurice Chalumeau [a well-funded institute promoting sexuality scholarship] or through student associations. It is attached to making knowledge progress on the complex question of gender and the personal and societal questions coming with it.”³⁹

In summary, through mainstream and conservative framings in the Romand media sphere and academic institutions, student protests over transphobic contents were turned into the main problem to be dealt with, erasing the contradiction between professed general discourses against transphobia by UNIGE and the very substance of the talks and of the books they promoted.

³⁷ <https://www.20min.ch/fr/story/des-militants-trans-empechent-la-tenue-dune-conference-187946547288>

³⁸

<https://www.watson.ch/fr/suisse/lgbtiq%2b/353800979-l-uni-de-geneve-la-liberte-attaquee-par-des-activistes-lgbtiq>

³⁹ <https://www.20min.ch/fr/story/des-militants-trans-empechent-la-tenue-dune-conference-187946547288>

Chapter 7 - UK

UK Parliament

Introduction

The UK Parliament is comprised of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Both houses are tasked with making laws (legislation), checking the work of the government (scrutiny), and debating current issues. This report focuses exclusively on the lower house, the House of Commons.

The House of Commons is a publicly elected body consisting of 650 members known as Members of Parliament (MPs). MPs are elected to represent constituencies by the first-past-the-post system and hold their seats until Parliament is dissolved. The party with the most members in the Commons forms the government. MPs in the House of Commons debate the big political issues of the day and scrutinise proposals for new laws.

At the time of writing (September 2023) the governing party is the Conservative Party, officially the *Conservative and Unionist Party*, also known colloquially as the Tories. The party is on the centre-right of the conventional political spectrum, and includes ‘one-nation’ conservatives, Thatcherites, and traditionalist conservatives. It is one of the two electorally dominant political parties in the United Kingdom, along with the Labour Party. It won the 2019 general election⁴⁰, and has been the primary governing party in the United Kingdom since 2010. The party currently has 354 members of Parliament and 260 members of the House of Lords.

It is an important moment to study anti-gender manifestations in UK politics. In the years since the last election, Amnesty International, national Queer NGOs and grassroots activists have drawn attention to a tangible backsliding on LGBTIQ+ rights in the UK.⁴¹ Recent reports have documented high rates of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in the UK, with the Home Office attributing this rise in part to anti-trans media reporting (ILGA Europe 2023: 153). In 2022, the Council of Europe designated the UK a ‘country of concern’ given the “...appalling rise of transphobia and toxic anti-Trans discourse in the UK” (Schad, 2022) - a designation shared with Poland and Hungary and one that troubles the patronising

⁴⁰ UK Parliament Election Results Dashboard: <https://electionresults.parliament.uk/> accessed 8 September 2023.

⁴¹ For example, Amnesty International Press Release “UK: UN view on trans rights is ‘much-needed common sense’” May 2023: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-un-view-trans-rights-much-needed-common-sense> accessed 8 September 2023

assumption that anti-LGBTQ+ politics is the preserve of ‘Eastern Europe’. At the same time, politics in the UK is profoundly antagonistic across social and political issues, and characterised by progressive mobilisations and organising, and thus also by powerful forms of solidarity and resistance.

The current parliament has debated the status and nature of gender freedoms in relation to a range of proposed legislative and political initiatives. The period in question is one in which several major global and geopolitical issues commanded significant attention, including Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, and inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Nonetheless, debates in this period considered abortion and reproductive rights, sex and relationships education, and gay and trans conversion therapy. As the analysis below documents, issues relating to gender recognition and trans rights were the predominant focus of interest in the period and came to dominate the agenda in late Q4 of 2022 and early 2023.

To ascertain the presence, nature and dimensions of anti-gender politics in parliamentary debates, 31 debates were sampled from 2018 to 2023 (plus one from 2016 for comparison purposes, which is explained below).

Data presentation

The data presented below is drawn from an initial corpus of 31 parliamentary debates, refined to 19 debates selected through a keyword search for ‘transgender’ and ‘gender recognition’.

Cluster	Debate Count	Debate Title	Search terms
‘Debating’ Trans lives	10 (32.3%)	GR Reform (Scotland) Bill: Section 35 Power 17.1.23/ GR Reform (contd.) 17.1.23/ Transgender Conversion Therapy 13.7.22/ Legal Recognition of Non-Binary Gender 23.5.22/ Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 21.2.22/ Gender Recognition (GR) 23.2.22/ Transgender Prisoners, 12.1.22/ GRA Consultation 24.9.20/ Transgender People: Discrimination, 22.7.20/ Self-identification of Gender, 21.11.18	Trans Rights Gender Recognition Act Transgender Gender-based violence
Attacking feminism and gender equalities	9 (29%)	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1.12.22 / Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Bill, 9.12.22 / Gender Specific Religious	Gender-based violence Racism Religion Gender equality/mainstreaming

		Persecution, 17.3.22 / Ethnicity Pay Gap, 20.9.21 / Online Abuse and Hate Towards Women, 7.7.21 / Safer Streets for Women, 24.3.21 / Gender-based violence 26.11.20 / Black Women: Domestic Abuse, 30.6.20 / Leaving the EU: Effect on Women, 17.5.18	Istanbul Convention Hate speech
Delegitimizing LGBTIQ+ lives, experiences and politics	6 (19.3%)	Conversion Therapy Ban (CTB), 30.3.22 / CTB: Faith-based settings, 24.11.21 / Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans Women's Health Inequalities, 10.3.20 / Gay Conversion Therapy, 7.6.18 / Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) (Northern Ireland), 28.3.18 / Provision of LGBT Inclusive Education in Schools, 20.2.18	LGBTIQ Religion Marriage Equality Sexual education
Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	6 (19.3%)	Maternity Outcomes: Migrant Women, 25.1.23 / Legal Rights to Access Abortion, 28.11.22 / Abortion in Northern Ireland, 25.3.22 / Hungary: Same-Sex Couple Adoption, 24.11.20 / Decriminalisation of Abortion 23.07.29 / Relationships and Sex Education, 25.2.19	LGBTIQ Sexual and reproductive rights Migrant women Sexual education Abortion
Total	31		

Table UK1: Outline of the Debates collected from Hansard (N=31) in each cluster

Note: Please see [Appendix A: UK Case Study – Parliamentary Debate Data](#) for the full list

From this sub-corpus 95 coded instances – average size three to six sentence excerpt – have been analysed, 43 in ‘Rhetorical Strategies’ and 53 in ‘Discursive Strategies’.

The table below presents the rhetorical strategies coded.

Code (Rhetorical)	Total Instances	Occurs in % of debates	Actor Total	Actors by Gender	Actors by Party	Instance distribution by Actor
‘What if’ scenarios	13	21%	7	F: 4 M: 3	CON: 5 SNP: 1 Lab: 1	Highest: 4 (M, CON)
UK as ‘tolerant nation’	11	42%	9	F: 3 M: 6	CON: 6 SNP: 2 IND: 1	Highest: 3 (M, CON)

Public incidents	4	5.3%	4	F:2 M:2	CON: 3 LAB: 1	Highest: 3 (M, CON)
Constituent voices	8	31.6%	8	F:3 M:5	CON: 6 LAB: 1 LD: 1	Highest: 3 (M, CON)
Bureaucratic empathy	7	37%	5	F: 3 M:2	CON:5	Highest: 3 (F, CON)
Total	43			F: 15 45.5% M:18 54.5%		

Table UK2: *Rhetorical Strategies*

Note: (N=19. Key for political parties: CON = British Conservative Party, SNP = Scottish National Party, LAB = British Labour Party, ALB = Alba Party, LD = Liberal Democrats, IND = Independent)

The table above illustrates the key *rhetorical strategies* used by actors across antagonistic positions within the debates. While the study encompasses contributions from the Labour party and independents, most instances, perhaps unsurprisingly given the ratio of power share, were from the governing Conservative Party. Female MPs contributed 45.5% and male MPs 54.5% of the rhetorical strategies coded. The codes are examined in qualitative terms in the next subsections.

‘What if’ scenarios

A common rhetorical tactic is that of positing speculative yet significant future consequences for a policy or legislative change under discussion. This tactic seeks to advance an argument by convincing your interlocutor that a damaging scenario can only be prevented by agreeing to your way of thinking, voting or legislating. This strategy is the most common in our sample and is marginally led by Conservative female MPs ahead of their male colleagues. Further, a high proportion of instances are articulated in ‘transgender debates’, once again underlining the centrality of this issue to fractious discourse in the House of Commons. The following contribution from Miriam Cates (CONS) in a debate on gender recognition reform evokes scenarios where transgender people occupy spaces of vulnerability, without ever being regarded as subject to vulnerability themselves:

“As well as the broader picture, there are specific impacts of GRA reform that would be significant, such as threatening sex-based rights. There are sound reasons of privacy, safety and dignity for women’s requirement for single-sex spaces and services. When using changing rooms and sleeping accommodation or for those in prison, women and girls have a right to expect that there are no males using those spaces. Self-ID could threaten those sex-based rights.”

It is worth noting that ‘what if’ scenarios concerning women’s spaces are used on a number of occasions to subject female MPs advocating for gender recognition reform to an aggressive mode of questioning:

Nick Fletcher (CONS): “Would the hon. Member be happy with a trans woman entering a changing room and sharing facilities with her?”

And:

David Davies (CONS): “I hear what the hon. Lady is saying. May I bluntly ask her whether she would be happy sharing a changing room with somebody who was born male and had a male body?”

Both examples depend on rhetorically intimating a hypothetical ‘trans threat’ which the questioners’ female interlocutors are compelled to imagine. Given the shared recourse to these tactics, however, this kind of ‘what if’ question can be reversed. Here, a Labour MP concedes that some (men) will take advantage of self-ID certification while using this to advocate for more protection for the majority of trans people. She also uses a leading question technique:

Danielle Rowley (LAB): “As the hon. Lady has rightly pointed out, a small minority would seek to cause others harm. However, more than half of trans people in the UK have attempted suicide and 84% have said that they have experienced suicidal thoughts. Does the hon. Lady agree that a lot more needs to be done to protect and support them?”

UK as a ‘tolerant nation’

This strategy occurs in 42% of the debates (N=19), has equal distribution between male and female MPs, and is used on different sides in the thematic debates under discussion. There is an interesting variety of expression here, starting from straightforward statements of collective national character - “we are a tolerant nation and we accept you as you are” (Nick Fletcher) - to the invocation of political values as characteristics that must be enacted:

Mike Freer (CONS): “The United Kingdom is a diverse society with many different cultures, backgrounds, identities and perspectives, and that diversity is a source of strength and enrichment of our culture and a driving force for change and growth. Our United Kingdom is made great by its diversity and its embracing of new cultures, new peoples and—dare I say it?—new ways of looking at people’s sexuality and gender.”

The presentation of these values varies from a rhetorical emphasis on their taken-for-grantedness to a more critical valence which demands that the values be enacted and respected in practice.

Public incidents

This category encompasses both general usage and also usage specific to the ‘trans debate’. Referring to live public incidents is an established way of claiming relevance and topicality. At the same time, invoking public controversies or media stories and emphasising or omitting crucial factual elements is often a dimension of the *public incidents* strategy, and one that causes it to overlap with the discursive strategy of ‘silencing/cancel culture’ - that is, claiming to be in some way prevented from speaking on these issues - discussed in more depth in the next section.

Constituent voices

This tactic invokes the powerful presence of the electorate in the parliamentary arena. Performatively, it advances the representative duty of MPs to speak for ‘the people’, while also adding weight to the speaker’s assertions. However, the anecdotal character of some articulations also serves to lessen the burden of proof on the speaker when it comes to difficult subject matter. The example below, for example, does this while intersecting with the ‘worst case scenarios’ tactic:

Craig Mackinlay (CONS): “I could go into quite a story about a nurse, a transsexual woman, who was presented to a constituent of mine and their daughter for an intimate examination, but that is a story for another day and I do not have time to examine it here.”

Similarly, constituent voices can be ‘ventriloquised’ to put an interlocutor on the defensive, as potentially having to be seen as denying or minimising people’s fears:

Tim Loughton (CONS): “That is why women, in particular, feel threatened. [Interruption.] The hon. Lady may well not feel threatened, but a lot of my constituents have come to me, having seen this evolving argument, to say that there are places where they no longer feel safe. We have a duty of care to those people; we must ensure their safety and wellbeing too.”

Given the diversity of experiences of constituents, it is clear that their opinions and needs can be invoked on different sides of a debate. Anonymous invocations far outnumber named citations:

Diana Johnson (LAB): “I want to draw to the attention of the Secretary of State to two constituents in my area, Stephanie Trotter and Vicky Parkey, who had a note put through their door on Thursday evening, which basically said that their relationship was immoral. It questioned their right to have a child together and told them that they should move away from the area. That bigotry and prejudice, which is still out there in some communities, has very effectively been challenged in my community

by neighbours displaying the rainbow flag and putting up supportive posters for that family.”

This tactic is pronounced in the debates concerning ‘relationships and sex education in schools’, however it is of particular utility to advocates of ‘parents’ rights’, who can speak for constituents who also happen to be parents demanding oversight of how schools educate children on matters of gender and sexuality:

Dr. Matthew Offord (CONS): “The issue of relationships and sex education is causing a huge amount of concern in my constituency. I took a delegation to meet Lord Agnew, who said that his Department set the direction but that the interpretation was being implemented by Ofsted. Now, there are some Members here who feel that the state knows better than parents themselves, but the last time I looked the Conservative party believed in freedom of choice and the freedom for people to decide their own future.”

Bureaucratic empathy

This widely deployed tactic occurs in 37% of the debates while being most used by Conservative MPs, which makes sense given that they are speaking from government roles, or defending government positions. In general, this tactic involves expressing empathy for those implicated in a proposed policy or legislative change while emphasising either bureaucratic processes and impediments to change, or that the law has gone as ‘far as possible’ under given circumstances.

Elizabeth Truss (CONS): “We want transgender people to be free to live and prosper in modern Britain. We have looked carefully at the issues raised in the consultation, including potential changes to the Gender Recognition Act 2004. It is the Government’s view that the balance struck in this legislation is correct, in that there are proper checks and balances in the system and also support for people who want to change their legal sex.”

The quote below intersects with the ‘tolerant nation’ trope to express empathy for non-binary identity as a ‘feeling’ that, for all its legitimacy, cannot be expected to impact on the rationality of the law:

Nick Fletcher (CONS): “Many of the people I have spoken to have said that they supported the petition because they feel that, at present, they do not exist. I want the community of people who feel that they are non-binary to know that, of course, I accept that they exist. I see them; I hear them; I feel for them; and I want to help them. I say to them, ‘We are a tolerant nation and we accept you as you are.’ It does not follow, however, that the law should be changed to reflect the way that certain

individuals feel. No matter where anyone sits on this subject, their opinion should be respected.”

The table below shifts focus to a presentation of the discursive strategies.

Code (Discursive)	Total Instances	Occurs % in of debates	Actor Total	Actors by Gender	Actors by Party	Actor distribution
Sex as biological fact	17	26.5%	10	F:5 M:5	CON: 8 SNP: 1 ALB: 1	Highest: 3 x 3 (2 x F, CON, 1 x M, CON)
Trans identity as ideology or lifestyle trend	12	21%	5	F:1 M:4	CON: 4 SNP: 1	Highest: 5 (F, CON)
Claims of silencing/ cancel culture	12	21%	7	F: 1 M:6	CON: 5 SNP: 1 ALB: 1	Highest: 3 (M, CON)
Transness as erasure	8	10.5%	4	F: 2 M:2	CON: 4	Highest: 3 (M, CON)
Activism/ Lobbying/ Campaigns as problem	4	15.8%	3	F: 1 M:2	CON: 3	Highest: 2 (M, CON)
Total	53			F:10 34.% M:19 65.5%		

Table UK3: Discursive Strategies

Note: (N=19)

This distribution of discursive codes presents some clear quantitative patterns. The ‘actors by party’ figures demonstrate that these claims are primarily, and sometimes exclusively, articulated by Conservative MPs. This is a striking pattern, even allowing for the variations in speaking time allocation in different types of parliamentary debate, as the Labour Party, the main opposition party, is completely absent from these totals. Further, these discursive claims were primarily articulated by these actors while opposing motions on forms of transgender and non-binary recognition. The minimal presence of two Scottish political

parties is a result of the centrality of Scotland's Gender Recognition Reform Bill to Westminster deliberations in this period (see 'UK Controversy Mapping').

Within this pattern of party distribution, the distribution by gender is noteworthy. Female MPs contributed only 34% while male MPs were responsible for 65.5% of the instances of discursive strategies. The participation of female MPs is most pronounced in the 'sex as biological fact' category, which is the category also with the highest usage. The relation between total and actor distribution positions this category as the most significant in gender terms. The articulation of 'trans as erasure' is also equally shared by female and male MPs, a parity that makes sense given the shared relation between the latter and former codes.

The greatest discrepancy in gender terms is with the claim of 'silencing/cancel culture', which is articulated far more frequently by male MPs. Overall, these totals suggest that both wider 'culture war' contentions – 'cancel culture', blaming activism – and articulations that actively question the legitimacy of trans identity in political terms (as ideology or lifestyle) are more pronounced among the male MPs in the sample.

The codes are now examined in qualitative terms, below.

Sex as biological fact

This contention is the most popular category to emerge in the analysis. A common feature of the articulations coded is that it constitutes a given reality *sine qua non* that is not open to rational challenge within the debates:

Nick Fletcher (CONS): "Biology matters and biological sex is real. Men and women are built differently from birth, and remain different throughout their lives. To pretend otherwise is to ignore reality."

On this basis - uniformly presented as a 'material reality' which is not substantively open to debate - actors in this category warn that any legislation which proceeds by ignoring this scientific premise 'conflates sex and gender', in a way that does not do justice to "... the concerns that are held by many women and same-sex attracted people" (JC). This formulation is important, as it introduces an ancillary dimension of the *sine qua non*: that any attempt to think sex and gender together introduces an immediate conflict between the categories, and concerns, of women and same-sex attracted women and men, and gender fluid or transgender individuals.

In general, contentions in this category are devoid of overt rhetoric or stereotypes, instead building on the implacable division of sex and gender to offer a deterministic relationship between the immutability of science, and the mutability of identity:

Miriam Cates (CONS): “The truth is that individual identities are complex and multi-dimensional, but they are as much a function of the things we cannot change as they are of the things we can. Of course, the same goes for sex. Let us be clear: human beings, like all other mammals, cannot change sex...To allow somebody easily to change their sex in law would be to accept as a society that this material reality is not important or that it can be changed in a straightforward way.”

The category of identity is thus presented as a mode of contingent legitimization for transgender people, one that allows for a potential negotiation of divergent rights, but where a category presented as ‘sex-based’ rights takes clear precedence over the subjectivity of ‘identity’.

Transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend

The approach to identity in the previous category is implacably binary and hierarchical, however it is generally presented as a frame of recognition for – limited – forms of gendered self-realisation. That is not the case in this category, which presents transgender identity and the desire to transition as pathological, extreme or transient desires shaped, and perhaps determined, by outside influences. On occasion, the idea that transgender identity is superficial is expressed sensationally for rhetorical effect:

Craig MacKinlay (CONS): “We all wanted to do a lot of things aged 16. I rather wanted a tattoo and an earring, but here I am aged 56, and I am damn pleased I did not go down that route.”

More frequently, these articulations are characterised by the search for external agents that can be blamed for a troubling ‘trend’ that is ‘putting these ideas in young minds’. The following quotation exemplifies how speculation as to ideological indoctrination, pre-existing ‘vulnerabilities’ and the assumed power of social media often interact in this material:

Miriam Cates (CONS): “Vulnerable children, particularly those who are autistic, same-sex attracted or have mental health conditions, latch on to gender theory as an explanation for why they might be different or why they do not fit in. These children then look up the terms ‘trans’ and ‘non-binary’ online and are drawn in by adults they do not know on Discord and TikTok, who tell them how to obtain and inject cross-sex hormones. They follow YouTube stars who glorify surgical transition.”

The frequent references to ‘social media’ in this sub-corpus are striking in their consonance with youth and media ‘moral panics’ in previous historical eras, targeting cinema, television, rap and heavy metal, and video games (Ruddock 2016). Media forms are presented as conduits for indoctrination, through which young people, presumed to have little or no agency or interpretative capacity, are acted upon in a direct, ‘hypodermic’ fashion. The

presumptive explanation of transgender identity as a new and unsettling trend among vulnerable and superficial young people connects this discourse to a longer history of youth ‘moral panics’ while also supporting more specific contentions, namely that young people are being unduly swayed by motivated forms of ‘ideology’.

Claims of silencing/cancel culture

The claim that one is being ‘silenced’ for merely expressing concerns or opinions has become a constant refrain in public discourse. Given this ubiquity, it is unsurprising to see it reproduced in contentious parliamentary debates, and as the sole code category where the key refrains are directly transplanted from wider media culture. The target of silencing varies, from contentions that ‘MPs are afraid to engage in this debate’ to anecdotes about figures bound up in public controversies. Along with generic references to ‘silencing’ and ‘cancel culture’ there is the specific contention that the accusation of ‘transphobia’ is used to shut down legitimate debate, as Elliot Colburn (CONS) puts it:

“We have ridiculous public conversations about erasing language or trying to figure out if certain words are offensive, and where we label anyone who expresses concerns about the protection of sex-based rights a TERF – trans-exclusionary radical feminist – or transphobic, rather than actually talking about the issues.”

There is a significant debate afoot in political culture as to “the very terms of the debate when it comes to disputes within feminism” (Pearce, Erikainen & Vincent, 2020), including division over whether and how the assignation ‘TERF’ constitutes an insult, as opposed to a critical – if disputed – political description. Beyond this ideological dispute, claims of silencing serve to present a Manichean vision of debate between good faith interlocutors and zealous opponents who refuse legitimate differences of opinion in the services of ideology:

Tim Loughton (CONS): “Frankly, anyone who has the audacity to question any of these things, as I just have, is faced with the cancel culture, which is so utterly damaging and absolutely does not help the population as a whole.”

Consequently, the claim of silencing frequently depends on reference to a controversial case that has attracted publicity and which seems to starkly represent the irrationality and injustice of a – one-sided – ‘cancel culture’:

David Davies (CONS): “Teachers who have tried to question what is going on or who have fallen foul of the activist groups are liable to find themselves being disciplined. A teacher called Joshua Sutcliffe was disciplined by a school in Oxford for committing the offence – a new one to me – of misgendering a group of pupils. He had apparently said ‘well done girls’ after a maths exam, although one of the girls identified as a boy. For that the teacher was disciplined.”

However, the top Google hit for ‘Joshua Sutcliffe’ is a BBC news story⁴² detailing the findings of a Teaching Regulation Agency misconduct panel report which concluded that multiple disciplinary offences, all involving forms of proselytising on questions of gender and sexuality, had been committed by the teacher over a period. The precise details here are less important than the repetitive form of cautionary ‘cancel culture’ tales, which radically simplify conflicts to fit a ‘good faith actors v radical ideological zealots’ vision of public and political life.

Transness as erasure

Building on the binary opposition central to ‘sex as biological reality’, this set of contentions regard the opposition between sex and gender as resulting in a series of ‘zero sum’ games where any gains for transgender and non-binary people comes at the expense of other categories of people. Multiple forms of argumentation are advanced on this basis. Sometimes the arguments are majoritarian, pitting a ‘tiny minority’ – who, it is frequently emphasised, should be respected – against the ‘majority of men and women’ who, in being spoken for in this mode, reject any ‘conflation of and around sex and gender’ which, Tim Loughton argues, “...threatens to erase the recognition of males and females – of men and women”.

The title of this coding category references the extent to which the idea of erasure is invoked, for it is critical to the way in which the ‘zero-sum’ relationship is reproduced. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, ‘erasure’ used in relation to human populations – as opposed to texts, or affective responses – means “the act of removing or destroying something, especially something that shows that the person or thing ever existed or happened”. This totalising sense is advanced in Jackie Doyle Price’s (CONS) explanation of the ‘conflicting rights’ framework, noting that these debates are

“...very personal for the transgender person who thinks their existence is being erased, and equally personal for women who feel that their sex-based rights, for which they are their forebears fought for generations, are being erased.”

A variation on the assertion of erasure links it to the putatively binary conflict of rights and interests between women and same-sex attracted people, and gender fluid and transgender people. Neale Hanvey MP, who is leader of the Alba party in the Commons – and who is one of 45 MPs who identify as LGBTQ – stated bluntly that:

⁴² “Oxford transgender row teacher banned from profession”
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-65688163>

“Homophobia is back, and after all the years we spent battering down those barriers...it is draped in a Pride flag. If we remove sex, there can be no homosexual. Sex matters. It is a defining characteristic of who I am.”

Activism as the problem

The focus on what is held to be excessively ideological and unrepresentative activism is the least populated category, a marginal status in parliamentary discussion which contrasts with the popularity of this trope in wider media discourse. It primarily functions as an extension of the image of Manichean debate promoted in references to ‘silencing/cancel culture’, framing organised forms of awareness-raising and campaigning by civil society groups as distorting influences in public debate. Here, Angela Richardson (CONS) suggests that ‘lobby groups’ effectively work to silence other actors:

“There needs to be sufficient time for all of us to understand both sides of an argument and hear all voices, not just the lobby group that is best funded and has the loudest group.”

The suggestion that ‘one side’ is dominantly characterised by the vocal activity of well-funded campaigns serves to reproduce the idea of ideological zealotry versus ordinary concerns. It also neglects to recognise the empirical reality of campaigning on transgender-related issues, which is that ‘the other side’ is manifestly characterised by a significant array of active and funded lobby groups that are frequently name-checked and quoted by Conservative MPs in the House of Commons. Concomitantly, the contention that the problem is excessive activism can serve to further the ‘transgender as ideology/lifestyle’ trope by suggesting that transgender desires are produced by being influenced by activism:

Nick Fletcher (CONS): “And please let us stop with this blurring of lines and bending to every whim that a lobby group asks for. Let us ask ourselves why a lobby group wants to work in this space.”

Further insights from keyword analysis

The focus on this corpus of debates from Hansard allows for a non-generalisable yet analytically significant analysis of how arguments about gender freedom and recognition are discursively shaped in parliamentary debate, and ways in which this coded material resonates with and diverges from wider anti-gender discourse in politics and media.

In order to generate further insight on this interrelation, the computational linguistic capacities of CLARIN were used to track and analyse key terms across a far more extensive corpus of debates beyond the Hansard sample discussed above.

Two key results of this exercise are presented, on the use of ‘gender ideology’, and important shifts in the discourse on transgender issues over time.

Gender ideology

The mobilisation of anti-transgender and LGBTIQ+ politics through opposition to the imposition of ‘gender ideology’ is a critically important tactic transnationally; this is demonstrated by the findings of the European Parliament study, presented subsequently. Moreover, the analysis of UK media discourse presented in the next chapter finds that it occupies a comparably important role in how stories and opinion pieces about transgender identity, gender fluidity, sex education and LGBTIQ+ visibility construct the ‘problem’.

Given this background, it was notable that there were very few references to ‘gender ideology’ in the Hansard corpus, and it did not surface as a discursive code in itself. As noted in the discussion of ‘trans as ideology/lifestyle’, there is one instance of it being invoked as an ideological source of influence over young people. The remaining 3 references to it follow the standard procedure of not defining what is meant by the idea, rather, solely emphasising its illegitimacy and consequences: it is ‘indoctrination’, and ‘unevidenced ideology that is causing harm to women, children, and people who are gay and lesbian’ (Miriam Cates (CONS)), and an orthodoxy that demands that one ‘submits unquestioningly’ to (Neale Hanvey Alba).

The CLARIN keyword search for the collocation ‘gender’ and ‘ideology’ outside of the Hansard corpus (N=31) produced three further invocations – two of the 3 instances using the descriptor “extreme” and one adding “radical”. Whilst this finding unveils an ideological bias, quantitatively this demonstrates that the popular appeal to the problem of ‘gender ideology’ has little or no significant purchase in UK Parliament debates during a period of intensive and conflictual discussion of transgender rights and recognition.

Shift in parliamentary discourse on transgender issues over time

We analysed a 2016 debate titled “Transgender Equality”⁴³ that was tabled by the female Conservative MP Maria Miller who, in her opening address responded to questions she was asked as to why the Women and Equalities Select Committee were focused on transgender rights as follows:

“The evidence that the Select Committee received gave us an opportunity to gain some sort of insight into the prejudice, discrimination and ignorance that trans people endure every single day of their lives, but also the great joy that they

⁴³

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-12-01/debates/D4F283FB-2C02-4C8C-8C7E-BEAB889D1425/TransgenderEquality>

experience when they are able to be recognised by the gender with which they identify. That is why this debate is important.”

This stated commitment to transgender safety and wellbeing from a Conservative MP is in direct contrast to the current political discourse analysed in this sample (as of September 2023). Having coded the 2016 debate using the same codes as the 2018-2023 sample, it is notable that speech contributions are clearly more sympathetic to transgender people than is evident in the corpus from 2018 on. Further, there is no evidence of anti-gender discourse, including an absence of the essentialist *sex as biological fact*, nor *trans as erasure* material. To explore this trend further, take for example the following random sample of debate motions on transgender prisoners:

Date	Party	Debate Title/Parliamentary Question
February 2023	Alba	Female Prison Estate: “What steps is he taking to ensure the safety, privacy and dignity of women within the female prison estate?” ⁴⁴
January 2017	Lab	Transgender Prisoners: “What support and resources the Government are providing to transgender prisoners.” ⁴⁵
November 2015	Cons	Topical Questions: “On 27 November, a transgender prisoner killed herself while serving in a male jail. What are the Government planning to do to address the concern about another tragic death in this vulnerable group of people?” ⁴⁶

Table UK4: Random Sample illustrating shift in tone on Parliamentary Contributions on Trans Issues

The shift in focus and tone of these debates on transgender prisoners during the two most recent parliamentary sessions is indicative of the wider turn to a hostile ‘anti-trans’ debate in UK politics.

⁴⁴<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-02-21/debates/A8A4B179-F623-4FB3-8607-466818B4AA78/FemalePrisonEstate?highlight=what%20steps%20taking%20ensure%20safety%20privacy%20dignity%20women%20within%20female%20prison%20estate#contribution-49E5055A-076B-4DCC-9E4D-DFC010D9A998> Female Prison Estate. February 2023

⁴⁵<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-01-24/debates/8F4BEAEB-6AB4-46A4-B657-A9A2ABF67E66/TransgenderPrisoners?highlight=what%20support%20resources%20government%20providing%20transgender%20prisoners#contribution-883643E9-8FA1-43C2-9720-19BACB59B404>

Transgender Prisoners: January 2017. Hansard

⁴⁶ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-12-08/debates/15120843000033/TopicalQuestions> Topical Questions: December 2015. Hansard

UK Media

Introduction

This chapter examines the media production and circulation of anti-gender discourse. It primarily does this by examining the status and meaning of the intensely contested idea of 'gender ideology' in journalistic reporting, opinion-writing and 'talk tv'. Media are traditionally recognised as important ideological agents, capable of agenda-setting and powerful issue-framing. The ubiquity of social media platforms, and the speed and density of their content flows, has further strengthened the assumption of media's importance in shaping public understanding of key issues. Consequently, the study of media is critical to an understanding of how anti-gender politics work in contexts where politics is deeply influenced by media logics of immediacy, flow, reaction, spectacle and sensation.

Nevertheless, contemporary media systems are complex, and are best understood as 'hybrid media systems' (Chadwick 2013, 2019) where 'older' and 'newer' forms of news-making impact on and converge with each other. Media publics are similarly involved, distributed across established national media outlets and fragmented across technological platforms and a plethora of hybrid media services. Given this, research approaches must combine several rationales. Research must be able to examine relatively stable processes, for example the resilient 'agenda-setting' power of established media titles. However, the study of how anti-gender politics is mediated in any context cannot simply take this cross-section of national media and approach this as indicative of a given 'public'. It must explore more emergent dynamics, such as the ephemeral yet often spectacular and influential news cycle interventions produced by online-only media.

This study takes account of this requirement by combining a comparative study of newspaper coverage across three major national titles, and an analysis of how new players in the UK media ecology reproduce political discourse across social media platforms.

The newspaper sector in the UK is historically regarded as being composed of three categories of newspaper – 'quality' or 'broadsheet'; mid-market tabloid, and 'downmarket tabloid' (Humphreys 2007). Further, this sector is understood as integrated to what Hallin and Mancini, in their influential typology of media and political systems, term a 'North Atlantic/Liberal' model (2004) characterised by market domination (with the exception of state-funded public service broadcasting); and a professionalised and commercial press characterised by systemic pluralism, state non-intervention, and 'moderate' levels of 'political parallelism' (that is, historical links between specific political parties and specific media – the 'party press', or, as is more common today, media-political orientations and/or editorial lines that align with parties and political blocs, see Artero 2015, van de Pas et al 2017).

However, this lack of ‘direct alignment’ (Binderkrantz et al, 2016) is not the same as a lack of political partisanship, or campaigning. In a scathing assessment of the UK press, Fenton and Freedman (2017) contend that the political reality of the UK press is one of close relationships with political power, exactly those actors the ‘fourth estate’ is meant to hold to account. An increasingly formulaic democracy characterised by intimate political-media relations, they argue:

“...has given us nothing more than the illusion of democratic communications: a media where editors and top politicians dine at the same tables, are educated at the same institutions and share many of the same corporate values and ideological agendas; a media that is disaggregated in theory but centralised in practice; a media where the tools may be open source but the where the most powerful networks remain closed.”

As a consequence, they argue, a significant sector of the UK press is characterised by often aggressive ideological intervention:

“Mainstream media outlets have failed to use their symbolic power to challenge this shift and to offer alternative visions and truly representative narratives, serving up instead an anaemic diet of stories that are frequently shallow, decontextualised, misleading or downright biased – for example the economics journalism that assumes the ‘expertise’ of financial commentators and the legitimacy of austerity policies, the reporting of ‘terror’ that marginalises geopolitical tensions and inequalities, the negative coverage of progressive movements and leaders and the popular representations of welfare claimants as ‘revolting subjects’ that seek to mobilise a sense of disgust towards the ‘unproductive’ and ‘undeserving poor’ in the contemporary world” (2017).

Our approach to the UK media environment, and our assessment of its reproduction of anti-gender politics, is informed by an attempt to reflect both this systemic approach while being highly attentive to the ideological campaigning and interventionist tendencies of key media titles and clusters. Further, the key changes wrought by digital networks on the media system, and the specific ways in which this has expanded and transformed the range and approach of partisan and campaigning media, requires attention. The next section details this further.

Approach to media analysis

The *first step* in the media research is a comparative analysis of three major newspaper titles.

The Daily Telegraph and *The Guardian* are often classified in the industry as ‘quality’ newspapers with significant national and cross-media profiles. While experiencing the same sectoral decline in circulation as most newspapers⁴⁷, they remain influential beyond their sales presence because of their wider agenda-setting agency. *The Scotsman* is an established ‘liberal-conservative’ daily that endures as a well-known media brand and presence in a very crowded Scottish newspaper market experiencing significant circulation decline (OFCOM 2020).

Content analysis of ‘traditional’ media sources such as newspapers is a conventional way of examining how issues are constructed and disseminated in public, and comparative analysis between titles provides a reliable way of examining political and ideological differences. In the media systems approach noted above, this kind of comparative analysis allows for an examination of differences in discourse and representation across the conventional political spectrum.

Nevertheless, this pattern of sectoral decline, in the context of a competitive and polyvalent media environment, underlines that this ‘spectrum’ approach can no longer be taken as indicative of, or standing in for, a representation of public opinion. Consequently, it is necessary to be very clear as to the possibilities and limits of an approach focusing on newspaper coverage.

As De Benedictis et al (2019) demonstrate in their study of coverage of “#MeToo social media discourse” in UK newspapers, while established news titles are reaching fewer readers than previously, their integration into media networks of comment, sharing and reaction means that their influence can be extended even as their circulation shrinks. They may, for instance, ‘validate and shape’ how emerging issues are framed and discussed. They can impact on their visibility and the extent and kind of attention they receive in the wider media environment (see also De Benedictis 2022). Further, as our research below demonstrates, the newer range of explicitly right-wing campaigning media that have managed to scale-up through online-only operations often produce content by amplifying stories from established right-wing media sources.

For this reason, our study complements the ‘newspaper spectrum’ research with a *second step*; a purposive examination of an area of media activity which has become structurally important in many countries over the last decade. While the division of ‘old’ and ‘new’ media still holds sway in how people conceptualise media systems, the ‘hybrid media system’ theorised by Chadwick is characterised by media operations that emerge through, or significantly benefit from, dissemination through social media platforms, while also establishing broadcast or publication services. These possibilities of digital scale have been particularly useful for networks of reactionary media, leading scholars to identify the

⁴⁷ Most newspapers no longer provide data on newspaper circulation to industry sources.

emergence of a 'right-wing media ecology' in the US (Benkler et al 2018) or the multi-sited/platform *fachosphère* in France (Lebourg 2023).

A comparable hybrid network has emerged within UK media. Central to this has been the establishment of the openly partisan news channel GB News, a channel funded by a range of sources closely tied to the British Conservative Party, and reactionary political foundations in the USA. As Steven Barnett and Julian Petley document, GB News is one of several ventures that have been shaped by a political assault on the statutory responsibility for impartiality which has been the 'historical backbone' of the UK broadcasting system. Politically, this has been furthered by presenting these initiatives as a 'corrective' to the 'liberal bias' of the BBC, and formally by increasing openly partisan and 'culture war' punditry on programmes putatively presented as news coverage (2021: 31-33).

The networked character of this sector allows for smaller scale initiatives to carve out public space while remaining closely aligned with established actors. One way in which this is done is by situating themselves as 'independent media' or 'media watchdogs.' One such initiative is the campaign group The Free Speech Union, which has close media ties with conservative UK media – through its directors, and board – and often features as a source for the same titles and channels (see Davies and MacRae 2023).

Data presentation

(a) Trigger issues across the three papers

In this step, the primary issues that 'triggered' – i.e were the primary issue of the article – the mention of 'gender ideology' in the article were categorised. The graph below presents the findings across all newspapers.

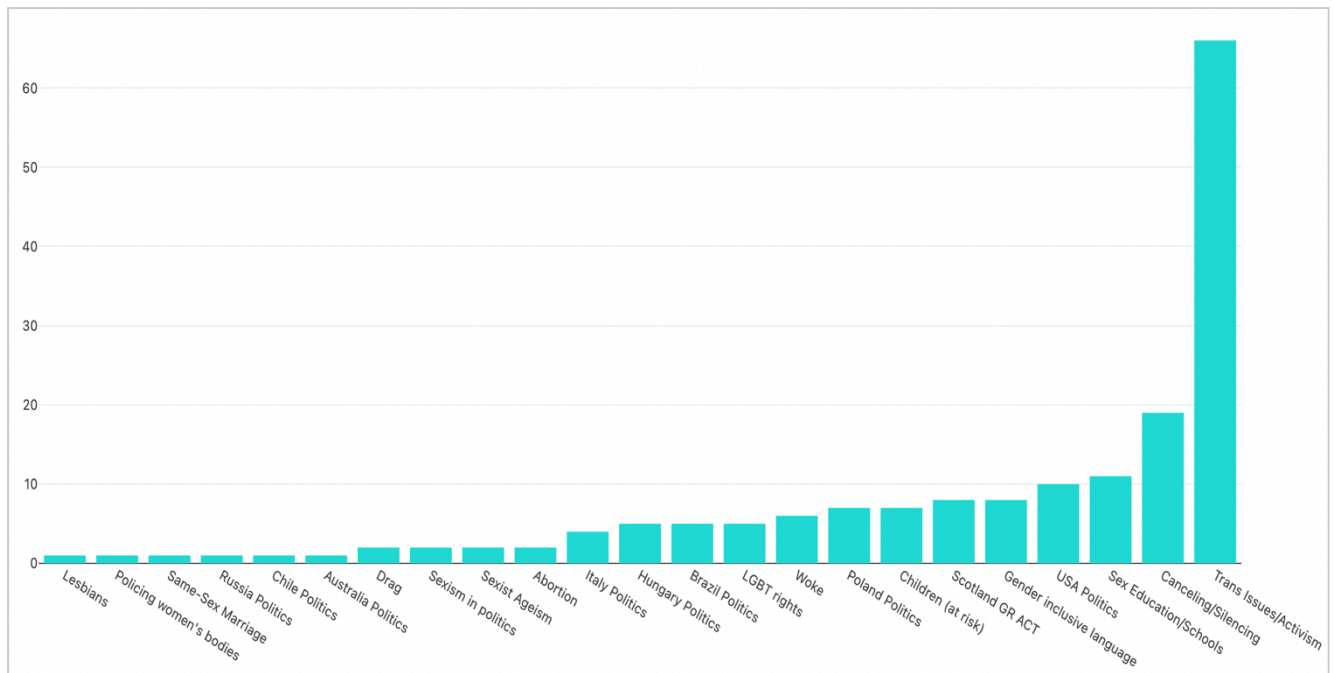


Table UK5: Bar chart of 'gender ideology' in relation to range of Issues

This overview illustrates how the idea of 'gender ideology' can be associated with or invoked in relation to a significant range of issues. At the same time, clear spikes in usage and association emerge.

The top three issues in the entire sample are: Trans Issues/Activism (37.7%); Cancelling/Silencing (11%) and Sex Education/Schools (6.29%). It is unsurprising, given the topical focus in public debate and the general political and cultural antagonism associated with Trans Rights in the contemporary UK, that 'Trans Issues/Activism' emerges as the manifestly dominant 'trigger issue'. That 'Cancelling/Silencing' is the second spike makes sense in relation to this, as a significant pattern of news coverage involves incidents where 'gender critical' actors claim to be, or are held to be, 'silenced' in their opposition to 'gender ideology'.

The disaggregated data by newspaper is now presented.

The Daily Telegraph

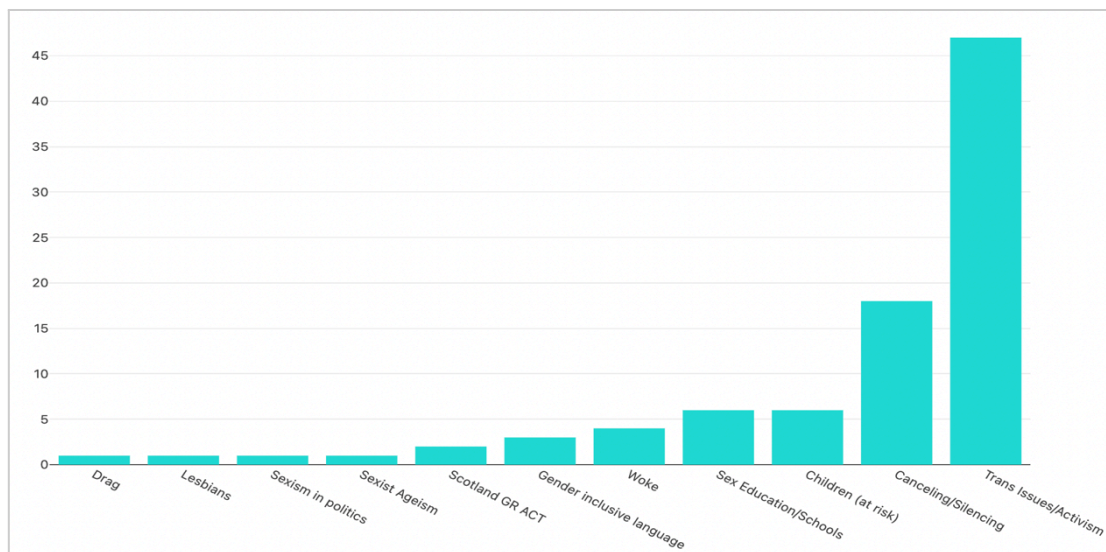


Table UK6: Trigger Issues in The Daily Telegraph sample

The *Daily Telegraph* chart emphasises the extent to which ‘trans’ and ‘activism’ are related in this coverage. The prominence of ‘Cancelling/Silencing’ also underlines the prominence of trigger issues frequently connected, explicitly and implicitly, to ‘Trans Issues’, namely sex education in schools, and purported risks to children through forms of education/‘Activism’ or awareness-raising that risk ‘sexualising’ them. ‘Trans issues’ comprise 52% of the coverage, ‘Cancelling/Silencing’ 20% and ‘Sex Education and Schools’ 6.6%, the latter two tangentially or directly in relation to ‘Trans Issues’.

The Guardian

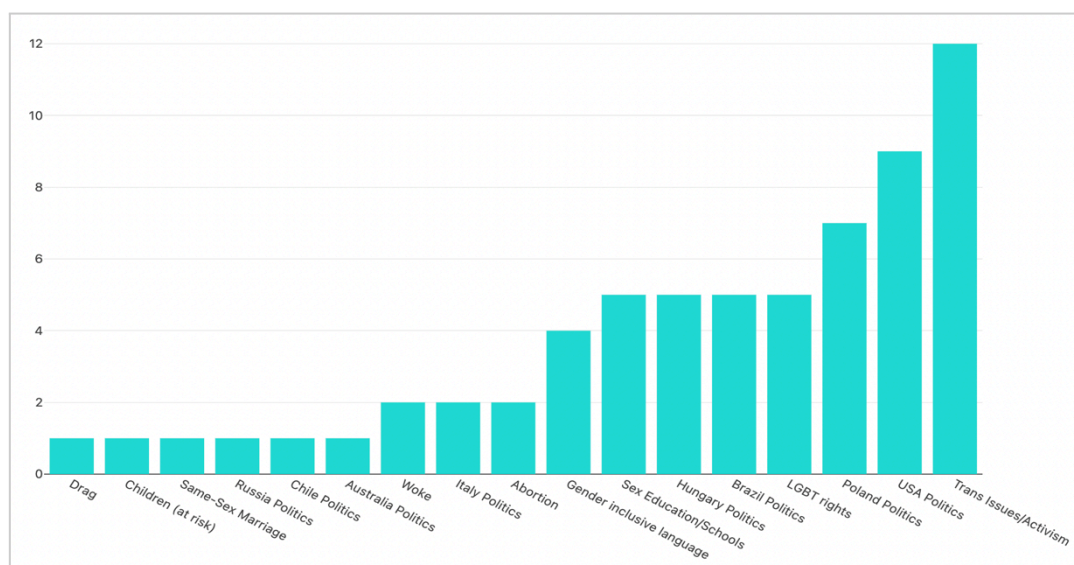


Table UK7: Trigger Issues in The Guardian sample

The top three issues covered in *The Guardian* are Trans Issues/Activism (17%); USA Politics (15.4%); and Brazil Politics (9.62%). Comparatively, this sample is more diverse in the content and geographic spread in terms of trigger issues covered.

The geopolitical focus of the media content is noteworthy, and we return to this contrast with the other titles in the subsequent analysis. Also, trans issues are covered as a secondary trigger issue alongside gender inclusive language and LGBTIQ+ rights, adding another 6% of coverage of this issue.

The Scotsman

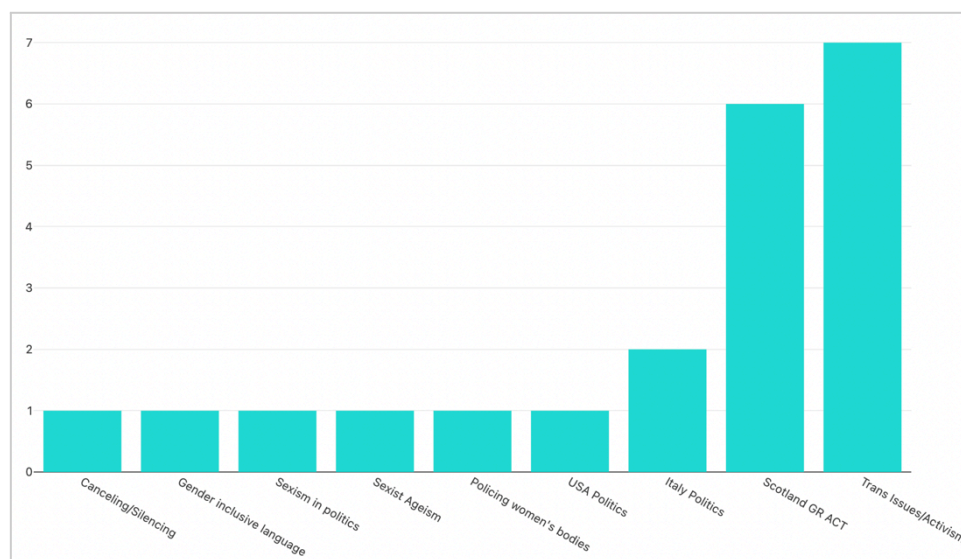


Table UK8: Trigger Issues in *The Scotsman* sample

The top two trigger issues are Trans Issues/Activism in the context of Scotland Gender Recognition Act (35.7%); Italy politics (14%) with all other issues equally distributed around 7%.

(b) Position of 'gender ideology' as a keyword

Overall, 89% of articles that cite 'gender ideology' do so in the article body, 7% in the headline, and 4% in the first paragraph. The positioning of a keyword in a news article reflects the extent to which it is regarded as having achieved public recognition and understanding. However, generic aspects of headline writing also impact word or phrase choice, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions on this overall pattern.

Keyword in The Telegraph

The prominence of the keyword in headlines and first paragraphs is clearly elevated across coverage in *The Telegraph*, which positions the keyword in the article body 78.7%; in the headline 13% and the first paragraph 8.2%.

Some *sample headlines* from *The Telegraph* illustrate the different ways in which the term is reproduced. Frequently, the term is used as a matter of fact, as if it has a status and coherence as an 'ideology' that will be readily legible for readers:

(03.04.23) "'Explicit' sex education in schools faces urgent review Prime Minister alarmed at inappropriate material and gender ideology theories being taught to children"

(15.07.22) "Mordaunt 'failed women', says Braverman Former leadership rival hits out at trade minister over female issues and gender ideology"

Equally common is a qualifier that suggests that it is 'controversial' or disputed, and thus the cause of the conflict or process being covered:

(08.03.23) "Tory revolt over 'shocking' sex lessons; MPs urge PM to launch inquiry into teaching of graphic content and disputed gender ideology"

While opinion pieces tend towards more openly pejorative usages denoting something called 'gender ideology' as a discrete problem, these formulations can also be found in news coverage headlines:

(11.02.23) (comment piece) "Sturgeon is imploding - as is her extreme agenda Scotland's First Minister has surely opened people's eyes to the absurdity of gender ideology"

(06.08.22) (news report) "'I won't put my girls in that organisation': the trans crisis facing Girl Guiding: The charity founded by Baden Powell is facing accusations of being captured by an extreme gender ideology"

Keyword in The Guardian

In contrast, The Guardian almost never uses 'gender ideology' in headlines, doing so only 1.9% of the time (one usage), while 98.1% of the time it appears in the article body. The one *headline* featured in The Guardian is somewhat random: (13.05.2022) "Alan Tudge responds to questions about 'toxic gender ideology' in WeChat interview" (an article about a "disgraced" Australian politician discussing this issue in an interview on the Chinese chat platform, WeChat). Notable is the use of quotation marks around the term, signalling

editorial distance, and also the use of the descriptor “disgraced” for the politician using the term.

Keyword in The Scotsman

The Scotsman exclusively uses ‘gender ideology’ in the article body, and most of these instances occur in the work of one particular columnist: Susan Dalgety.

(c) News genres in which the term ‘gender ideology’ features

The news genre in which the term is reproduced is significant, as it gives further framing to the contexts and issues that ‘gender ideology’ is linked to. To examine this an initial division between ‘News UK’ and ‘News International’ (domestic/foreign) is used. Further refinement is possible by grouping issues within these broad – but, in news organisation terms – important categories.

The overall breakdown across all newspapers demonstrates a relatively equal distribution between categories:

Article Type	Distribution of the use of ‘gender ideology’
News UK	42%
News International	27%
Comment/opinion	31%

Table UK9: *Distribution of ‘gender ideology’ across Newspaper Sectors*

However, this weighting varies significantly in the disaggregated data.

The Telegraph distribution: Comment/Opinion is 31.3%; News International is 1.56%; and News UK is 67.2%. The dominance of domestic news and comment in this distribution is significant and is further discussed below in relation to the comparative data.

The Guardian distribution is almost the inverse of the Telegraph’s - Comment/Opinion is 21.2%; News International is 59.6 %; and News UK is at 19.2%

The Scotsman distribution is Comment/Opinion 64.3%, UK News 14.3%, and News International 21.4%

Discussion

The data clearly shows that *The Telegraph* overwhelmingly reproduces the term ‘gender ideology’ in UK national news stories, whereas *The Guardian* primarily does so in relation to international case studies and controversies.

This contrast is heightened when the range of stories in each category is further compared. In *The Guardian*, the term is dominantly reproduced in coverage of international politics where the idea of ‘gender ideology’ has become a recognisable nationalist or far-right trope and rallying call – for instance in the politics of Jair Bolsanaro in Brazil, Donald Trump in the USA, and Victor Orbán in Hungary. In contrast, *The Telegraph* primarily locates the term in UK News. Within this genre, it is framed as an issue to be faced in conflicts concerning sex and relationships education in schools, trans rights in law, institutions and public spaces, and in controversies related to ‘culture war’ incidents of ‘silencing/cancelling’. That is, *the two newspapers invert the primary locations of ‘gender ideology’; the actors associated with it, and the given status of the concept.*

While the idea is also substantially reproduced in *The Telegraph* opinion pieces, it is notable that this is the dominant category in *The Scotsman*, whose percentage of comment and opinion pieces reproducing the term is statistically greater than in the other two papers combined (64.3%). This can largely be attributed to the consistent usage of the term by one columnist, Susan Dalgety, who regularly self-identifies in her writing as ‘gender critical’. The next section considers the authors who reproduce the term.

(d) Journalists and opinion writers who employed the term ‘gender ideology’

The Telegraph writers

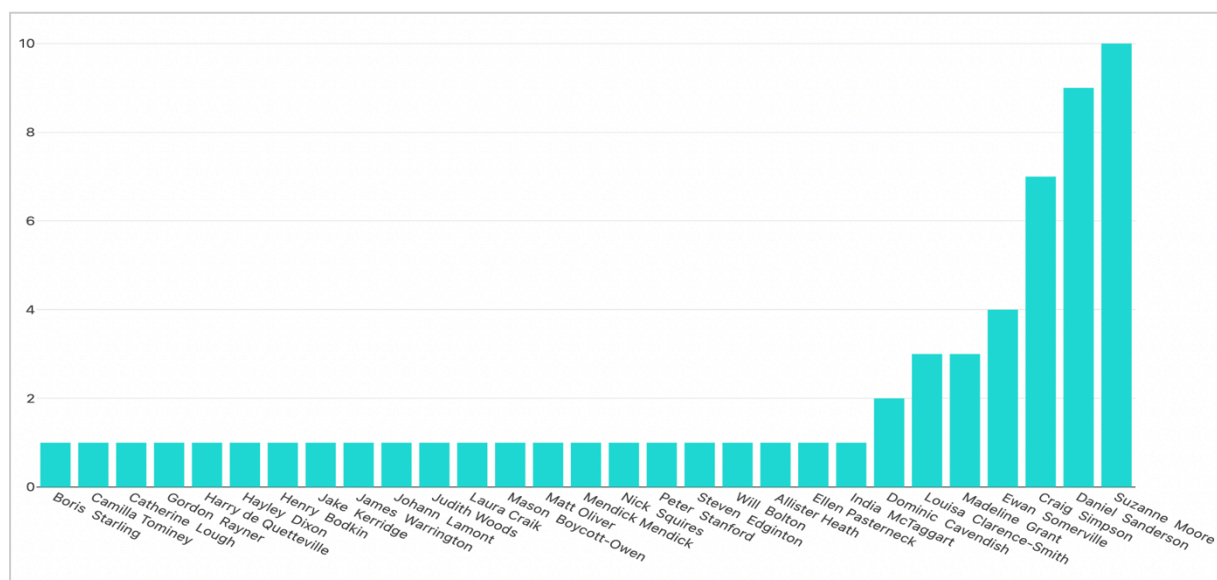


Table UK10: *Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term ‘gender ideology’ at The Telegraph*

The top three Telegraph writers who employed the term are the columnist Suzanne Moore, and the reporters Daniel Sanderson and Craig Simpson. Sanderson is the newspaper’s Scotland correspondent, and thus a significant proportion of his usage of the term has been related to covering GRA-related issues in Scotland. Some examples of how the term is used

by these writers opens out a range of usage. In Suzanne Moore’s opinion pieces, the idea of ‘gender ideology’ is used regularly and capaciously, with a consistent emphasis on the idea that it is something that has been imposed politically, used to attack and marginalise ‘real’ feminists, and thus must be resisted:

“Gender ideology feels less and less tied to the actual lives of trans people and more a badge of radical Leftism. In Spain the same argument is happening: a similar bill allowing anyone aged 16 or over to change gender on their ID card, has just been passed by parliament. It was championed by Podemos, the Left-wing part of the socialist coalition. Again, Spain’s feminists have argued this erodes women’s rights.” (03.01.23 “Women, get ready to fight for our rights this year”)

“The Lib Dems are also fully subscribed to this groovy gender ideology. The likes of Layla Moran spout stuff about not caring about bodies, but seeing into people’s souls. This is the equivalent of those well-meaning liberals who ‘don’t see colour’ and, frankly, insulting.” (30.03.21 “The women’s vote counts - so why don’t women?”)

Daniel Sanderson, in his 14.06.2022 news report “Swap gender as often as you like, Scots told” includes a quote from a self-described ‘gender critical’ organisation criticising Prof. Sharon Cowan’s endorsement of the GRR Bill as “nonsense [...] gender ideology”:

“Susan Smith, a director at the campaign group For Women Scotland, which opposes the changes”, said Prof Cowan’s submission “encapsulated the nonsense and the leaps of logic required to sign up to gender ideology.”

The Guardian writers

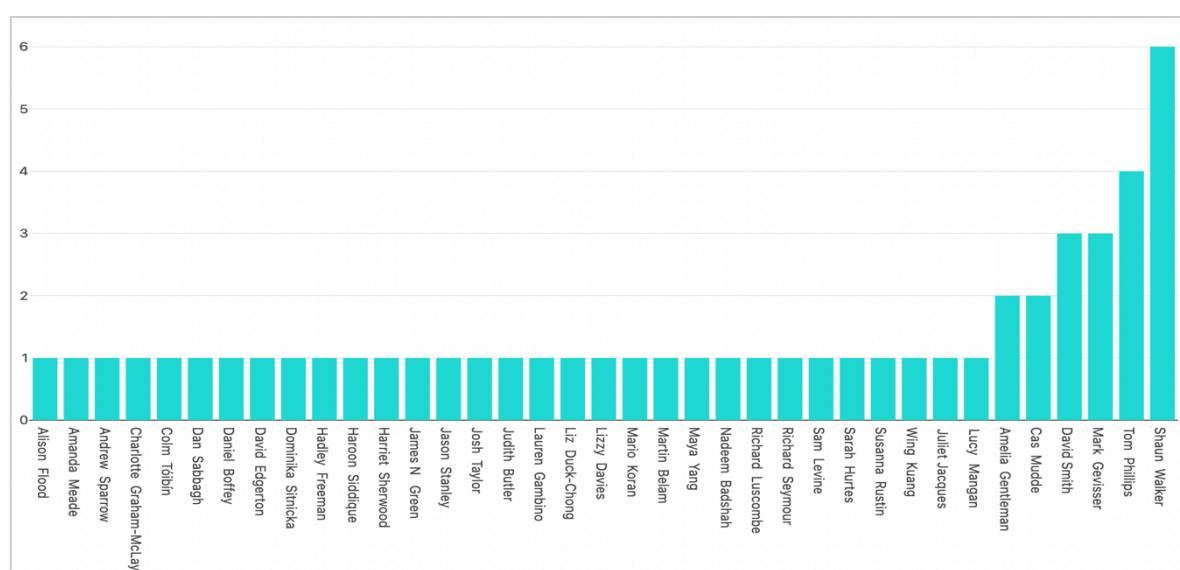


Table UK11: Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term ‘gender ideology’ at The Guardian

The top three Guardian writers that reproduced the term 'gender ideology' are Shaun Walker, Tom Philips and Mark Gevisser.

Shaun Walker is the paper's central and eastern Europe correspondent who has a record of covering political attacks on LGBTQ+ groups in Poland and Hungary, and who draws attention to anti-gender strategies. For example, in covering the 2022 elections in Poland with the Polish journalist Dominika Sitnicka, they highlight how "Poland in 2022 is not so easy to be manipulated with homophobia...Kaczynski consciously did not choose the entire LGBT group, but only transgender people". (24.8.22, "Trans community in Poland braces for political attacks as election looms"). Walker also draws explicit attention to the political utility of the idea of 'gender ideology', here in an article on anti-gender strategy in Hungary:

"It shows that even as Orbán requested special measures for fighting coronavirus, his government had not forgotten its other battles. Trans rights and so-called 'gender ideology' are frequent bugbears of alt-right and conservative politicians, and Orbán's government has previously introduced a measure that in effect banned universities from teaching gender studies." (2.4.2020 "Hungary seeks to end legal recognition of trans people amid Covid-19 crisis")

Likewise, Tom Phillips highlights how 'gender ideology' features as a mobilising reference in reactionary politics, here writing on the 2022 Brazilian elections:

"A yellow and green Brazil flag indicating support for Bolsonaro hung beside the altar of one local place of worship, the International Church of God's Grace, whose leader, RR Soares, is one of several powerful televangelists backing Bolsonaro for his fight against 'gender ideology'." (16.10.2022 "'It will be extremely close': bellwether state holds key to Brazil election")

Mark Gevisser is a regular commentator on anti-gender politics in The Guardian, and in keeping with the usages of the term by the above journalists, he clearly frames it as a political and campaigning discourse mobilised in relation to the backlash against LGBTQ+ rights:

"The 21st-century conversation about sexual orientation and gender identity is a global one, although it has local or regional accents. In Russia and many African states, for some people it has been about the most basic rights to freedom of association and safety, and for others, about protecting children. In countries from the US to Mexico to France, the conversation has been about what a family looks like, and who has the right to make one. In the Catholic countries of Europe and Latin America, the pink line became part of a broader conflict over 'gender ideology', and the accusation that humanity is meddling with a divine plan. In the Middle East, the conversation blossomed as a result of the Arab spring, as a budding queer movement

made tentative first steps toward public visibility - and was described, too, as a negative symptom of this opening up.” (16.6.2020 “How globalisation has transformed the fight for LGBTQ+ rights”)

The Scotsman writers

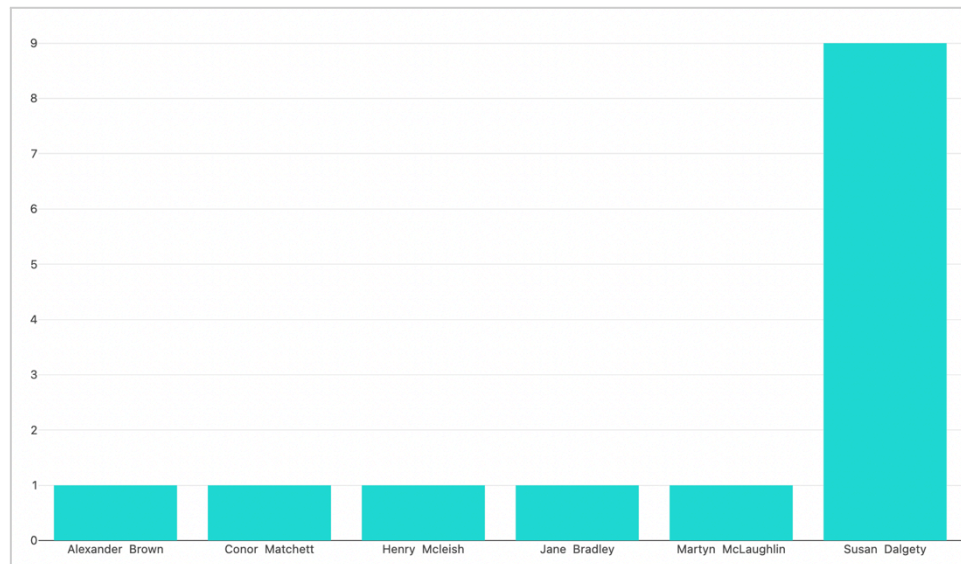


Table UK12: Journalists and Commentators who employed the Term ‘gender ideology’ at *The Scotsman*

As noted, Susan Dalgety is the most frequent contributor in *The Scotsman* sample (64%), exclusively reproducing the term within comment pieces. Dalgety uses the term as self-evident, merely appending intensifying descriptions:

“Victoria Smith asserts that it is not surprising that it is largely women over 45 – those of us who have survived the biological reality of our female bodies, from infertility to unplanned pregnancies, and are now coping with the menopause and old age – who have chosen to speak out against extreme gender ideology.” (03.03.2023 “How young women are complicit in patriarchy turning middle-aged women into ‘hags’ to be ignored and belittled”)

In common with Suzanne Moore, Dalgety consistently frames her opposition to ‘gender ideology’ as a feminist position, and one that is regularly traduced and misrepresented. For example, in a ‘plea’ to Nicola Sturgeon, she recommends that Sturgeon reads

“... *Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality*, by Helen Joyce. She’s an Economist editor by day, but took a year’s sabbatical to write this book, and trust me, it was worth it. It’s a searing analysis of the transgender debate that has dominated much of public discourse in Scotland in recent years, at least among feminists. You know the one I am talking about – those pesky trans wars where women are fighting to retain their hard-won sex-based rights, such as single-sex spaces, and are accused of being hateful bigots for stating the obvious, that sex is binary and immutable. You even got

involved yourself one night in January when you made that YouTube video. Remember, the one where you begged young people not to leave the SNP.” (16.7.2021 “Dear Nicola Sturgeon, please read this plea from a sister feminist about the trans debate”)

Across all three papers, the top two writers who employed the idea ‘gender ideology’ are self-identifying ‘gender critical’ opinion columnists who, within the time period, dedicate a significant portion of their written output to transgender-related issues. The presumptive editorial freedom accorded to these columnists to continually write about the same issues provides a significant platform for the dissemination of the term and suggests editorial acceptance of the normalisation of the term. This prominence, even within the parameters of the sample, contradicts a key contention that ‘gender critical’ perspectives are marginalised and silenced within UK public culture.

(e) Actors quoted or mentioned in articles

On one level, the coding of actors is straightforward – if a person is mentioned in an article, they constitute an ‘actor’. However, given the sample size and nature of news reporting, counting anyone mentioned in an article would bloat the sample size while collapsing the differences in significance between actors mentioned in a news story or column.

Therefore, this analysis draws on a discourse analysis framing of an actor as someone productive and demonstrating discursive agency. (Kolner, 2009, Leipold, S. & Winkel, G. 2013). Practically this means that a person mentioned is coded as an actor if they are (a) quoted in the article or (b) play a clearly proactive role in the event/issue/antagonism featured in the story. Actors mentioned in passing or in passive roles – e.g. “The Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was asked for a comment” – were not coded.

Further, given the tendency of many actors on this specific terrain to politically identify themselves in highly particular terms, a secondary coding was instigated of ‘gender critical’ or ‘gender affirming’ based on the actors own publicly available self-ascriptions. While this coding has been reviewed to ensure its fidelity to these descriptions, it is recognised that any such code cannot account for how actors may have more complex configurations or positions that change over time.

Actors mentioned in The Telegraph

Even with the inclusion criteria used, *The Telegraph* coverage featured a significant range of actors; for clarity, the chart below is limited to those mentioned at least twice.

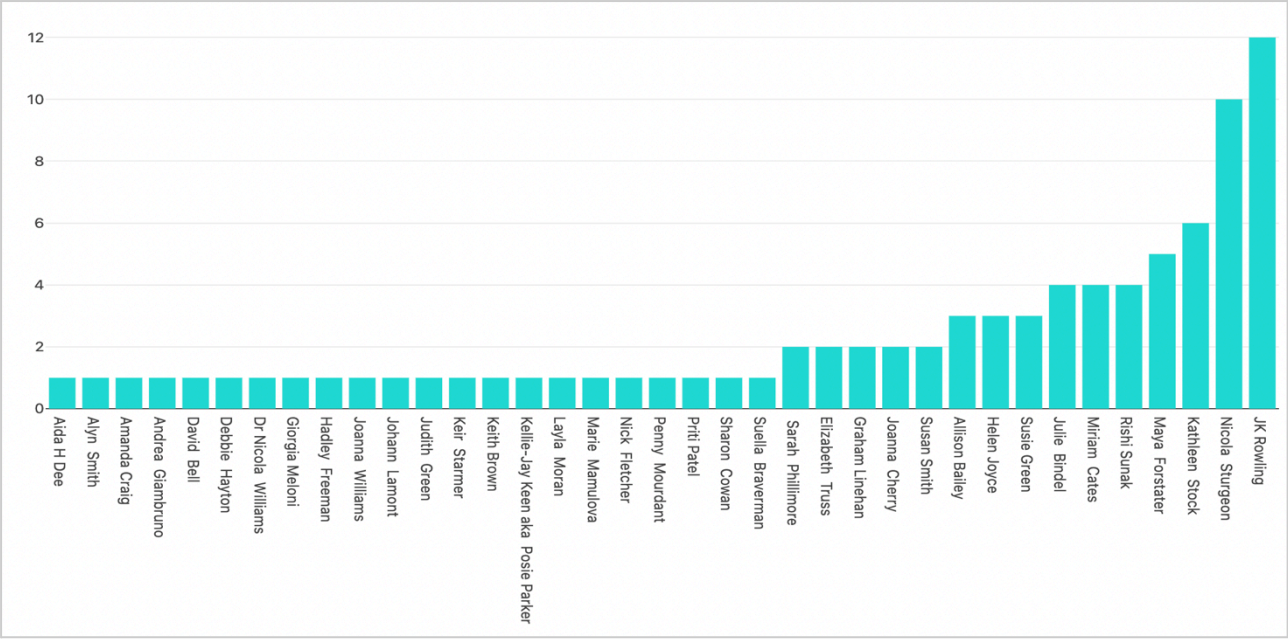


Table UK 13: Actors mentioned at least twice in The Telegraph

Within this range, extracting the top ten most mentioned actors in reporting and comment reveals a concentration of actors that self-identify as ‘gender critical’ and/or are active in ‘gender critical’ movements:

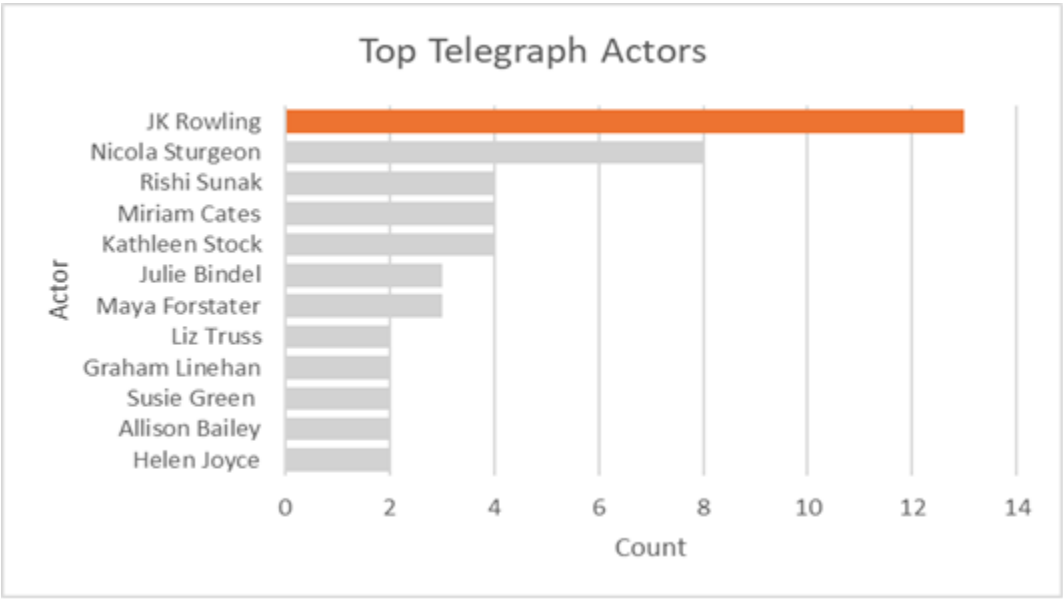


Table UK14: Top Telegraph Actor Mentions

Given this preponderance, we recalculated the total percentage of mentions for self-described ‘gender critical’ actors as a proportion of the totality of coded actor mentions, which produced the following result:

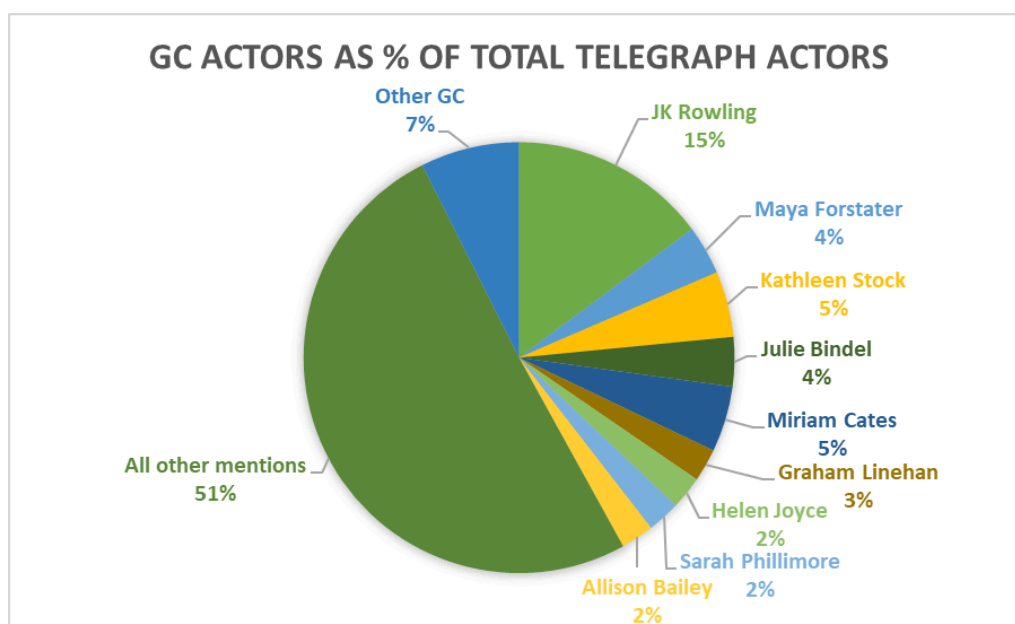


Table UK15: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Telegraph Actor Mentions

This statistic is somewhat stark. Exactly half of all actors mentioned in *The Telegraph* coverage that features the term ‘gender ideology’ are self-described ‘gender critical’ actors who, in the main, are heavily involved in campaigning or public advocacy aimed at opposing transgender recognition.

Actors mentioned in *The Guardian*

While Guardian coverage similarly features a wide range of actors, there is also a pattern of actor mention which clearly corresponds to the generic positioning of ‘gender ideology’ in international news coverage.

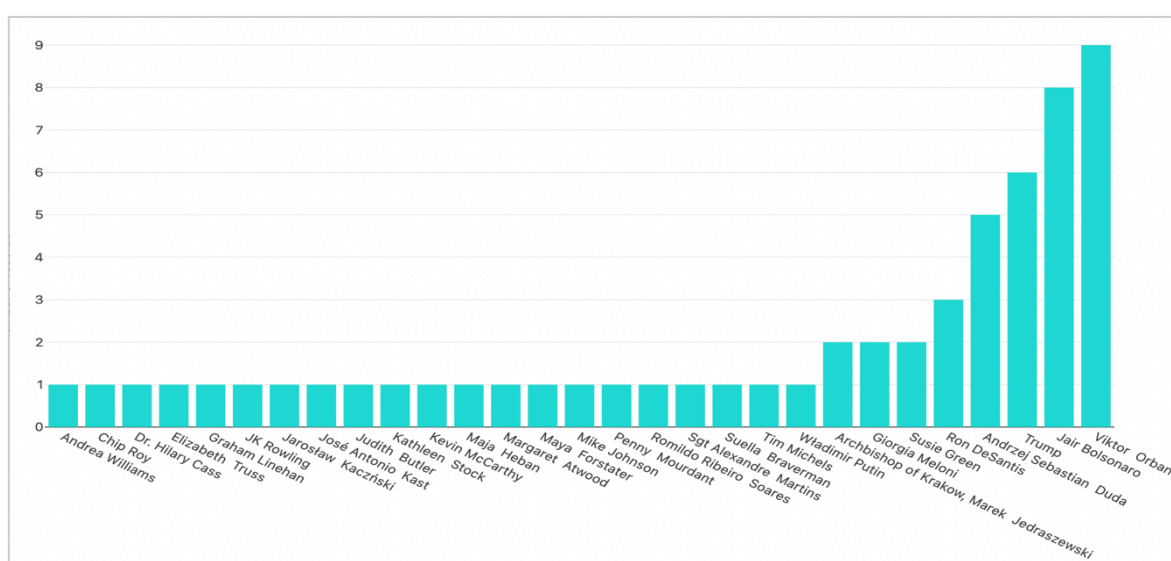


Table UK16: Actor Mentions in *The Guardian*

Focusing in on the share ratio of all actors with at least two mentions, it is clear that *The Guardian* coverage overwhelmingly mentions ‘gender ideology’ in news coverage associated with so-called ‘populist’ leaders who have made it a central tenet of their reactionary politics.

While some of the ‘gender critical’ actors dominant in *The Telegraph* coverage do appear, they are limited and diffused generally throughout the sample.

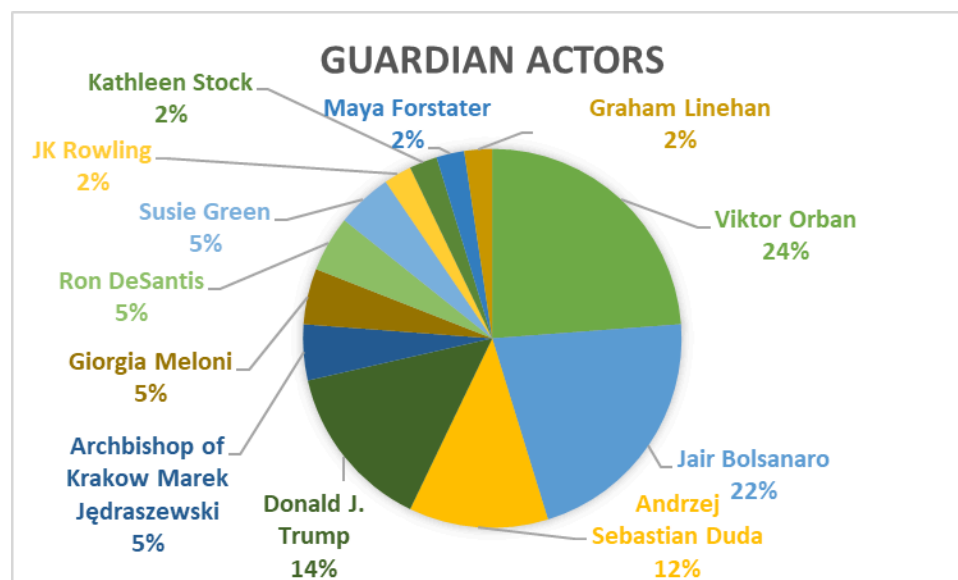


Table UK17: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Guardian Actor Mentions

Actors mentioned in *The Scotsman*

Actor mentions are quite limited in this sample, so much so that they barely require presentation in figurative form.

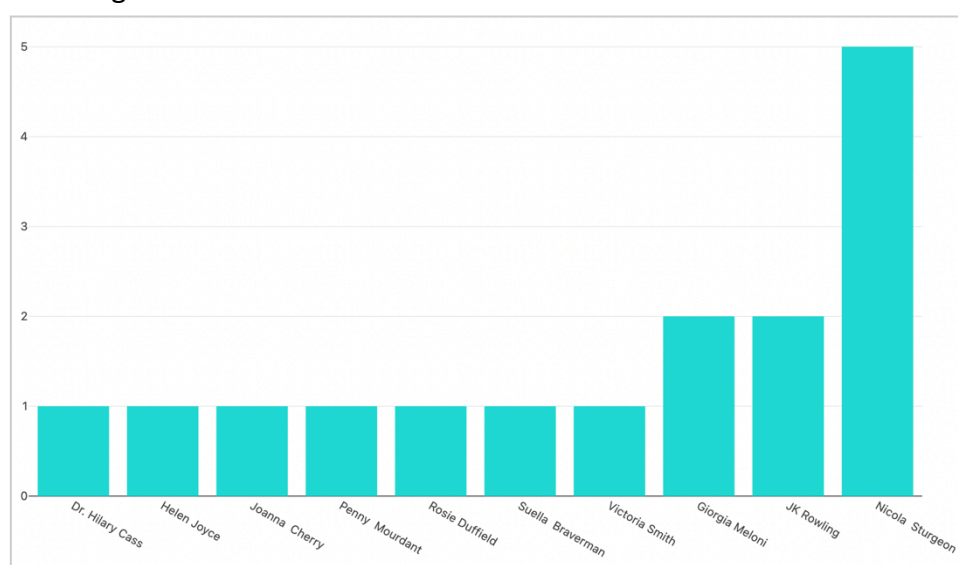


Table UK18: Actor Mentions in *The Scotsman*

Given the topicality of the Scottish parliament’s Gender Recognition Reform Act during this period, the pre-eminence of then-SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon in the actor mentions is hardly surprising, and it is notable that 60% of the top actors are politicians, primarily key MPs driving the debate around the GRR.

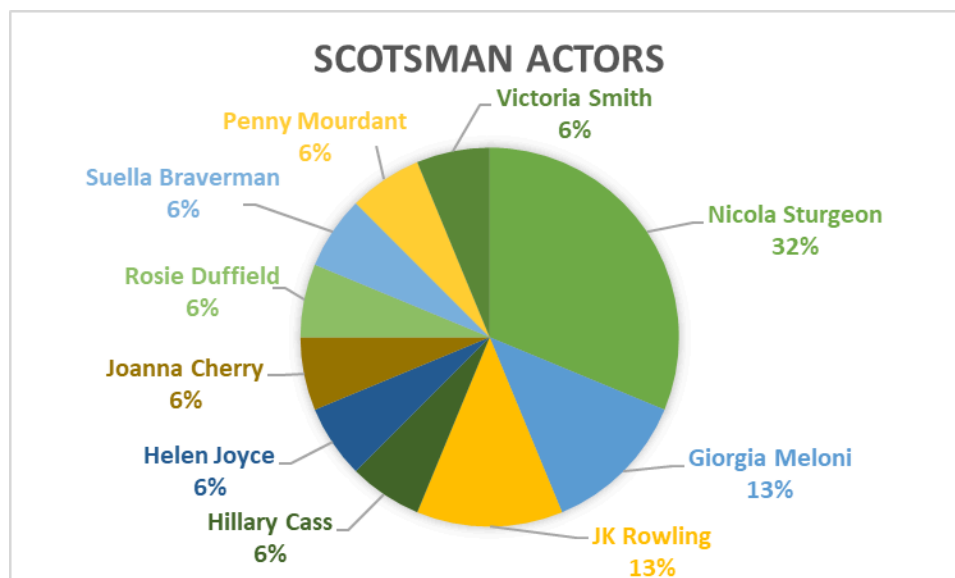


Table UK19: Gender Critical Actor Mentions as % of total Scotsman Actor Mentions

(f) Organisations mentioned



Table UK20: Organisation Mentions in The Guardian

The Guardian range of mentions is quite international and eclectic, featuring political parties (PiS), internationally active radical religious groups (Citizen Go, Christian Concern), gender-affirming (Binary Australia) and ‘gender critical’ (LGB Alliance, the most mentioned).

Organisations mentioned in The Scotsman

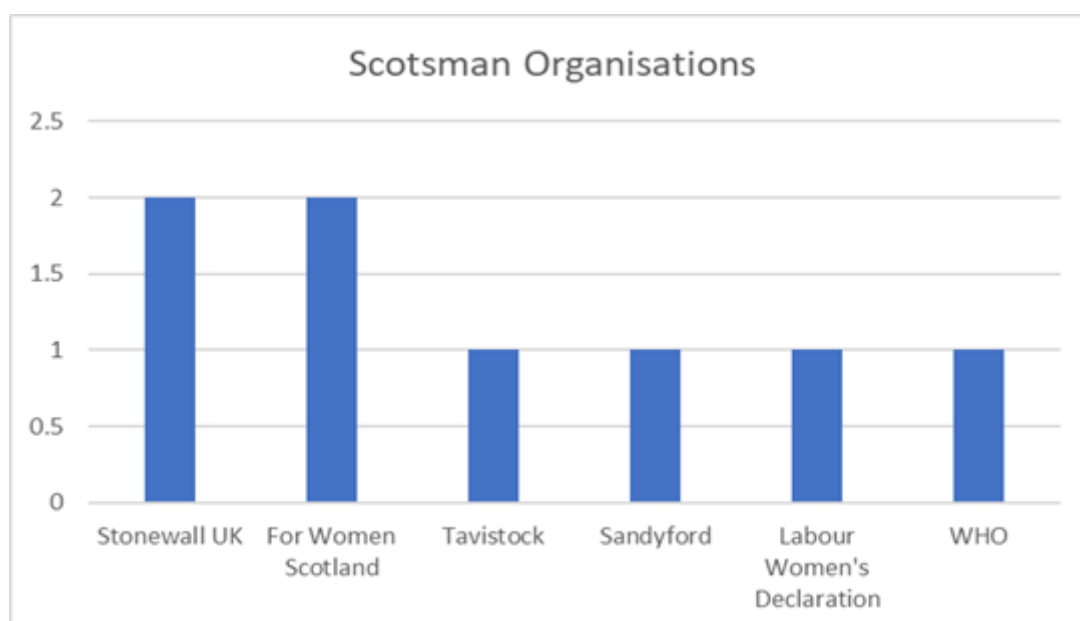


Table UK21: Organisation Mentions in The Scotsman

As with 'actors', the organisations mentioned in The Scotsman are very limited, though in contra-distinction to that category, this category is almost entirely UK-focused.

Organisations mentioned in The Telegraph

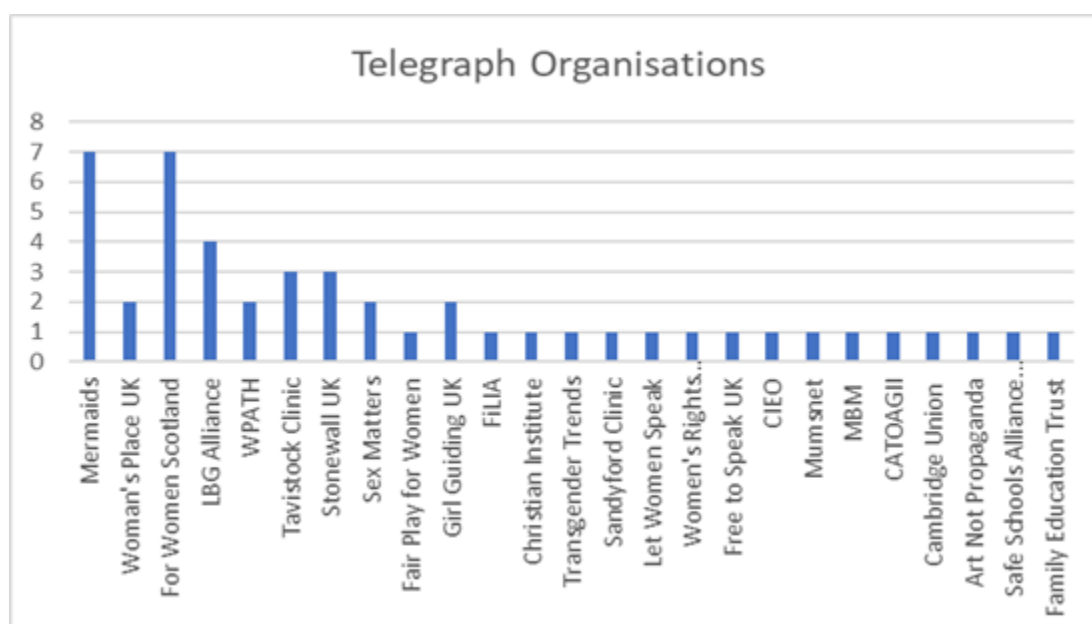


Table UK22: Organisation Mentions in The Telegraph graphed by Occurrence Count

The Telegraph sample features the most organisations, and of note in this range is that nearly all are focused on campaigning or service provision in the UK.

To draw this out further, these organisations were grouped into (a) ‘gender critical’ campaigning organisations (from which Mumsnet was excluded, despite its close association, in public discussion, with these organisations), (b) gender-affirming organisations (c) gender affirming health services and (d) All other organisations. Then, these sectors were examined in terms of the overall ratio of mentions:

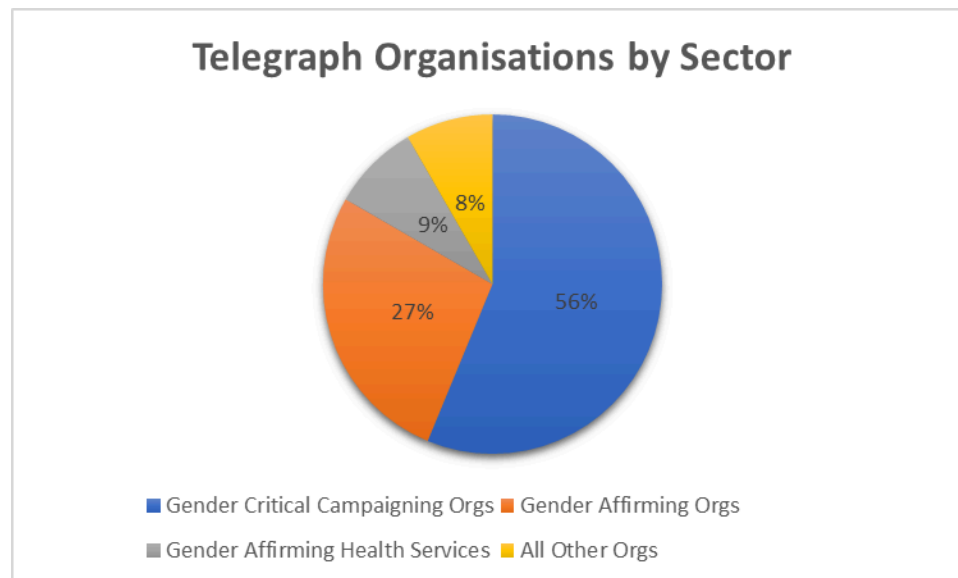


Table UK23: *Telegraph Organisations by Sector*

The dominance of ‘gender critical’ organisations is somewhat predictable given the patterns of coverage to date, but it should be noted that there is also a significant qualitative difference between organisations that are the subject of the story (which is predominantly the case with Stonewall, or Mermaids) and organisations that are the source and quoted in the story (notably in this regard, For Women Scotland).

(g) Presentation of ‘gender ideology’ – quotation marks or not, definition or not

It is already clear that there are significant differences in how the term ‘gender ideology’ is reproduced within media coverage, the status it is accorded, and the actors it is associated with. To examine these differences further, we examined whether the terms are presented in quotation marks, or not. This is based on the convention that presenting the term without quotation marks indicates that it is being presented as a self-evident and stable idea – and may have been accepted into in-house style guides – while presenting it in quotation marks indicates that the contested and unstable status of the idea is being communicated.

84.5% of the time The Telegraph *does not* use quotation marks when reproducing the term ‘gender ideology’. In contrast, the Guardian used quotation marks almost always - apart from once - when publishing the term.

Generally, The Scotsman does not use quotation marks, and this clearly relates to the dominant usage of the term in opinion pieces written by a self-identified 'gender critical' author. The single time that quotation marks were employed was in a piece by the newspaper's Deputy Political Editor, Conor Matchett, which reproduces the quotation marks placed on the term in a statement by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission:

"This comes as the UK is named as a country of concern in a resolution by the Council of Europe, in which the General Rapporteur on LGBT+ rights raised concerns about the growth in 'highly prejudicial anti-gender, gender-critical and anti-trans narratives', which reduce the fight for the equality of LGBTI people to what these movements deliberately mischaracterise as 'gender ideology' or 'LGBTI ideology'. Our communities need and deserve a stronger human rights institution. Stonewall calls on the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to urgently review EHRC and ensure that trans people's rights are effectively supported by this institution." (January 2022)

To follow up on the textual treatment of the key term, coding for *whether some form of definition was included* was carried out. For the purposes of with a minimal understanding: a 'definition' was included for any qualifying sentence clause included prior to or after the use of the term.

The Telegraph: Over 95% of the time it does not offer a definition. An example of the few definitions provided is from one of the 'top writers', Craig Simpson, which offers a definition positing a relation of 'precedence' between gender and sex:

"Some members of the union have raised concerns that under the leadership of Harris, best known for her 1999 novel, *Chocolat*, the union has failed to defend those who are sceptical about gender ideology, a term referring to the view that self-identified gender takes precedence over biological sex." (21.11.2022, "Writers' union figure quits as gender inquiry 'undermined'")

The Guardian: 94% of the time it does not offer a definition of 'gender ideology', however that this is in parity with The Telegraph is misleading, as the vast majority of their coverage places the term in quotation marks and offers qualifiers, e.g. 'so-called'.

Data presentation: Activist right-wing media

As discussed in the introduction, the 'hybrid media system' produces opportunities for new actors to pursue adapted forms of highly political media activity. GB News represents an attempt to import US-style 'outrage programming' to the particular political conjuncture of post-Brexit Britain. As Berry and Soberaij have noted (2014), 'outrage' broadcasting is branded as news, but functions economically and culturally by massively expanding the role

of opinion and discussion programming in the ‘news’ offering. Consequently, for the most part these media actors do not provide original news coverage but comment on and respond to news stories disseminated by other media, providing an ideological re-framing. This reactive dimension is extended in a social media environment, where re-posting and reaction are key drivers of content circulation. This is the central ‘business model’ of the Free Speech Union’s communication activities. Taken together, the commentary/re-framing model and the sharing/reaction imperative provide the basis for examining the circulation of stories, images, and discourse that advance anti-gender politics.

The following section presents the data findings for this section using figures such as bar charts and pie charts where visual presentation of the quantitative findings is relevant.

Trigger issues

Trigger issues in the overall sample

Samples from GB News (Facebook and YouTube) and the Free Speech Union (Facebook) were coded for ‘trigger issues’.

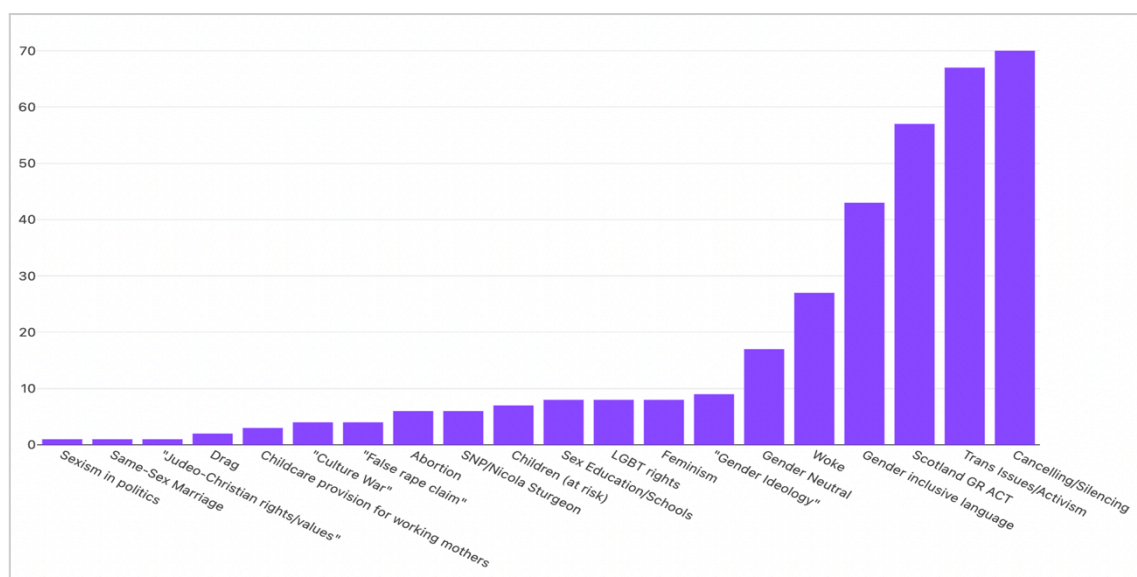


Table UK24: *Trigger Issues coded from GB News (Facebook and YouTube) and the Free Speech Union (Facebook) Story Samples*

In % terms, the top 5 issues are: 1. Cancelling and Silencing - 20% / 2. Trans Issues/Activism - 19.2% / 3. Scotland GRR Act - 16.3% / 4. Gender inclusive language - 12.3% / 5. Wokeness - 8%

The top 3 trigger issues account for 55.5% of the stories sampled. Given the topicality of the Scottish GRR Act, and the stated mission of the Free Speech Union, it is not surprising to see the overall significance of ‘trans issues’ and ‘cancelling’, given that the assumed relationship

between these – that ‘extreme’ trans activism is shutting down reasonable debate on science, sex, women’s rights, etc. – is a recurrent theme in the parliament and comparative newspaper sample.

Trigger issues: GB News (YouTube)

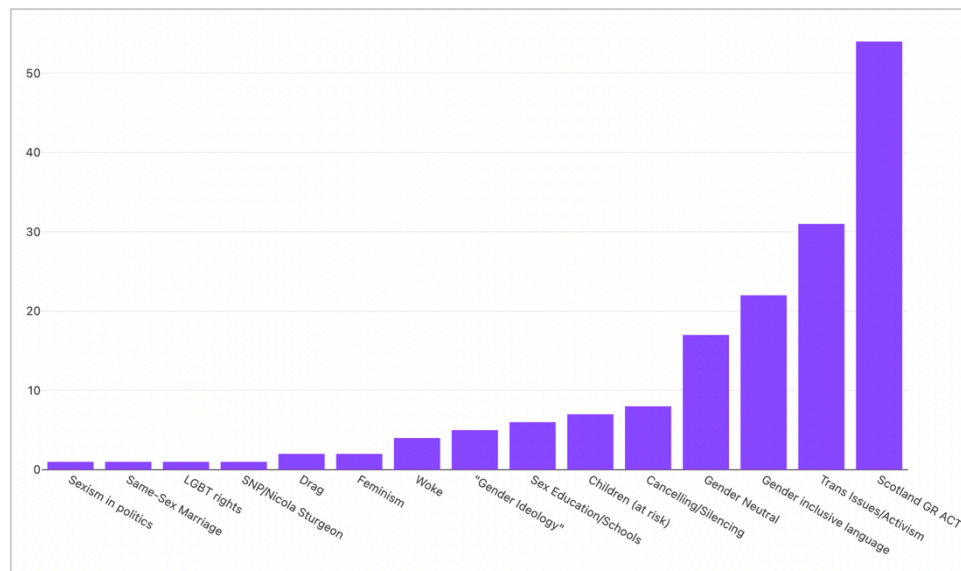


Table UK25: Trigger Issues coded from GB News (YouTube) Story Samples

The top three results – Scotland GRR act - 33.3% / Trans Issues/Activism - 19% / Gender-inclusive language - 13.6% – indicate the extent to which the GRR was not only the subject of significant coverage in this period, but the subject of constant editorial discussion while also acting as a catalyst for broader coverage of ‘trans issues’ and wider ‘gender panic’ issues.

Trigger issues: GB News (Facebook)

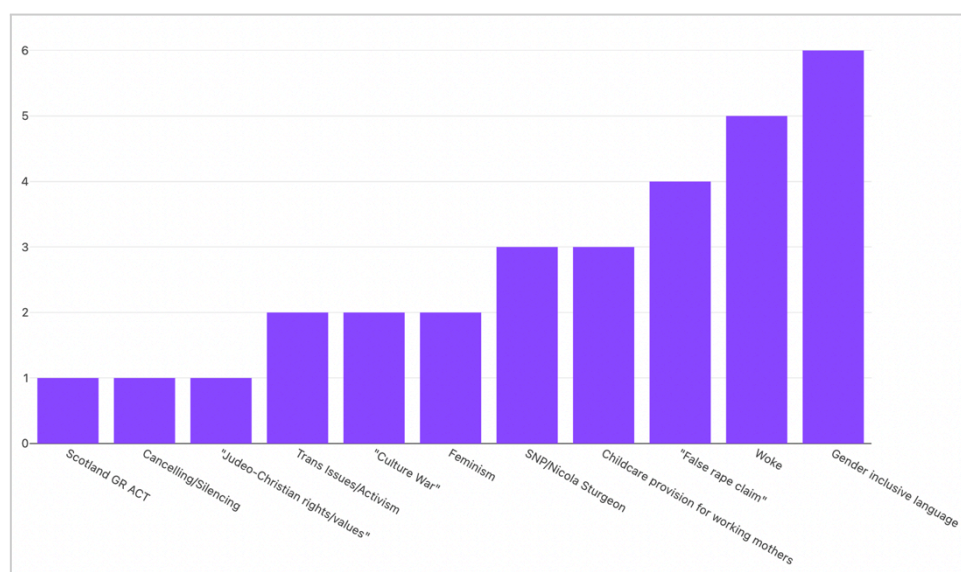


Table UK26: Trigger Issues coded from GB News (Facebook) Story Samples

The dominance of the top 3 issues – Gender inclusive language - 20% / Woke - 16.7% / ‘False rape claim’ - 13.3% – underline the extent to which gender-related ‘excessiveness’ and ‘wokeness’ are framed as everyday problems that require constant coverage. At the same time, this is also a result of platform content management strategies, as there is a high degree of reposting the same story at regular intervals to attempt to achieve ‘timeline saturation’.

Trigger issues: The Free Speech Union (Facebook)

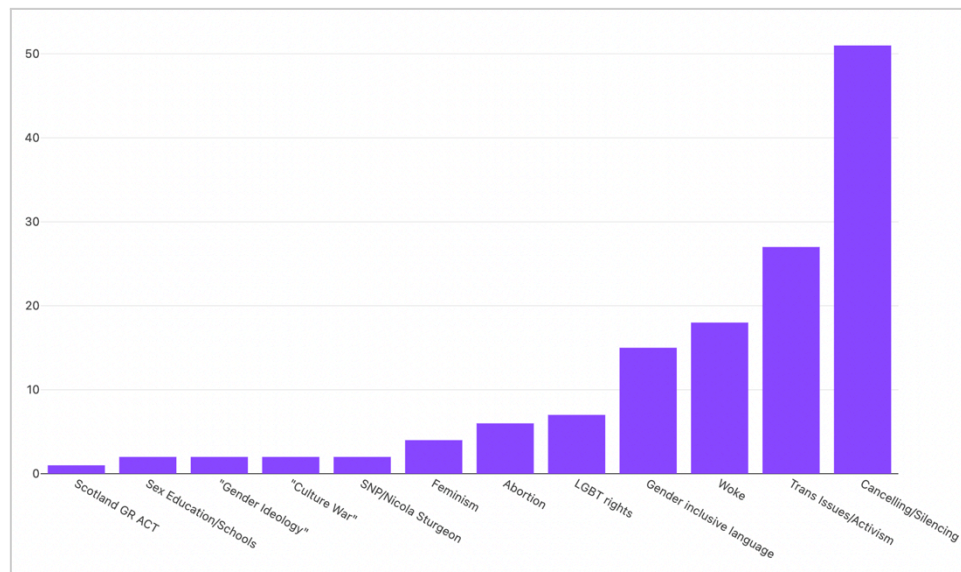


Table UK27: *Trigger Issues coded from Free Speech Union (Facebook) Story Samples*

The top issue categories Cancelling/silencing - 37.2% / Trans issue/activism - 19.7% / Woke - 13% – all relate to supposed incidences of free speech being threatened, both by diverse incidences of ‘wokeness’ and specifically also once again by trans activism. The Free Speech Union Facebook page also contained 10 event notices during the sample period, *and 7 of these were about cancelling/silencing in relation to trans activism, 2 in relation to cancelling/silencing and ‘gender ideology’.*

Other media mentioned, as story source or subject

Given the pronounced ‘activist media’ strategy of drawing on and re-framing media content from other sources (Berry and Soberaij 2014), it was important to examine the extent and range of ‘media mentioned by media’ in the sample.

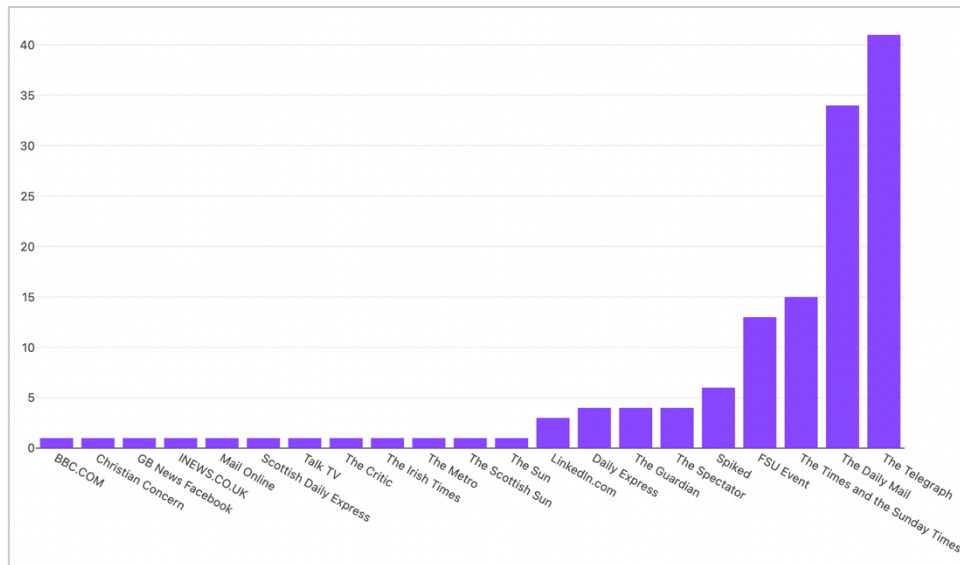


Table UK28: Media Mentions by Media

The Top 5 across the sample as a whole represent an interesting cross-section of established conservative newspapers and newer right wing activist media, indicating the extent to which they are co-integrated in an expansive right-media media milieu:

The Telegraph - 31% / Daily Mail - 21% / The Times and the Sunday Times - 12.7% / Free Speech Union - 11.8% / Spiked! - 5.4%

The Free Speech Union on Facebook

The Free Speech Union is the media actor most involved in media cross-posting. Indeed, given that 95% of the posts in the sample were commentary on re-posts it is clear that its publicity strategy is dependent, to a significant extent, on re-framing available content.

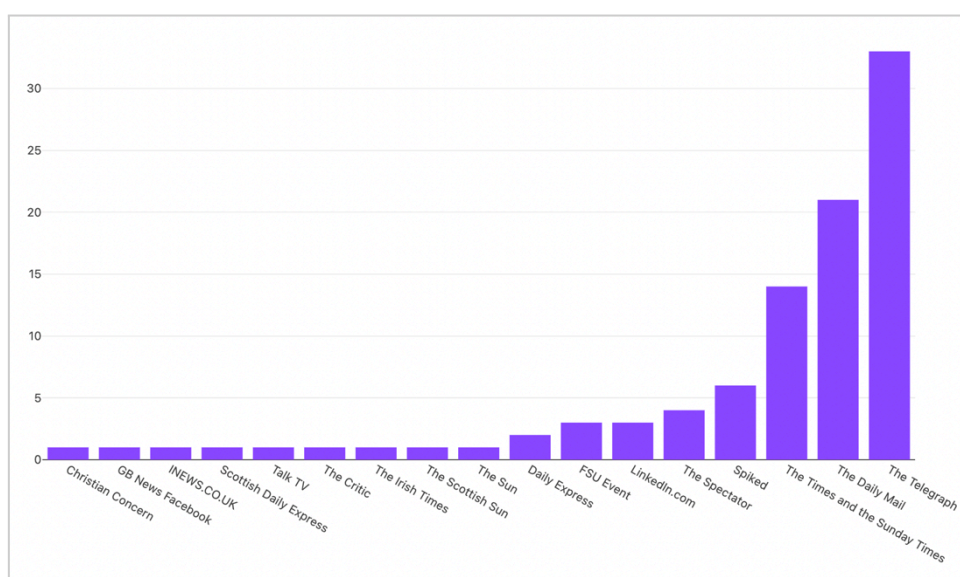


Table UK29: Free Speech Union Reposted Content Sources

The top 5 by %: 1. The Telegraph - 34.7% / 2. The Daily Mail - 22% / 3. The Times, Sunday Times - 14.7% / 4. Spiked! - 6.3% / 5. The Spectator - 4.21%

This list indicates the extent to which the Free Speech Union's approach to content distribution is aimed at integrating it into a very established right-wing media network. In comparison, despite their relative closeness in the media ecology, there is only one reference to GB News in the Free Speech Union sample, indicating that political and thematic affinity does not directly translate into cross-media posting and referencing.

GB News on YouTube

This focus required an additional step to ascertain the extent of media mentions, as the screen grab of video freeze frames from its YouTube feed did not, unlike Facebook posts, provide sufficient information. Consequently, the opening two minutes of each video in the sample (N=129) was viewed to answer the question: *are other media stories used as the basis for the GB News story?*

26 videos out of 129 (20%) involved a media reference in the first 2 minutes that was crucial to framing the discussion to come. There are undoubtedly many more mentions in the videos, however restricting the sample to the first two minutes allows a focus on where those mentions are fully central to the theme of the subsequent programme. To analyse this further the genre of the programme was recorded. 53% of these media mentions occurred in the programme 'Headliners', and 25% on 'Free Speech Nation'. Both programme formats are debate shows which explicitly focus on discussing public controversies or political issues with invited guests. The vast majority of the stories selected (65%) were taken from *The Daily Mail* (38.5%) and *The Telegraph* (27%), further underlining the extent to which 'old' and 'new' right-wing media have come to form an integrated ideological environment where issues are created and boosted by cross-media engagement.

Coda: 'gender ideology' on GB News

In order to develop a point of direct thematic comparison between the comparative newspaper study and the 'activist media' study, a further random sample of GB News videos (N=71) were transcribed and analysed for mentions of the key terms 'gender ideology'.

The term 'ideology' was mentioned 19 times in total in 71 videos, and 18 of these mentions – which occurred in 10/71 videos – were either 'gender ideology' as a direct quotation, or as a clear implication in speech, e.g. when Kate Coleman, the Director of the campaign group Keep Prisons Single Sex said of pro-GRR MPs "I mean, they are totally committed to this ideology". While this is far from as minimal as the instances in parliamentary discourse, it is significantly less prevalent than in The Telegraph coverage and opinion. Of further note is

that 80% of these mentions were by GB News programme presenters, a pattern which suggests that the term is widely shared in editorial terms within the media company, but not significantly taken up as a point of reference by invited guests.

The following example demonstrates the ways in which 'gender ideology' is constantly presented by programme anchors to guests as an idea to take up and re-confirm. This edition of 'Free Speech Nation' broadcast on 1.15.23, featured an interview with Professor Robert Wintermute, a Human Rights academic and trustee of LGB Alliance, and who was discussing a student protest he faced when giving a lecture in McGill University on, to quote from the show intro "...how trans rights can potentially infringe on women's rights." The programme presenter, Andrew Doyle, drew on another key frame of 'activism as the problem' in his opening question to Wintermute, "Now, one of the major issues that people have with these kinds of Trans activists and protestors is that they can be quite intimidating, and quite intolerant?" In a subsequent exchange, Doyle repeatedly prompted his guest to re-present his argument in relation to the term 'gender ideology.'

Andrew Doyle: "How is it the case that gender identity ideology poses any kind of threat to gay rights?"

Robert Wintermute: "I mean, gay rights was secured on the basis of the record that some people are attracted to members of their own sex".

Andrew Doyle: "But gender identity ideology kind of seeks to override that and sort of suggests that actually it's not about same sex attraction. It's about same gendered attraction, which isn't something that most people recognize because most people don't have a gender identity. Would you say?"

UK Controversy Mapping

Introduction

The UK parliament and media data clearly point to the emergence of a concerted and largely hostile focus on transgender issues over the last few years. Extensive media coverage has sought to construct a 'trans debate' characterised by dramatic increases in coverage, and increasingly sensationalist and campaigning journalism. This deliberately polarising saturation coverage was significantly amplified in 2022-23, when the Scottish Parliament's attempt to pass the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill (henceforth GRR) was blocked by the parliament in Westminster. Given the significance of this move for the already fractious 'trans debate', this event was selected for a third phase of case study research, 'controversy mapping'.

Controversy Mapping (CM) is an approach adapted from recent methodological innovations in Science & Technology Studies (STS), which sets out to map how positions, opinions and actions unfurl in, through and beyond antagonistic moments or events. The approach is flexible, offering a suite of digital tools and open-source platforms that allow opinions and media content to be collated and analysed, and the relations of actors to be mapped. This latter aspect is crucial to understanding tactics and strategies, and for this reason the CM approach is preferable to the methodological framework of 'critical media events', which, in fully focusing on media dynamics, risks producing a media-centric view of socio-political conflicts (see Hepp and Couldry 2010). Working with the Controversy Mapping approach involves moving from media coverage towards the involvement and practices of a wider spectrum of actors.

The Controversy Mapping began by gathering a wide sample of opinion pieces in newspapers and online news sites to map an initial overview of the issues held to have produced and driven the controversy. In the second stage 'issue mapping' was conducted through a number of steps, building an 'issue network' (Venturini and Munk: 2021) of all the organisations mentioned in 'transgender' coverage in several newspapers for the period of the controversy concerning the GRR.

Background to the case study controversy

In late December 2022, the Scottish Parliament passed the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill (GRR), a bill reforming gender recognition laws. A key dimension of this reform was the introduction of a self-id system for trans people. The introduction of the bill followed a lengthy process of public debate, consultation and political conflict. In mid-January 2023, the Conservative government in Westminster announced its intention to block the passage of the bill, citing potential contradictions with UK Equality legislation.

Press coverage and political opposition also noted the value of this move in terms of the UK's so-called 'culture wars' and as a distraction from the wider political pressure on a fractious government. Thus, a multivalent controversy was generated, involving arguments about questions of national sovereignty, the legitimacy of self-id, and the wider slate of issues that have become wrapped up in the so-called 'trans debate'.

Gender Recognition Reform Bill Background

The legal premise for the Gender Recognition Reform Bill (GRR) began with a European Court of Human Rights case in 2002. The court ruled in the *Goodwin v United Kingdom* case that the inability for a trans person to change their sex on their birth certificate was a breach of their human rights.¹ The UK's judicial obligation to rectify this breach was fulfilled by passing the Gender Recognition Act or GRA (2004). Under the GRA, a trans person could apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) after fulfilling a medicalised diagnosis of their gender status. This means that the applicant must 1) provide proof of a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a phenomenon that is not experienced by all trans people; 2) have lived in their "acquired gender" for two years; and 3) make a statutory declaration that they will live their "acquired gender" until death. The GRA (2004) also prohibits trans people under the age of 18 from obtaining a GRC.

This process has been critiqued as over-medicalised and pathologising (as it violates the principle of first-person authority over gender) by both trans advocacy groups and international human rights organisations. For example, a 2014 Amnesty International report states that "Absolute denial of legal gender recognition to individuals under a given age is not consistent with existing international standards regarding the rights of children".⁴⁸ In addition, the European Commission criticised the Act for prescribing "intrusive medical requirements" that lag behind international human rights standards.² The SNP intervened in the reform process when, in 2018 a consultation in England and Wales found that a majority of the over 100,000 respondents were in favour of cutting most of the requirements for a GRC but despite this, in 2020, the government in Westminster announced that it would not legislate to reduce the requirements.^[4] The SNP carried out two separate consultations, both of which resulted in majority in favour of reforming the Gender Recognition Bill. The following section details the timeline of actions set in motion by Scottish political party, the SNP, subsequent to their ascent to power in 2016.

Gender Recognition Reform Bill Timeline

The Scottish government proposed amendments to the bill that would lower the age that people can change their legal gender from 18 to 16; remove the requirement of a medical diagnosis of 'gender dysphoria', and reduce the waiting time from two years to six months

⁴⁸ Amnesty International. Europe: The state decides who I am: Lack of legal gender recognition for transgender people in Europe (2014) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/001/2014/en/>

for living in an acquired gender. The SNP consulted on reforming the GRA (2004) between November 2017 and March 2018 and found a majority of the 15,500 respondents in favour of the bill.³ The second consultation on a draft bill took place between November 2019 and March 2020, again evidencing majority support.⁴ The introduction of the bill was delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19 and so the SNP had to win the 2021 election in order to proceed as planned. They formed a majority coalition with the Scottish Greens and commenced the legislative process of the GRR in 2022.

The bill was introduced on 2 March 2022, by the SNP MP Shona Robison, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government. Subsequently, the bill was opened for mandatory public consultation – its third such process – by the Scottish Parliament's Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (EHRCJ). This committee was designated as the lead committee and ran thirteen evidence sessions. On the 6th October 2022, they released its Stage 1 report⁵, recommending that the general principles be approved.⁶ The committee majority believed the statutory declaration process would be sufficiently robust; the minority said the removal of the requirement for gender dysphoria and the requirement for medical evidence could potentially mean the process is open to abuse from bad faith actors, particularly predatory men. Committee convener Joe FitzPatrick MSP commented:

"The committee would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute and engage with our stage 1 scrutiny of this bill. We heard a wide range of views, from individuals and organisations, through extensive written and oral evidence. [...] Whilst not all the committee agreed, for the majority of our members it is clear that now is the time for reform of the gender recognition process and we support the general principles within the bill. [...] We believe these important reforms will improve the lives and experiences of trans people."⁷

On October 27, the Stage 1 vote was held on the bill in the Scottish Parliament, and passed with 88 for, 33 against, and 4 abstentions. At this stage the bill achieved significant cross-party support – with the exception of the Scottish Conservatives – while also triggering what *The Guardian* referred to as the SNP's "largest ever backbench revolt". Their report of 27 October noted the significance of extra-parliamentary activism and media coverage on the vote formation:

"This significant rebellion is reflective of the febrile public discourse that has taken hold around the bill, which is contested by some campaign groups, who argue it will fundamentally alter who can access women-only services and believe they have not been adequately consulted. In the chamber on Thursday afternoon, supportive MSPs urged colleagues to seek out the testimony of transgender people and suggested that Scottish government delays had allowed a vacuum to develop allowing people 'to interpret the bill as something it is not'" (Brooks and Carrell 2022).

The EHRCJ Committee met on November 15 where a number of amendments were proposed to the bill at Stage 2,^{[28][29]} the majority of which were not passed.^[30] The Finance and Public Administration Committee published an updated financial memorandum on 7 December 2022 on the bill and noted the updates at its meeting on 13 December 2022. On 19 December 2022, the day before the Stage 3 debate began, the EHRCJ Committee held an evidence session on the bill.⁸ They heard from two United Nations representatives, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and Reem Alsalem, UN Special rapporteur on violence against women. In a widely publicised intervention, Alsalem said the GRR "would potentially open the door for violent males who identify as men to abuse the process of acquiring a gender certificate and the rights that are associated with it", a view that was disputed by Madrigal-Borloz, who said it was a "significant step forward" which would bring Scotland in line with international human right standards.⁹

On 22nd December 2022 the Scottish parliament passed the GRR¹⁰ by a majority of 86 to 39, with 0 abstentions and 4 members not voting. The announcement of the result was accompanied by cheers from supporters in the chamber, and shouts of "shame on you" from protesters in the public gallery.¹¹ The possibility of a legal response by the ruling Conservative Party in Westminster was widely mooted by early January. For example, on January 12th the closely affiliated think tank Policy Exchange published *The Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill: The Case for a Section 35 Order*.¹² On January 17, much of the legal rationale within this policy document was reiterated by Alister Jack, the Secretary of State for Scotland, when he made an order under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 preventing the bill from proceeding to final approval through 'royal assent':

"Today I will make an order under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 preventing the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill from proceeding to Royal Assent. This order will mean that the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament will not submit the Bill for Royal Assent. This Government believe, however, that transgender people deserve our respect, our support and our understanding."¹³

Westminster's decision to block the bill made international headlines and was immediately linked to the status of Scottish devolution, LGBTIQ+ rights and the political calculus of 'culture war'. On 17 January 2023 Stephen Flynn, the SNP leader at Westminster, requested and was granted an emergency debate on the use of the Section 35 order. The debate was on the question "This House has considered the Government's decision to use section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 with regard to the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill."¹⁴ The debate lasted for two hours, and the house voted 318 to 71 in favour of the UK government position that the house had considered the matter. On 24 January 2023, Flynn tabled an 'early day motion' against the section 35 Order which was worded as follows: "That a humble address be addressed to His Majesty praying that The Gender Recognition Reform

(Scotland) Bill (Prohibition on Submission for Royal Assent) Order 2023 of 17 January 2023, a copy of which is this House was presented on January 17, 2023, be annulled.”¹⁵

Several opinion polls were also published in this period. In a January 2022 poll by BBC Savanta ComRes, 57% of the 2,038 Scots they surveyed supported making it easier to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate; a majority (53%) opposed reducing the age for this from 18 to 16. The same poll found a close split – that over 40% of people supported de-medicalisation of self-identification, compared to 37% against it. Crucially, there is a disparity between the public opinion and level of engagement with issues pertaining to trans lives and the clarity and extent to which it is reported online and in mainstream media. Professor Sir John Curtice, who has studied the results of the poll for the BBC, said:

“On many of the questions in this poll we have got between a fifth and a third of people saying they are frankly not sure, don't know, neither agree nor disagree with either option. In contrast to the online debate, which is undoubtedly deeply polarised, the general public are not particularly sure and only about a third are following the issue closely.”

A December 2022 YouGov poll commissioned by The Times found that two thirds of Scottish voters they surveyed opposed key aspects of the bill, particularly those related to the lowering of the minimum age for applying for a GRC.¹⁷ An Ipsos poll directly examined the legal justification for the block:⁷ “Question: The UK government argues the Gender Recognition Bill will affect equalities laws. Do you think the UK government should or should not have blocked the Gender Recognition Bill?” 37% responded ‘definitely should have’, with 20% arguing ‘definitely should not have’, with ‘probably should have / have not’ equally distributed.⁴⁹

In conclusion, this section has summarised the key decision and mobilisation moments in the controversy. The next section outlines our approach to building the controversy mapping.

Data presentation

What's the controversy about? Opinion piece analysis

Controversy Mapping research often initiates the mapping of a controversy by examining how a variety of viewpoints on the nature of a controversy are expressed in media debate. Media debate is not regarded as an approximation of ‘public opinion’, but rather as a key

⁴⁹ See Sophie Perry's ‘What happened in Scotland's gender recognition reform law court battle with UK government’ in *Pink News* (21.09.2023) for relevant commentary piece: <https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/09/21/scotland-gender-recognition-reform-law-court-battle-uk-government/> accessed November 2023.

factor in the shaping of the controversy itself. Editorials and opinion pieces are important in this regard, in that they often seek to frame the nature of a problem analytically, politically and ideologically, while also reflecting particular opinions back to their readers in ways they think readers will regard as in tune with their own perspectives and values. The nature of the UK government intervention ensured that the controversy was, from its inception, polarised but also multivalent, and explanations as to what was ‘really at stake’ diverged sharply. For this reason, the body of opinion writing on *what the controversy is centrally about, and what caused it* provides a valuable first step in this CM.

The codes developed from this question were:

1. GRR incompatibility with the UK Equality Act (incompatibility)
2. Dismissal of Devolution / Scottish democracy (dismissal)
3. Problem of erasing ‘sex-based rights’ (erasure)
4. Desire to signal Scottish progressiveness (signalling)
5. Using trans people to further the ‘culture wars’ (culture wars)
6. Presumed public disquiet at the consequences of self-id (presumed disquiet)
7. Using trans people for political gain (political gain).

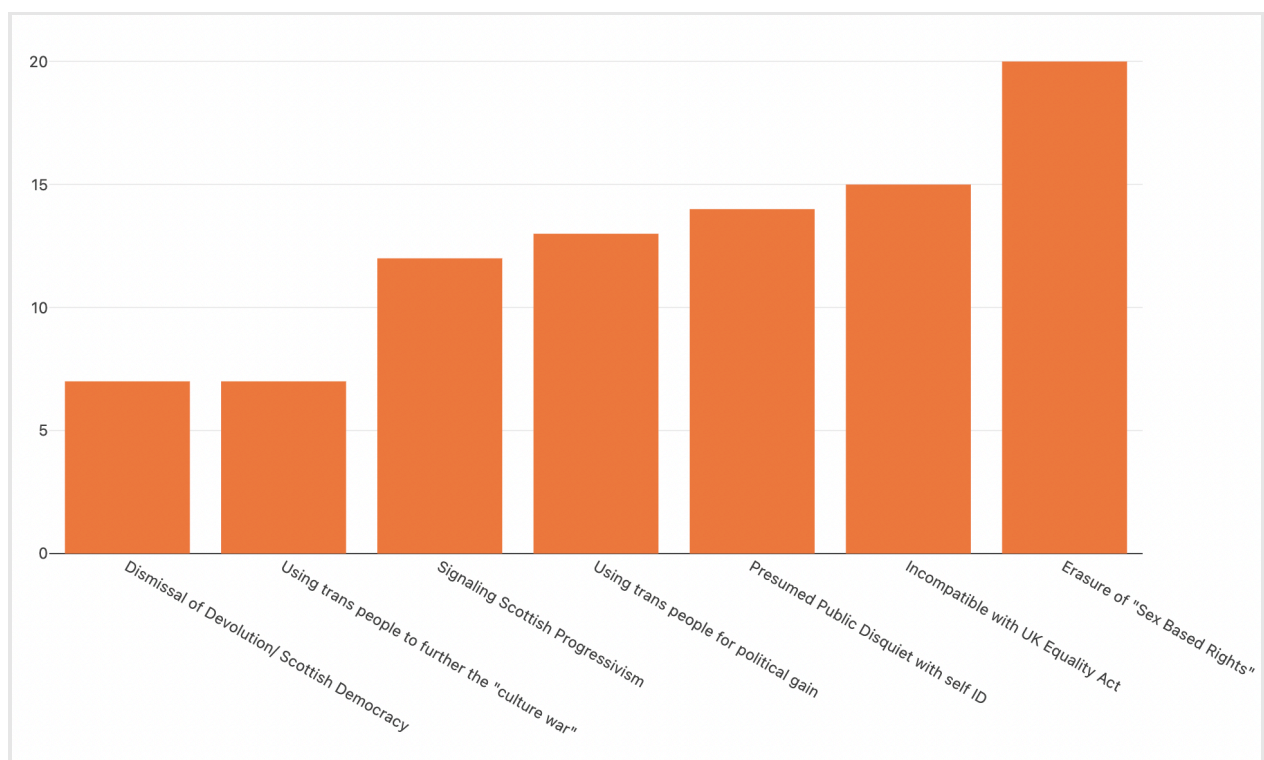


Table UK30: Distribution of Codes in the overall Sample, sorted by increasing Occurrence

In percentage terms, the distribution is: Erasure (23%), Incompatibility (17%), Presumed disquiet (16%), Political gain (15%), Signalling (14%), Dismissal (8%), Culture war (8%).

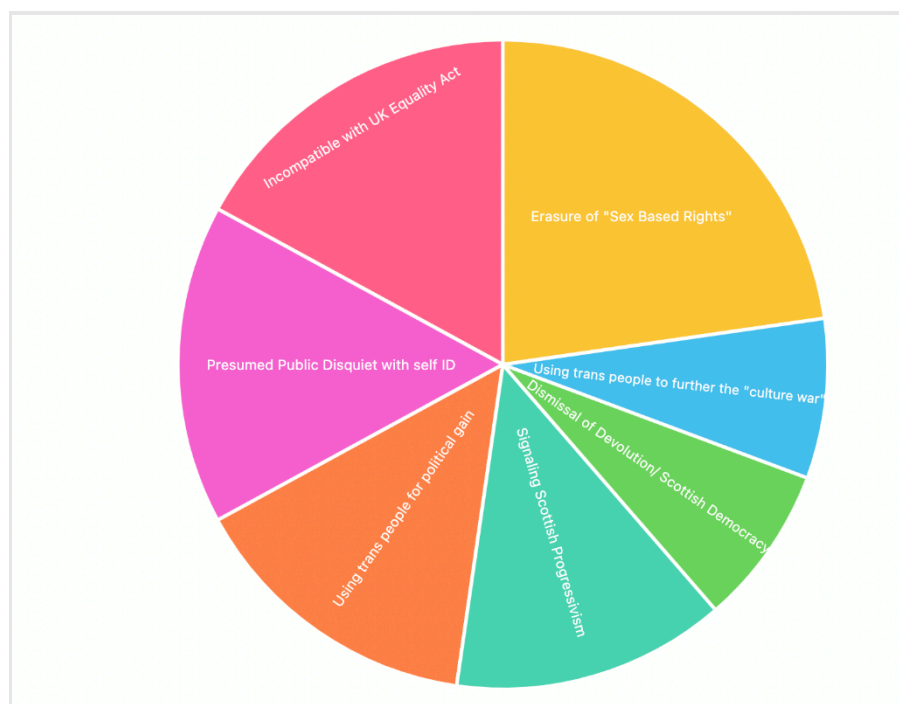


Table UK31: Percentage of Codes in the overall Sample

Although the sample is largely random, it is striking that the top 3 categories are rationales that hold the passing of the GRR – as opposed to the Conservative blocking of the legislation – as primarily the cause of the controversy. Further, while the government’s legal argument as to the bill’s incompatibility with existing equality legislation is significantly reproduced, the categories of ‘erasure’ and ‘presumed disquiet’ are substantively concerned with trans rights themselves, framed as a threat to the status of ‘sex-based rights’ in law and society, and as open to forms of abuse by predatory men.

The prominence of the category ‘erasure of sex-based rights’ corresponds with the centrality of this contention in parliamentary anti-gender discourse, and in right-wing media coverage. Given that the overall distribution of rationales is shaped to an important extent by the aggregation of political and ideological orientations in the random sample, the titles were grouped by general political orientation for closer analysis.

The largest of the three groups (article N=24) is ‘*mainstream centre-left and centre-right media*’, which comprises of The Guardian (5 including 1 Observer), The Independent (1), The Herald (5), The Scotsman (6), LBC (1), Daily Record (1), Jewish News (1), Inews (2), Aljazeera (1) and politics.co.uk (1) :

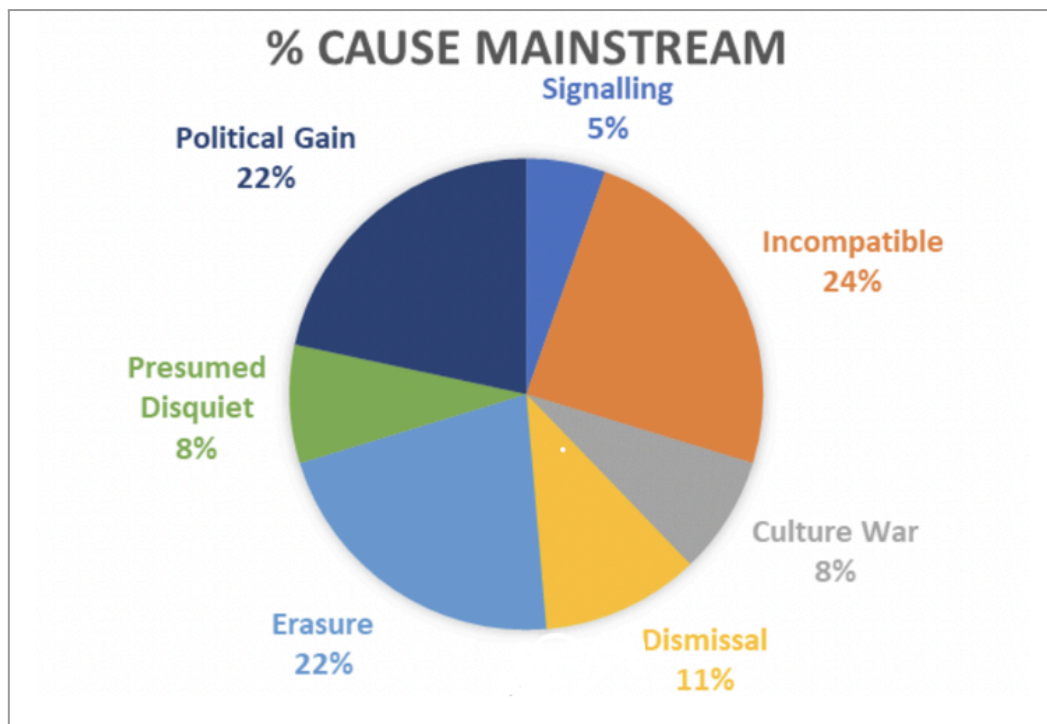


Table UK32: 'Mainstream centre-left and centre-right Media' Story Samples grouped by Cause

The elaboration of legal reasons and political calculations (incompatible, political gain) accounts for nearly half of the reasons offered in this sample, providing overall a cautious balance between accepting the Conservative's legal rationale while also openly doubting their political motivations. While the importance of political calculus is foregrounded, the contention that the GRR could erase sex-based rights for women and girls is also pronounced, indicating the extent to which the idea that trans rights and women's rights are inevitably in conflict is accepted in centrist public discourse. However, this point is not accompanied by a significant articulation of 'presumed public disquiet', indicating that most commentators who advance this argument do so on their own terms, without appeal to the external legitimacy of 'public opinion'.

The *left and progressive media* (article N=9) category encompasses The Morning Star (2), Pink News (2), Workers' Liberty (1), RS21 (1), Novara (2), and Canary Workers' Coop (1).

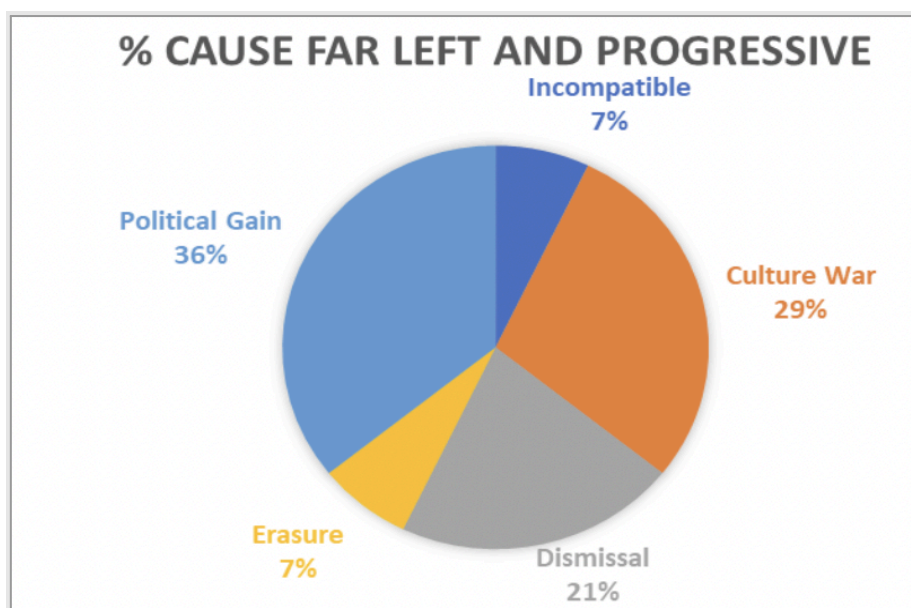


Table UK33: 'Left and progressive media' Story Samples grouped by Cause

In this sub-sample of left and progressive media, the preponderance of reasons given for the controversy point critically to the political calculations of the Conservative Party (political gain). This is closely allied to the specific allegation that they are using 'trans issues' to advance a distracting and sensationalist 'culture war'. The contention that the blocking of the bill is a dismissal of Scottish democracy is also pronounced, far more so than the proposition of legal incompatibility. Consequently, the most popular reason for 'centre-right and centre-left' media is the least significant one for far-left and progressive actors. The limited attention paid to 'erasure' is indicative of the extent to which trans rights are regarded as not in conflict with women's rights in this sector.

The 'right-wing media' sub-sample (article N=17) included The Mail Online (9), Spiked (2), The Scottish Daily Express (1), Premier Christianity (1), and Unherd (4).

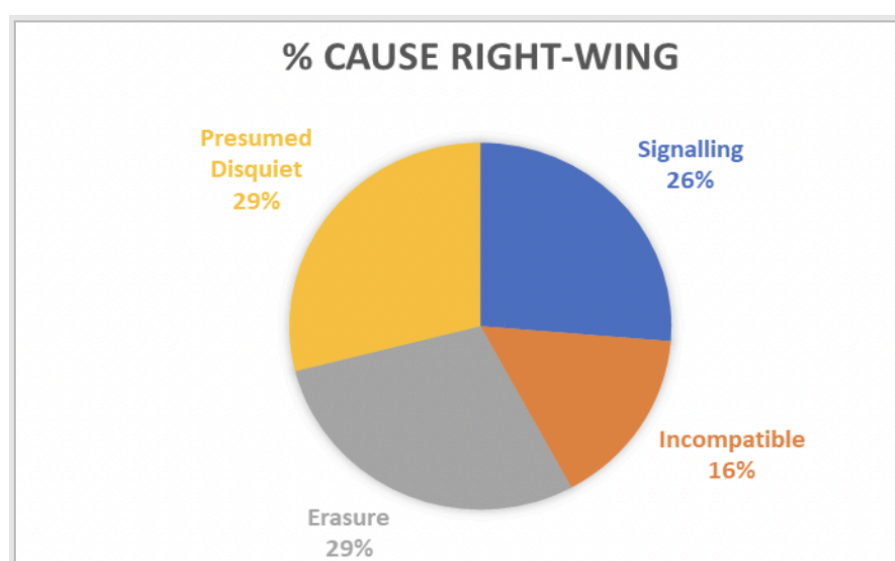


Table UK34: 'Left and progressive media' Story Samples grouped by Cause

The most popular controversy rationale advanced in the category is one that barely features in the other two, 'presumed public disquiet at the consequences of self-id'. While some of these articles draw on opinion polls – which produced a messy diversity of results in this period that do not point to any clear overall picture – most assert the reality of public disquiet, either inferring from outrage about specific cases (the prison placement of 'Isla Bryson', for example) or pointing to activist groups as an indicator of public opinion. Similarly, the category of 'signalling Scottish progressiveness' is lightly registered in the first media category, and absent in the second, whereas here it accounts for more than a quarter of reasons offered. This indicates the extent to which the right-wing press explains the genesis of the controversy in the SNP and Nicola Sturgeon's 'woke' politics and orientation to 'gender ideology'.

It is interesting to note the extent of the distribution of rationales across these media sectors: the centrist media category reproduces 7/7, the left/progressive category 5/7, and right-wing media 4/7.

Actor networks in news coverage

A key aim of this research is to analyse core actors and organisations involved in propagating anti-gender tactics and strategies. To fulfil this, the corpus of 'transgender' mentions in major newspapers within the controversy mapping time frame were mined for all references to organisations in the media coverage. The actors were logged and quantified in an Airtable database, and then mapped using the open source digital tools Issue Crawler, and Gephi. Issue Crawler is a 'network location and visualisation' software that crawls the web for links between a given set of webpages, and then visualises the outlinks from the specified sites in what are called 'cluster maps'. Gephi provides a more detailed network mapping, statistically representing the density of these nodes as online – colour-coded – communities.

The Telegraph 'transgender' network mapping

The actors featured in the 222 'transgender' article were identified, and 42 were entered into the database:

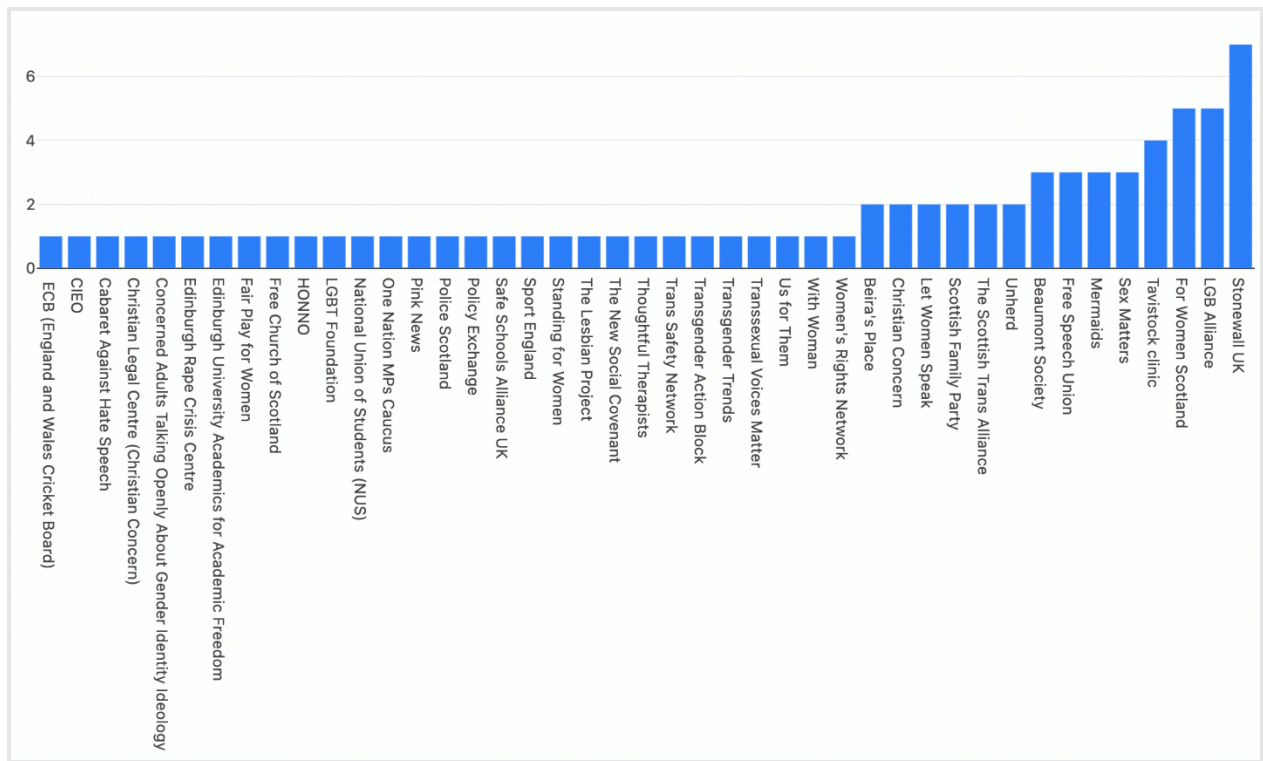


Table UK35: Counts of Organisation Mentions in 'transgender' articles in The Telegraph

Based on counts of mentions, the top ten organisations mentioned in The Telegraph are: Stonewall UK; LGB Alliance; For Women Scotland; Tavistock Clinic; Sex Matters; Mermaids; Free Speech Union; Beaumont Society; Unherd; and The Scottish Trans Alliance. The type of actors spans advocacy organisations, activist groups, gender-affirming clinics and right-wing media outlets. While they arrayed across positions in the controversy, six out of ten are avowedly 'gender critical'.

With the aim of casting a wide net to capture the complex assemblage of actors in the transgender controversy in the UK, the seed URLs of 42 actors were added to Issue Crawler, which produced the following network cluster map:



Table UK36: Network Cluster Map of Actors identified in the Transgender Controversy in the UK

In network analysis it is recognised that networks are dynamic, and that different forms of visualisation can produce quite different *representations* of the network. Similarly, the moment in time that cluster maps are produced in is central to the picture produced, literally and systemically; the ‘crawl’ for this image was conducted in April 2023 at the height of the controversy when many activist groups were mobilised online (and on the streets). This means that the cluster map represents the issue network at a moment of intensive activity – digital activism, and media and political campaigns during Spring 2023.⁵⁰

In this network image, Sex Matters – established by Maya Forstater – is the central node, with several other ‘gender critical’ organisations situated as central nodes linking to and from it. This means that the web pages of these organisations are frequently shared with one another both by site visitors and by citing each other's web pages frequently. Close to the central node, there is a strong ‘triangular’ relationship between Woman’s Place UK, Fair Play for Women and Stonewall UK, signalling them as substantial actors in the controversy, but here they relate to each other differently. Stonewall UK is a central target of criticism

⁵⁰ For diachronic comparison, Free Speech Union appears as the central node in an Issue Crawl completed in Autumn 2023 using the same inputs, for example.

and counter-activism from organisations that are aligned with each other politically within the network. Nodes such as Stonewall notwithstanding, the issue-community that emerges, when organisation mentions in The Telegraph are cluster mapped, clearly demonstrates significant links between a wide range of organisations campaigning against trans rights. These organisations have largely become active since 2018.

According to Issue Crawler’s creators, issue mapping works best when the URLs are batched according to controversy ‘sides’ as much as possible. A reduced sample of 23 URLs from actors that self-identity as gender critical – or that predominantly platform gender critical actors – was therefore submitted to a refined crawl producing the network cluster map below (Fair Play for Women, Beaumont Society, LGB Alliance, Let A Woman Speak, For Women Scotland, Standing for Women, Kellie Jay Keen (Posie Parker), Scottish Family Party, Christian Concern, Safe Schools Alliance UK, Transgender Trend, Sex Matters, Cieo, New Social Covenant, Miriam Cates, Thoughtful Therapists, Us for Them, The Lesbian Project, Unherd, Beiras Place, Free Speech Union, University of Edinburgh Academics for Academic Freedom, Policy Exchange).



Table UK37: *Network Cluster Map of Actors self identifying as gender critical, or who predominantly platform gender critical actors, in the UK*

The reduced input for this cluster map provides a clearer picture of the 'gender critical' network active during Spring 2023, surfacing the key actors in the UK's transgender controversy. It is important to note how issue mapping results in some actors mentioned in The Telegraph seed URL list falling out of the map (e.g. The Lesbian Project and Thoughtful Therapists) while new ones emerge (e.g. Feminist Current Canada and Detrans Voices) on the strength of their network connections. Despite these shifts, Sex Matters is positioned as the clear central node again, as shown on the network cluster map above, with the strongest connections to 1. Fair Play for Women, 2. Safe Schools Alliance UK, 3. For Women Scotland, 4. Policy Exchange, and 5. Unherd.

Whereas above our focus is on the network cluster produced by Issue Crawler, the below section illustrates the data visualisation produced by Gephi. The difference is the surfacing of key communities (active social groups) in Gephi from the noise of the network cluster map which is more inclusive in its visualisation and less discerning in positing the potency of the actors in the graph beyond identifying the central node. Communities are homophilic nodes clustered together in densely connected groups. Within these clusters, nodes are densely connected while having few connections to outside nodes. Below, discrete communities that have been assigned a specific colour are evident. By analysing the nodes and edges, communities are seen to act as bridges to others, the proximity of those communities and their density.

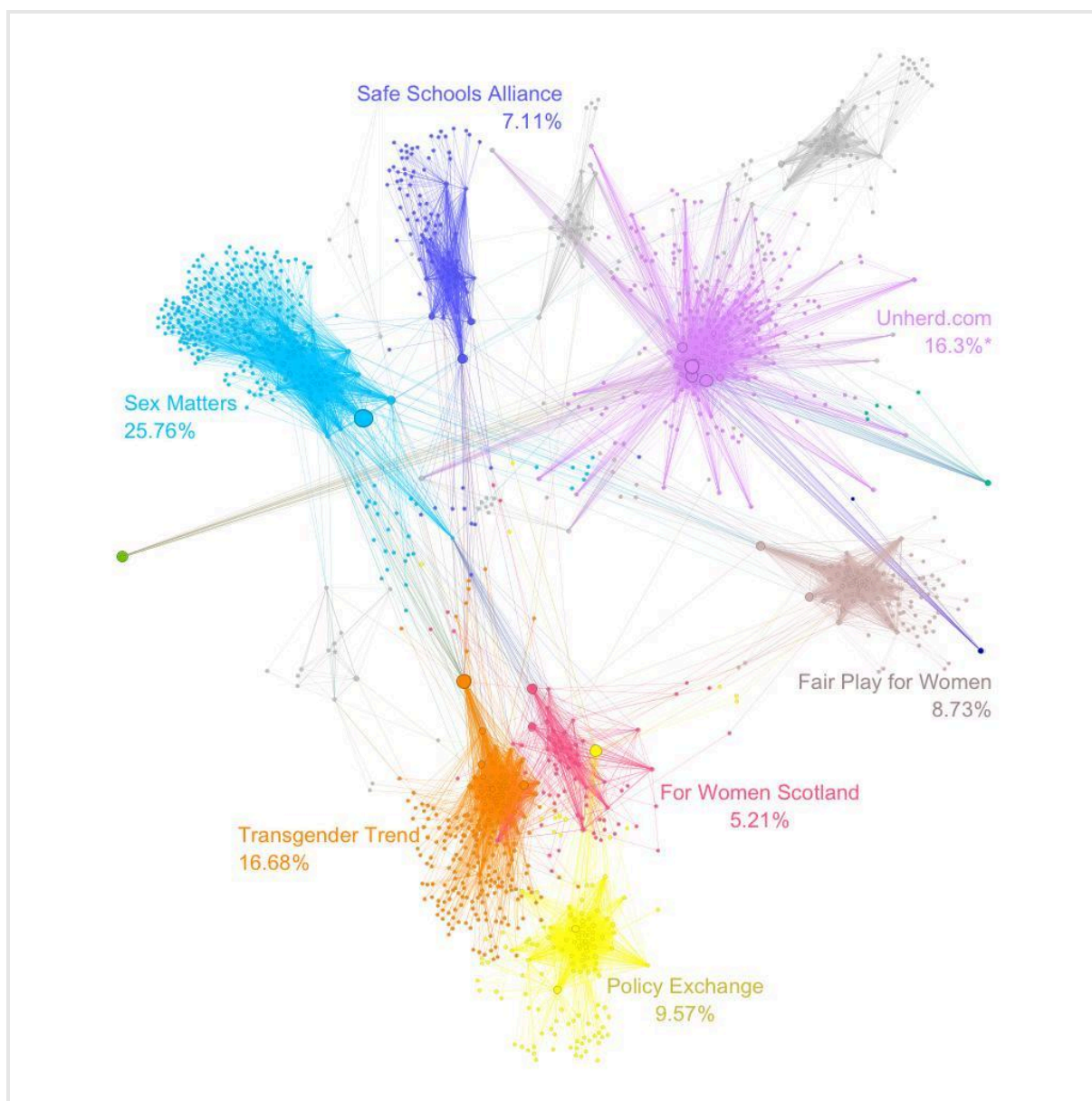


Figure UK38: Graph of top seven 'gender critical' communities in the UK Transgender Controversy

The top seven communities that emerge are:

Network Colour Key	Organisation	% Share of Network Connections
	Sex Matters	25.76%
	Transgender Trend	16.68%
	Unherd	15.90% (16.3%*)
	Policy Exchange	9.57%
	Fair Play for Women	8.73%
	Safe Schools Alliance	7.11%
	For Women Scotland	5.21%
	Other UnHerd Writers*	0.41%
	Disparate Network Nodes**	26.53%

Table UK39: Table of top seven ‘gender critical’ communities in UK Transgender Controversy

**Separate nodes appeared for both Unherd and related UnHerd contributors, demonstrating that Gephi reads them as organisational nodes in their own right, and increasing Unherd’s share of the community to 16.3%.¹⁰*

***Connectivity of <2, i.e. fewer than 2 connections between nodes* We did this by going to the Filters panel clicking topology and setting the degree range to 2 minimum. Nodes with a degree inferior to 2 are now hidden. For more information, see the Gephi visualisation section in Appendix Appendix C – Controversy Mapping Data.

The community represented here in light blue, *Sex Matters*, has the largest reach across the network, with “edges” or “legs” reaching to all of the other discrete communities. Our interactive vector demonstrates that many of these exchanges represent the sharing of homepages via Twitter; this is classic network dissemination and solidarity in action, evident in almost all activist organisations across the political and ideological spectrum.

Unherd’s purple star shape illuminates the dispersal role it plays, with edges in all of the other communities, functioning as a content source but also content platform for a variety of ‘gender critical’ organisations. *Fair Play for Women*, in pale mauve, is visibly more connected to *For Women Scotland* and is spatially siloed in comparison to the other communities. *Fair Play for Women* is in close proximity to the main media disseminator, *Unherd* and the dark blue Safe Schools Alliance (probably due to the sports in schools single issue alliance). *Policy Exchange*, in yellow does have edges in all communities but is particularly close to *For Women Scotland* – centrally involved in and widely quoted in media during the controversy – and Transgender Trend, a name which clearly echoes the ‘transgender as lifestyle trend or ideology’ coding category discussed above.

Campaign organisations and tactics

The issue mapping process pointed to important organisations central to processes of information exchange and connection. These organisations were selected for a qualitative examination of the campaign tactics and strategies that were mobilised or visible in their online presence during the period of the controversy mapping. These top – and exclusively ‘gender critical’ – nodes were *Sex Matters*; *Transgender Trend*; *Unherd*; *Policy Exchange*; and *Fair Play for Women*. For comparison, *Stonewall UK* and *LGBT Alliance* were also analysed.

The qualitative analysis of strategies and tactics involved studying homepages, and reviewing resources, events, campaigns and news. All downloadable resources, such as handbooks, were logged and examined. While a systematic analysis of social media activity was not possible – given changes in the accessibility and searchability of platforms – the organisations’ Twitter accounts were reviewed to build a picture of how connections and solidarity are expressed through functions such as ‘likes’, ‘retweets’ or replies. However, given the instability now inherent in social media research, it bears repeating that this analysis of tactics draws primarily on more stable resources such as organisation websites and campaign materials.

Campaign tactics

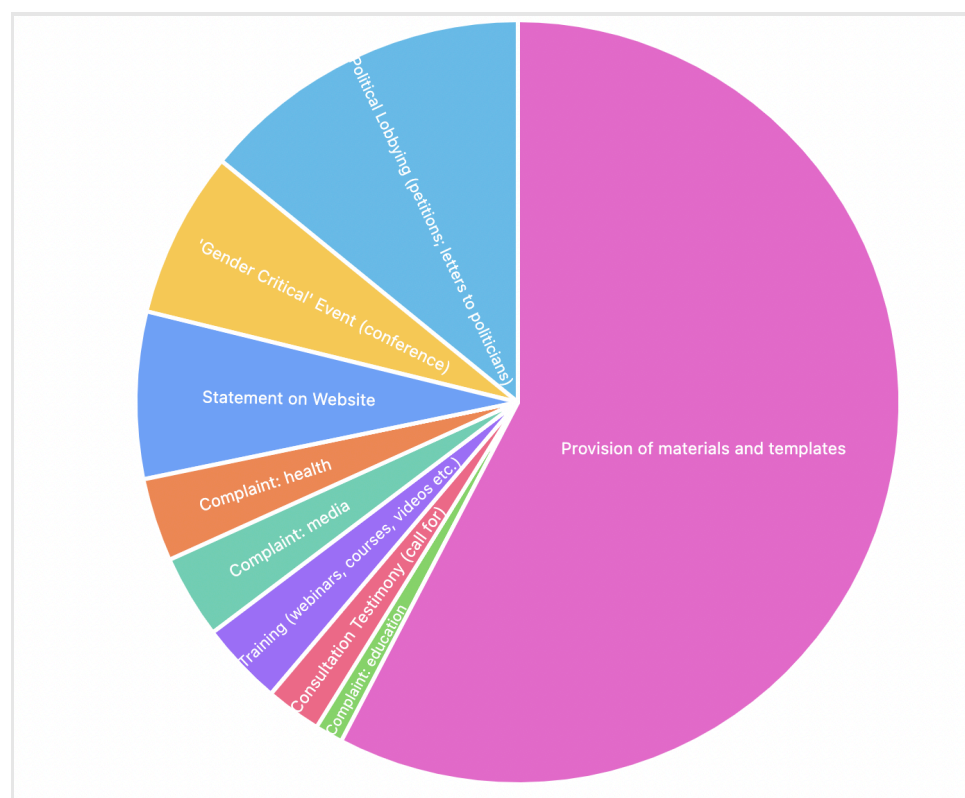


Table UK40: Breakdown of Outreach Tactics employed by Organisations central to processes of information exchange and connection

57.6% of the outreach tactics involve the provision of informational or campaign materials, such as handbooks or directories shared by the organisations on their website. A medium/dissemination channel bias must be noted here, as our sample focuses on websites which exist as functional, resource-based sites of information production and sharing. Thus, other tactics, both offline and in other online spaces, remain outside the scope of this discussion. Below, evidence of identifiable tactics from online resources is presented.

1. Sex Matters is the most significant actor to emerge in this controversy's networks, thus their tactics are of particular interest to the study. Of the samples studied on their website, Sex Matters use "provision of materials" 41% of the time; with an even 8.3% spread for "Training (webinars, courses and videos)"; media "complaint" tactics (marked focus on the BBC); complaints against schools and academic institutions; and complaints against health institutions (especially trans-affirming clinics). Lobbying/call-to-actions comprise a quarter of these tactics and are designed to spur citizen engagement by priming the public for action. This is particularly apparent in the prevalence of ready-to-download, often prepopulated legal complaint templates, specifically informing actions that refute gender inclusive language, laws and policies.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Sex Matters	Provision of materials	41
	Training (webinars, courses and videos)	8.3
	Complaint: Media (BBC)	8.3
	Complaint: Education	8.3
	Complaint: Health	8.3
	Lobbying/call-to-action	25

Table UK41: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Sex Matters

2. Transgender Trend predominantly provides materials and templates (78%). Given their focus on the medicalisation of transition, it is notable that they engage in “complaint against doctor; care provider; hospital; clinic; and teaching hospital” 11% of the time. This is matched by their record of 11% “complaint against media”.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Transgender Trend	Provision of materials	78
	Complaint: Media	11
	Complaint: Health	11

Table UK42: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Transgender Trend

3. Unherd is an unusual result in this network, as it is an online commentary and current affairs site that appears in an issue network of organisations due to the extent that its material is shared by organisations in the network. This centrality is therefore a product of their popularity with ‘gender critical’ organisations, and their propensity to platform regular contributions from leading figures in the movement. Given the nature of their site, their material does not neatly fit the coding categories derived from organisational websites:

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Unherd	Gender critical event	62.5
	Provision of materials and templates	25

	Statement on Website	12.5
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Table UK43: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Unherd

Nevertheless, the dominance of ‘gender critical event’ facilitation is striking, as this evidences Unherd’s role as a particularly potent fulcrum around which the gender critical movement assembles, also physically. The ‘UnHerd Club’, for example, is very active in organising events, such as an ‘evening with Kathleen Stock’ in May 2023:

“After being exiled from her teaching position at the University of Sussex, philosopher Kathleen Stock has become one of Britain’s most radical voices of reason, celebrated for her incisive cultural theory. Join her for an evening of conversation about the Western crisis of meaning and how to read the myths we tell ourselves, with UnHerd’s Freddie Sayers.”

Unherd positions itself similarly to the Free Speech Union as a disinterested Protector of Free Speech (while making the intentional choice of ‘exile’ to interpret Stock’s resignation from the university). Unherd is not only a facilitator of campaign relevant events, but its limited forays into news production involve producing polling data on controversy-related questions. The image below is of a polarised UK, a spatial representation of polling published in 2020 on the question "It is acceptable for adolescent children to make their own decisions about their gender identity". The presentation states that they collected data from 21,119 respondents between 15th January and 4th November 2019 using an online panel provider.

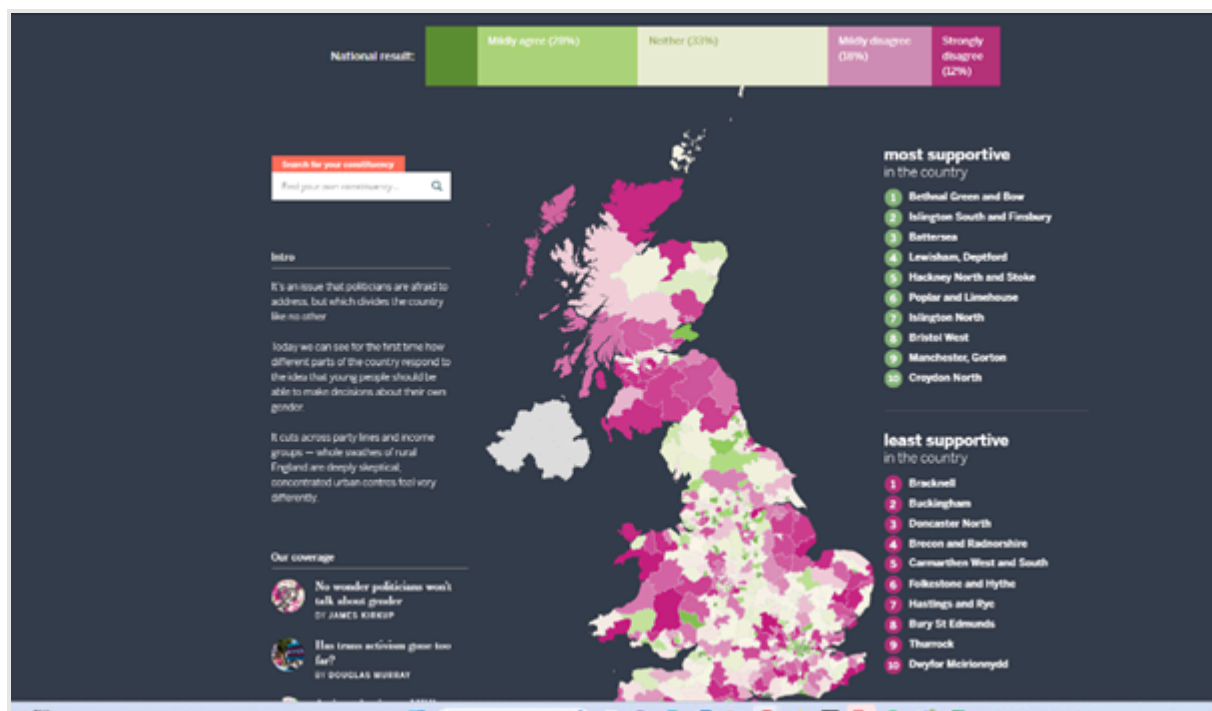


Figure UK44: Spatial representation of polling published in 2020 on the question "It is acceptable for adolescent children to make their own decisions about their gender identity."

Link: <https://election.unherd.com/gender/>

This tactic illustrates Unherd's financial resources to carry out poll research (and to embed GIS plug-ins onto their home page and provide a sharp user interface). It also succinctly demonstrates a clear political position which frames gender freedoms as a threat to working class Britain. The contextual copy reads:

"It's an issue that politicians are afraid to address, but which divides the country like no other. Today we can see for the first time how different parts of the country respond to the idea that young people should be able to make decisions about their own gender. It cuts across party lines and income groups — whole swathes of rural England are deeply sceptical; concentrated urban centres feel very differently."

The results show that 33% are "undecided" and 39% agree or strongly agree. Unherd lists in red the constituencies that disagree and strongly disagree which amount to 30%. The visualisation of a 'divided Britain' is powerful, and also serves to position UnHerd as a neutral facilitator and reasonable arbiter attempting to reflect public opinion, even as it strategically works to produce representations of public opinion that feed into and seek to sustain the 'trans debate'.

4. Policy Exchange – this think tank, closely related to The Conservative Party, uses its position as a registered charity and governmental adviser to ensure that gender freedoms are consistently framed as an issue of national political concern. Given its mandate to provide policy briefs and reports, 81.8% of their output is the provision of materials and templates.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Policy Exchange	Provision of materials and templates	81.8
	Complaint: Health	9.09
	Statement on Website	9.09

Table UK45: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Policy Exchange

Of particular note here is the *Biology Matters Project Compendium* by Maureen O'Hara with a foreword written by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington, Rosie Duffield MP, and Joanna Cherry KC MP. This compendium seeks the following from the general public:

“Policy Exchange issues a call for evidence asking people to share their experiences and concerns about the ways in which gender identity ideology is being adopted in the public sphere, sending their evidence to callforevidence@policyexchange.org.uk

This might include:

1. Examples of where women’s rights, the rights of LGB people, and children’s rights are at risk of being undermined by the adoption of gender identity ideology.
2. Examples of where organisations and public sector services have introduced de facto self-identification and have developed policies based on gender identity ideology.”



Figure UK46: *Biology Matters Project*

It is striking here that Policy Exchange fully adopts the term ‘gender ideology’ as a naturalised term and tasks the public to record instances of this phenomenon as ‘evidence’ without any guiding definitions as to what constitutes ‘gender ideology’, or evidence of its enactment. While this tactic nominally calls for testimony, its goal is a framework of citizen surveillance with potentially disruptive consequences in the provision of, inter alia, health care and education. These initiatives must also be understood in terms of the think tank’s proximity to government, as evidenced by the key role of self-proclaimed gender critical Conservative MPs in content production, launches of public consultations and proposing legislative frameworks. Its initiatives work to systemically problematise gender freedoms and to target transgender rights, positioning it as arguably the most influential source of policy potential for trans exclusionary groups and campaigns.

5. Fair Play for Women's mandate is to lobby for single sex sports categories and to seek to exclude trans people from playing on women's sports teams in the name of competitive fairness. 90% of their tactics can be coded under "provision of Material and templates" including "memes for sharing" and a "Transgender Media Guide" and a policy guide titled "How does the Gender Recognition Act impact on the sex-based rights of women?" prepared by legal firm Murray Blackburn Mackenzie (MBM policy).

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Fair Play for Women	Provision of materials and templates	90
	Complaint: Health	10

Table UK47: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Fair Play for Women

10% of Fair Play for Women's tactics comprise lobbying. The example of their lobbying below shows that Fair Play for Women go beyond "protecting sport for women" as they post the following call to action, an email template prepared by their anti-gender network relation, Sex Matters: *Take Action Now URGENT: Conversion Therapy – email your MP*. Here is Fair Play for Women's accompanying message:

URGENT: Conversion Therapy – email your MP

"Many people are worried that the current UK government conversion therapy bill could reduce support for gender-dysphoric children to a simplistic affirmation and transition approach. Yet many such children and young people have other mental health issues, past experiences or good reasons why they fear growing up as the sex they were born; it cannot be a crime to explore these other factors rather than affirm and medicalise unhappy young people. Many people who oppose gay conversion therapy have concerns about the inclusion of so-called gender conversion therapy in this way. The public consultation closed in February 2022, after we forced an extension by threatening legal action. But it's not at all certain that those in government promoting this bill will pay attention to that. Whether you responded to the consultation or not, writing to your MP on this issue is a good step to take. They need to know that the draft bill is not good enough to protect young people from harm. Sex Matters have a suggested letter to MPs on conversion therapy that makes it quick and easy."

Figure UK48: Fair Play for Women's call to action copy

6. For Women Scotland are central to the controversy and deeply connected to the above actors. 50% of their tactics are coded as "Political lobbying: petitions/letters to politicians";

“Provision of materials and templates” (33.3%); and “Gender Critical Event” (16.7%). Examples of the “political lobbying” tactic are the petitions *Update the Equality Act to make clear the characteristic “sex” is biological sex – UK Gov petition, closing date: 20 April 2023* and *Repeal the Gender Recognition Act 2004 – UK Gov petition, closing date: 24 May 2023*. For Women Scotland operates as a focal point of the controversy as the SNP and Westminster grapple over the Gender Recognition Reform Bill. While the number and visibility of gender critical groups have mushroomed in the UK, they have not just emerged in the past six months, and some have been campaigning for over four years.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
For Women Scotland	Political lobbying	50
	Provision of Materials	33.3
	Gender Critical Event	16.7

Table UK49: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by For Women Scotland

For Women Scotland is active in terms of protests and the green and purple branding is often pictured in accompanying UK media headlines. See below from a protest on 09 February 2023:



Figure UK50: For Women Scotland leaflet

A key tactic For Women Scotland engages in is the provision of materials from badges and leaflets to playback videos as evidenced by providing recordings for those unable to attend

protests in person, for example “See our page for videos of the speeches, links to media coverage, and photographs.”

7. In 2020, **Safe Schools Alliance** supported legal action against Oxfordshire County Council over their release and promotion of a “Trans Toolkit” for use in schools around the county. They say:

“This Toolkit claimed to provide guidance to schools on how to care for pupils identifying as transgender. However, it misrepresented the Equality Act 2010 in doing so. It also disregarded the privacy and dignity needs of other children, particularly girls. It contained serious safeguarding flaws with regard to its promotion of mixed-sex toilets, changing rooms and overnight accommodation. Alarmingly, it also failed to follow standard safeguarding procedure in its treatment of children identifying as transgender.”

The tactics used by this organisation is overwhelmingly “provision of materials” (90%) ranging from letter templates to guides. This level of priming parents to complain and its proclivity for legal action raises a coding question for this tactic analysis section in general, specifically: Is the provision of materials and templates primed for lobbying schools and complaining more appropriately coded as “lobbying” even if it’s not a petition?.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Safe Schools Alliance	Provision of Materials	90
	Statement on the website	10

Table UK51: Breakdown of Campaign Tactics employed by Safe Schools Alliance

In conclusion the top seven anti-gender actors (confirmed by top seven communities that emerged in Gephi network mapping) in the Gender Recognition Reform Bill controversy have been analysed above in terms of a sample of their tactics in order to probe the ways these actors work together and catalyse public action against gender freedom in the UK. More qualitative analysis will be carried out to determine the strategy, intensity and effectiveness of these tactics, which will inform the project’s tool (D1.3) that will delineate key and emerging tactics in the greater anti-gender movement in Europe.

Actor	Tactic	% Frequency
Stonewall UK	Provision of materials	50
	Statement on website	25
	Political lobbying	12.5

	Training	12.5
LGBT Foundation	Provision of materials and templates	50
	Training	50
LGB Alliance	Political Lobbying	33.3
	Statement on website	33.3
	Provision of materials and templates	33.3

Table UK52: Quantitative findings for LGBT Foundation, Stonewall and LGB Alliance

UK Case Study Findings

The research design for these case studies constructed clusters of key issues concerning gender, sexuality and feminism that are key sites, across multiple contexts, of anti-gender discourse in politics and public culture. This expansiveness notwithstanding, this research reveals a somewhat narrow pattern: a distinct – and distinctly hostile – preoccupation in the UK with the existence, identities and rights of trans people. This focus in media and politics is singular, but it is not exclusive, i.e., it should not be understood as dominating to the exclusion of other modalities of anti-gender politics. Rather, anti-trans politics is prosecuted as both a coherent ideological goal and as a productive nexus for connecting a more disparate range of political preoccupations, and actors.

This oppressive relationality is present in the range of international bodies that have recently criticised both the overt forms of hatred and delegitimation aimed at trans people, and the demonstrable backsliding on LGBTIQ+ rights in the UK. A joint statement in 2020 from Liberty, Amnesty International UK and Human Rights Watch¹³ stated that:

“Human rights are universal and belong to everyone. Yet too often in the UK trans people are spoken about and treated as though their rights don’t matter. The toxic media coverage about trans people has recently spiked. At times of crisis and political change, marginalised groups are often singled out for abuse and hate. History has shown us time and time again the dangers of setting the rights of one marginalised group up for debate.”

In ILGA-Europe’s widely cited ‘Rainbow Index’ of LGBTIQ+ rights, the UK dropped from 1st place in 2015 to 14th by 2022.¹⁴ As well as documenting hate crimes and legislative stagnation or regression, these reports consistently draw attention to the significance of hostile media and political discourse.

Our findings empirically demonstrate the expansion and intensification of this anti-trans politics, and further the analysis of its production, constitution and circulation by exposing and analysing key discursive strategies derived from a significant corpus of parliamentary, media and civil society sources. They demonstrate how these strategies overlap and diverge across sites of activity, illuminating a surge that is shaped by right-wing, reactionary political instrumentalisation and media opportunism, but also by more disparate affective aversions and unlikely affinities.

UK Parliament Findings

As Craig McLean (2021) has recently noted, there has been a significant growth in the ‘anti-transgender movement’ in the UK, resulting in what they term a “silent radicalization of

the British electorate”. In McLean’s analysis, this process profoundly intensified in the aftermath of a parliamentary Transgender Equality Enquiry (TEE) which sat in 2015-16, reported in 2016, and led to the establishment in 2018 of a process of public consultation on reform of The Gender Recognition Act (GRA, 2004). This process of consultation prompted the formation of a “whole host of (gender critical) lobby groups” intent on using the process to oppose trans people self-identifying as their adopted gender without having to secure a gender recognition certificate (2021: 474-5).

While this analysis emphasises *a presumed and projected radicalization of the electorate* when spoken for and represented in anti-trans rhetoric by politicians, commentators and ‘gender critical’ activists, McClean also points to a rapid and stark process of political re-orientation. To contextualise this report’s findings from a corpus of debates spanning 2018-23, but primarily gathered from debates between 2021-23, the prevalence of debates on transgender issues in the House of Commons was examined using CLARIN, which revealed an extraordinary spike in parliamentary mentions of “transgender” during December 2016, when the TEE reported.

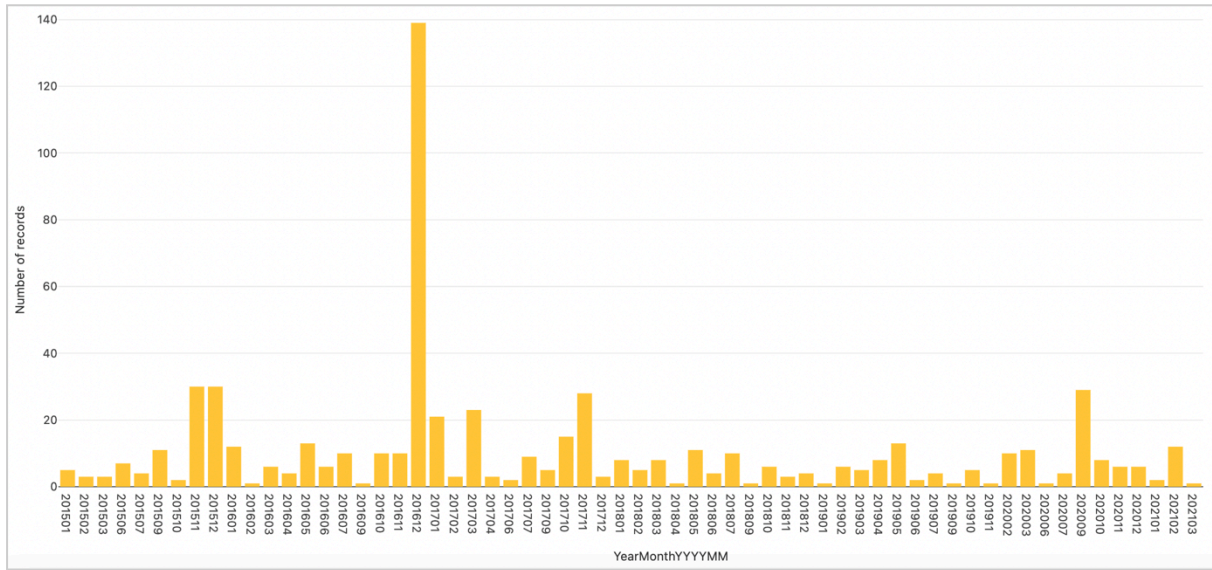


Table UK53: Prevalence of Debates on transgender issues in the House of Commons, 2018-2023

The longest debate from this month - Transgender Equality, 01.12.2016 – was selected for coding, using the codes derived from the 2018-23 corpus. Strikingly, no anti-gender material was coded, indicating a complete absence of the talking points and tropes that proliferated in the later debates. Similarly, there was a complete absence of reference to campaign groups that self-describe as “gender critical”, again in notable contrast to the main corpus (which informed our decision to track them, in the following stages of research, through media sourcing, and network mapping). On the contrary, politicians that subsequently became actively involved in promulgating anti-trans politics can be seen, in the run-up to this debate, advocating, for example, for care for transgender prisoners:

Sue-Ellen Cassiana Braverman, CONS (08.12.2015): “On 27 November, a transgender prisoner killed herself while serving in a male jail. What are the Government planning to do to address the concern about another tragic death in this vulnerable group of people?”

The expressions of concern in relation to prison are particularly striking, given the subsequent importance of prisoner placement to the discursive coding presented below. In the debate on 01.12.2016, the Conservative MP Ben Howlett openly criticises the placement of a transgender woman in an all-male prison:

“In November 2016, however, the Ministry of Justice published the results of a data collection exercise conducted in March and April of this year. It was reported that 70 transgender prisoners were held in 33 prisons in England and Wales at that time. The Committee argued that there was ‘clear risk or harm’ when trans prisoners are not located in a prison ‘appropriate to their acquired gender.’ The report also said that holding trans prisoners in solitary confinement was not fair or appropriate, and I am sure that the whole House agrees. Last year, there was the example of Tara Hudson, a transgender prisoner from Bath, who was born male but had lived her entire adult life as a woman. Tara was sent to an all-male prison.”

Bearing this temporal and political context in mind, the main findings from the parliamentary data analysis (corpus spanning 2016-2023) are the following:

- Demonstrating the political intensification described, debates related to gender recognition and trans rights are generally the most extensive, involved, and productive of content codes and data. Sharp differences of position and ideology are also expressed, if to a far lesser extent, in debates on abortion and LGBTIQ+ rights. However most debates in the clusters beyond ‘debating trans lives’ are quite short, technical and procedural, involving questions of clarification on progress with various reports and legislative proposals to responsible ministers.
- The material coded and presented as ‘rhetorical tactics’ and ‘discursive tactics’ is overwhelmingly drawn from contributions from Conservative Party MPs. This dominance is partly explained by the party’s role in government, and by the fact that, in the debates in question, the party was predominantly mobilised to oppose changes to legislation on gender self-identification. The almost total absence of the British Labour party from this data can be taken as evidence of them not publicly engaging in anti-trans politics during this period. Nonetheless this is also, to an extent, a result of the sample parameters; between the completion of data gathering and the time of

writing, the Labour party have reneged on an electoral manifesto commitment to support 'self-ID' reforms to the GRA.¹⁵

- Further, this coded material is predominantly drawn from contributions by male Conservative MPs. Their prominence in particular categories – 'silencing', 'what if', 'trans as lifestyle trend' – that allow for greater declamatory licence is predicated on a discursive pattern of speaking "in defence of women", sometimes in ways that subject opposition MPs who are female to aggressive forms of rhetorical questioning (David Davies (CONS): "I hear what the hon. Lady is saying. May I bluntly ask her whether she would be happy sharing a changing room with somebody who was born male and had a male body?"). To an extent, this reflects a wider pattern where women's rights and safety are invoked to posit an inherent conflict with trans rights, despite polling evidence in the UK clearly indicating that women are more likely to reject transphobia and support trans rights than men in Britain.¹⁶
- Nevertheless, UK parliamentary discourse bears little resemblance to the overt and often spectacular anti-gender discourse expressed in debates in the European Parliament (where, as our study of the EP documents, a large far-right bloc is explicitly mobilised in and through opposition to 'gender ideology', and where this provides a central tenet of their cross-party cooperation). The relative absence of references to 'gender ideology', despite the prominence and naturalisation of this term in UK media discourse, is the most striking indicator of this.
- While inflammatory rhetoric is largely absent from parliamentary debate, the prevalence of the code 'sex as biological fact' indicates the extent to which transgender rights are held up as inherently in conflict with women's rights, that is, transgender rights put women's rights – or 'sex-based rights' – at risk. As will be seen below, this prevalence is reproduced in a significant degree of media coverage and comment on the controversy generated by the UK government's decision to block the passage of the Scottish GRR. In this data this fact is often stated as a form of common sense, or through the articulation of gender/sex and identity/biology dichotomies, which are justified almost exclusively with reference to 'science and material reality', as opposed to religious rationales.
- The most overt delegitimation of transgender lives occurs in the categories 'transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend' and 'what if'. What unites these coding categories is the discursive production of imagined scenarios

and anxious speculation. They licence a recourse to stereotypes and, by constantly positing transness as a opportunistic way of accessing “women’s spaces”, insistently reproduce the association of transgender men with predatory sexual behaviour and abuse. Similarly, the *imaginative search for explanations for transgender identity that exclude the explanations of trans people themselves* reproduce established twentieth century moral panic images of young people as vulnerable and susceptible to media and ideological indoctrination. It is notable that this projection of vulnerable subjectivity is not reproduced by Conservative MPs in debates on prohibiting forms of “gay conversion therapy” in the corpus. In arguing for conscience-based exemptions to these prohibitions, party MPs contend that, as a party of liberty, everyone must be treated as a rational agent that can make the autonomous decision to subject themselves to such therapies as a ‘free choice’. This underlines the extent to which transgender identity, particularly among young people, is framed as a consequence of factors other than their own agency: social media influences, trends in popular culture, and dangerously zealous activism, particularly in schools.

- The category of ‘trans as erasure’ reinforces the dominant emphasis on sex/gender and biology/identity dichotomies, but it is characterised by speaking positions that do not as readily appear when these arguments are circulated in media discourse. In contra-distinction to articulations that position transgender identity as a problem for forms of commonsense, MPs that speak against trans rights as ‘a feminist’, ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay man’ posit it as a threat to historically achieved and hard-won political and sexual freedoms.
- Given the extent to which the idea of “transgender identity as ideology or lifestyle trend” depends on projecting indoctrination or undue influence, there is little overt reference to the ‘problem’ of what is held to be ‘excessive activism’ in the debate corpus (a finding also at odds with the centrality of this trope to media discourse). As with ‘gender ideology’, this restraint is confined to this selection of parliamentary discourse, as this reference point is actively reproduced by Conservative politicians in other settings (see section conclusion).
- The trope of what is projected as ‘excessive activism’ must be read against the fact of a growing number of highly mobilised anti-transgender organisations which are frequently mentioned in the House of Commons, and often described as “women’s rights groups”. Several of the most frequent contributors of coded material are involved in Conservative Party or party-related initiatives that explicitly campaign on gender recognition and

relationships and sex education in schools, such as Policy Exchange's 'Biology Matters Project' and The New Social Covenant. The fact that both groups openly oppose something called 'gender identity ideology', and yet this trope scarcely features in parliamentary discourse, underlines how anti-gender discourse does not walk in straight lines from one context to another. Nevertheless, the fact that significant contributors to the data are involved in cognate ideological campaigns is relevant to explaining the presence of anti-gender discourse in Commons proceedings. Subsequent to the data collection period (May 2023), one of the top contributors of coded material, the MP Miriam Cates, co-founded The New Conservatives, a lobby group that aims to influence the formation of The Conservative Party's 2024 election manifesto, including seeking a manifesto pledge to 'ban gender ideology in schools'.¹⁸

In conclusion, these findings empirically demonstrate the intense ways in which the political landscape in the UK is reconstituted through anti-trans politics. While much of the coded material attests to ideological and political conviction on the issue of sex vs. gender, and while the discursive expression of these ideas is less characterised by the overt stereotypes and targeting language encountered in other political contests, anti-transgender politics has become an important and renewable currency that is instrumentalised for multiple political rationales.

These findings point to an increased political import of anti-trans political rhetoric amongst the UK's ruling party over their term in government. In February 2023 the Conservative Party's Deputy Chairman, Lee Anderson, used his first interview in the role to declare that the party should campaign in the next election on a "...mix of culture wars and trans debate".¹⁹ It is precisely this mobilising 'mix' that accounts for the abrupt incorporation of 'gender ideology' and anti-transgender rhetoric into the Conservative Party Conference speeches of the Home Secretary and Prime Minister in October 2023. In her highly publicised speech, the then-Home Secretary Suella Braverman described 'gender ideology' as a 'poison' beloved of a 'luxury beliefs brigade' that her party must determinedly challenge on behalf of the 'common sense majority'.¹⁷ The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, made a clear reference to the 'problem of activism' in his keynote speech to the same party conference in October 2023: "It shouldn't be controversial for parents to know what their children are being taught in school about relationships. Patients should know when hospitals are talking about men or women. We shouldn't get bullied into believing that people can be any sex they want to be. They can't. A man is a man and a woman is a woman, that's just common sense".

The idea of 'being bullied' is illegible in this construction without the vision of a powerful and aggressive 'trans lobby' that has been assiduously cultivated in media and public

discourse. This declaration of strategic choice has been made in a context where whilst sexual orientation hate crimes are down by 6%, transgender identity hate crimes rose by 11% (from 4,262 to 4,732) from April 2022 to March 2023, the highest number since the time series began in the year ending March 2012. The Home Office said, “Transgender issues have been heavily discussed by politicians, the media and on social media over the last year, which may have led to an increase in these offences, or more awareness in the police in the identification and recording of these crimes.”

Our findings demonstrate the emergence, in the House of Commons, of a concerted focus on transgender-related issues that significantly departs from the broadly inclusive political focus evident in the period when the reform of the Gender Recognition Act was first proposed and debated. This departure is characterised by the consistent reproduction of discourse that positions trans people, particularly trans women, as threats to ‘women’s rights’. In the next section, the report considers the influential role of media coverage and campaigning in furthering this discourse of threat and risk.

UK Media Findings

The nature of British media coverage of transgender-related issues has been a focus of criticism and concern for some time. The negative representation of transgender people was discussed at the Leveson Inquiry (2011-12) into “the culture, practices and ethics of the press” and directly criticised by the chair of the public inquiry, Lord Leveson.²⁰ A 2020 IPSO report “examining trends in editorial standards in coverage of transgender issues” notes a ‘particularly marked growth’ in ‘transgender-related stories during the last five years’, as

“All publication types are publishing more transgender-related stories but most notable has been the proportion of transgender-related stories published by the tabloid press. At the start of the decade, most of the stories were published in the broadsheets but over half of the stories published now are in tabloids.”²¹

A study by the transgender media researcher ‘MinnyMum’ provides statistics on the stark increase in stories about people who, while comprising approximately 0.1% of the population, are the subject of an average of 154 articles per month in mainstream titles between 2015-2022, with a pattern of significant intensification over time. In May 2022 16 articles a day were published on ‘trans issues’, with *The Daily Mail* alone publishing on average five a day during this month.²² The extent of this hypervisibility is important; as Sivamohan Valluvan has pointed out, a feature of contemporary reactionary politics is to render “...the excluded Other the overdetermined and outsized object of political discourse” (2019: 35-6). This outsizing, unsurprisingly, is achieved through predominantly negative coverage. A similar study by Elli Folan notes that “Of the 115 Daily Mail articles in

trans issues in January 2023, 100 of them (87%) could reasonably be categorised as negative, in comparison to zero negative articles in January 2013.”²³

While the extent and velocity of this negative coverage is well-established, there is far less research on the discursive aspects of the negativity, and little consideration of systemic dimensions, that is, how and why this hostile coverage has intensified now, within a transformed and febrile media system. Bearing this political and systemic context in mind, the main findings from the media data analysis are the following.

- The comparative analysis between three broadsheet newspapers empirically demonstrates the extent to which transgender coverage has become a key pillar of right-wing media’s creation of a ‘culture war’ strategy in the UK. This involves a concerted and hostile focus on the lives of transgender people themselves, and the positioning of the ‘trans debate’ as part of a wider and more fluid targeting of gender and sexuality issues that can be encompassed by and collapsed into the idea of ‘wokeness’.
- The treatment of the transnationally distributed and controversial term ‘gender ideology’ provided an initial way into this comparison between newspapers. While *The Guardian* endured internal upheaval in 2020, prompted by staff protest at ‘anti-trans bias’ in comment and opinion pieces,²⁴ in our data it clearly treats the term ‘gender ideology’ as ideologically loaded, and as exclusive property of the transnational far-right. *The Telegraph*, meanwhile, systematically naturalises the term through its reporting, in both news coverage and opinion pieces. This naturalised treatment of what is well-established as an anti-gender campaigning concept, in a context where editorial guidelines and style guides routinely offer advice for the journalistic treatment of controversial ideas and claims, is significant in pointing at ideological intervention through media activity.
- In contradistinction to other news sources, The Telegraph exclusively reserves its usage of ‘gender ideology’ for UK domestic reporting, linking it in almost every articulation in the corpus to transgender issues, particularly the ‘problem of activism’. This positions ‘gender ideology’ as an established political problem in education, social services and public spaces and institutions, and is key to the development of the ‘problem of activism’ in the UK context. This data points to this coverage as a form of campaigning journalism which focuses concertedly on trans-inclusive services and associations.

- The campaigning valence of the *Telegraph* is reiterated by the network of actors and organisations that consistently provide the source or focus of its coverage. It is striking that half of the actors mentioned in stories that feature the term ‘gender ideology’ are self-described ‘gender critical’ actors who, in many cases, are actively involved in campaigns and organisations mobilised against transgender rights. Similarly, in the data on organisations mentioned, 56% are ‘gender critical’. All of these mentions are as story sources, as opposed to story subjects or respondents, a finding well-illustrated by comparing the two most cited organisations in the sample. For Women Scotland was founded in 2018, and in this short space of time has been included as a regular source of stories and framing quotations for *The Telegraph* and cognate media (a significant achievement for such a young organisation, albeit one bolstered by the publicity accorded the Scottish GRR reform process). Mermaids, a charity and advocacy organisation for transgender youth, is mentioned as frequently as For Women Scotland in the coverage, but it is predominantly mentioned as a subject embroiled in controversies that they must respond to.
- Within media regulatory systems, journalism can legitimately be politically and ideologically partial. Within these arrangements, civil society groups can strive to position themselves as trusted sources on issues of concern. However, what these sourcing routines demonstrate is a pattern of differentiated access which poses important questions of media ethics. In political communications research, the differential access of ‘interest groups’ to media coverage, and particularly to being the source of news coverage and issue framing, is regarded as a key indicator of the democratic functioning of the news media (Binderkrantz, Bonafont and Halpin, 2016). While ‘interest group diversity’ can be measured across a spectrum of media outlets, our findings indicate that it is significant when one set of interests, namely ‘gender critical’ or anti-transgender campaigning groups, have been successful in being granted disproportionate access to news coverage and news framing.
- *The Telegraph’s* concerted and hostile focus on transgender issues in the UK can be found in other newspapers on the political right – as the quoted studies of *The Daily Mail* show – and must be further understood, as our findings suggest, as folded into an emerging cross-platform right-wing media ecosystem where key actors continually amplify and cross-reference each other’s stories. The cross-platform creation of an issue around transgender and ‘woke’ stories can be seen in the daily output of GB News and The Free Speech Union. It is well-established that forms of content saturation increase

the credibility and persuasiveness of stories for sectors of the audience (Lecheler et al 2015). These cross-media dynamics promote not just content confirmation but also competition for attention and status within the right-wing media sector, a competition that is expressed through increased search for sensational, attention-grabbing content, and increasingly extreme 'takes' that seek to provoke more interaction, comment and publicity. This underlines that there is media-systemic as well as ideological integration of this cross-media network.

- As the case of GB News demonstrates, this integration also has a clear commercial rationale, as it allows newer market entrants access to sensational and seemingly popular stories without sinking costs into news gathering and journalism (Petley and Barnett 2023). Consequently, this report contends that anti-trans content is not just a product of campaigning journalism, it is also a valuable commodity with exchange value in a media sector aiming at carving out audiences in a fragmented media public and divided electorate. This systemic dimension is critical to understanding the accelerated and expanded production of these stories, suggesting that this content surge is a result not only of ideological animus, but also commercial considerations and datafied calculation. Our data shows that there is a commercial rationale for anti-trans content.
- Significant amounts of anti-transgender content is carried by both GB News and Free Speech Union as a key dimension of how they position themselves as champions of free speech. Coverage of a handful of controversies over 'gender critical' speakers on university campuses has animated a media frame of 'excessive' transgender activism as a threat to freedom of expression. More substantively, the ceaseless positioning of 'gender ideology' as a repressive hegemony serves as a legitimating framework for breaking 'taboos' and 'silences' and thus positioning anti-transgender sensationalism as a form of democratic journalism. The systemic dimension is also important here, as this positioning is a dimension of GB News' market positioning as 'necessary pluralism' to the putatively liberal hegemony of the BBC, a manoeuvre which is necessary to justify maximal levels of opinion and comment – which are much cheaper than news-making - within the regulatory framework.

UK Controversy Mapping Findings

- In the sample of 50 opinion pieces from 22 news sources commenting on the GRR, only two were written by writers who identify as transgender. This is indicative of how trans issues get written about, and who speaks on transgender issues. It is also the inverse of the repressive hypervisibility noted in the media findings: even where there is broadly sympathetic coverage, transgender people are significantly more likely to be spoken about than to be platformed in a 'debate' about their lives and rights.
- While anti-gender politics are not exclusive to the political right and far-right, the sectoral analysis of opinion and comment demonstrates key dimensions of its significance on the political right, and the nature of its presence in other sectors. The 'centre-left' and 'centre-right' media sampled in this study largely eschew sensationalist and 'culture war' discourse, while the binary of sex and gender remains prevalent as a 'commonsense' explanatory framework. Left-wing and progressive media have a clear political motivation to criticise the current UK government, however the extent and character of their critique of how transgender people are being exploited for political gain is not just a consequence of political opposition, it is a clear normative commitment. In the right-wing sector, the dominance of 'presumed public disquiet' indicates the importance of 'populist' modes of communication vested in the conceit of 'speaking up' for the 'silenced majority.'
- The dynamics of the so-called 'trans debate' clearly prefer highly sensationalist coverage of issues that can be presented as indicating the nature and extent of the 'problem'. In a large corpus of articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, the GRR and the case of Isla Bryson are the subject in the headline or main paragraph mentions – of almost identical levels of coverage: 20% in both instances. The case of Isla Bryson – a transwoman convicted of rape and sexual assault and initially committed to a women's prison – became a huge political issue in mid-January that impacted on the SNP's support for a challenge to Westminster's legislative block. Both issues received the same amount of coverage in the sample period, despite the Bryson case occurring more than 1/3 through the timeline of the controversy.
- The importance of media coverage to political tactics in this controversy is underlined by the popularity of a key tactic of anti-gender organisations; to prepopulate complaint letters against media outlets, with a particular focus on the BBC given its status as the public service broadcaster.

- In terms of network building, the data showed a significant proliferation of “women’s rights” groups mobilised to oppose the Scottish legislation on gender recognition. The data demonstrated that they appear far more frequently in media coverage in direct comparison with trans inclusive bodies and all other relevant agents and institutions. For example, in terms of groups used for published quotes in the Bryson case coverage, 80% self-identify as ‘gender critical’ or post anti-gender ideology on their websites. In the GRA coverage, it is 70%, with one of these groups, For Women Scotland, quoted 500% more than any other campaigning group in discussion of the legislation.

Chapter 8 - European Parliament

Introduction

This report presents a study of anti-gender politics in the European Parliament, conducted between 14.11 and 20.12.2022.

The European Parliament (EP) is an important forum for political debate and decision-making in the European Union. Its members are directly elected by voters in all Member States to represent citizens' interests with regard to EU legislation, and to have an oversight of the democratic functioning of the EU institutions. While it does not have the right to propose new bills, it can amend, and decide whether to accept or reject legislation.

Within the parliament, MEPs are organised into officially recognized cross-national political groupings. In the current, and 9th legislature (2019-2024) there are seven groups. The historically most established and dominant are the European People's Party (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D). The other groups are Renew Europe (Renew); Identity and Democracy (ID), Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA); European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR); and the Left group (GUE/NGL). Over the last years, anti-gender politics has proven to be central to antagonisms between the political groupings, and of importance in understanding the increased standing and influence of radical right groups within the parliament. It has been widely noted that a focus on gender-related issues has provided an important point of collaboration for a 'populist nationalist politics' that takes direct aim at fundamental rights in the EP.

These parties and actors organise and strategise their EP interventions in relation to topical issues, transnational controversies, and ideas and discourses circulated and translated between political contexts. This concerted action is of direct relevance to the aims of RESIST Work Package 1, which seeks to map the circulation of anti-gender discourses targeting fundamental rights and democratic freedoms in political and media spaces, including parliaments; and to understand the tactics, arguments and narratives enacted in political debate. Thus, the EP is of relevance not only because of the historically unprecedented presence of radical rights actors, and their mobilisation around these issues, but also because it provides an opportunity to examine how these ideas and narratives circulate at supranational and transnational scale.

The report is presented as follows. The next section examines radical right actors in the EP to situate the subsequent analysis of anti-gender discourse. Following an explanation of the methodology, the report presents a thematic analysis of plenary debates (N=58) on the Istanbul Convention, Gender Mainstreaming, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and

Rights. The raw but thematized data from the coding of LGBTIQ-related debates is also included. Following this, an analysis of radical right parliamentarians' written questions on gender-related issues is presented.

Context: The Radical Right in the European Parliament

The study of the radical right in the EP has increased in recent years. This is in part because of the relative increase in their presence and impact, and because this interaction-at-proximity within the groupings allows for analysis of how a network of often diverse parties engage ideologically and politically (Forchtner & Lubarda 2022). What Enzo Traverso has referred to as Europe's 'post-fascist constellation' is complex, and this produces significant taxonomical debate as to how to describe these actors. For the purposes of this report, this is somewhat simplified by the grouping process in the EP. That is, while whole political groupings in the EP can be meaningfully characterised as 'radical nationalist right', there are significant differences between them on their proximity to 'far-right', 'fascist-autocratic' right positions, ideologies and tendencies. This study brackets these definitional debates by primarily focusing on the two main groupings in the 2019-2024 parliament, and mapping these back to related groups in the 2014-2019 term. This is not to deny the importance of a nuanced approach to radical right parties, but rather to note that categorical debates have limited relevance to this report's research objectives. The two groups in focus here are the European Conservative and Reformists (ECR) group, which has 63 MEPs from 19 parties and 15 countries, and the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, which has 64 MEPs from 10 countries.

The ECR self-describes as a centre-right political grouping. Founded in 2009 primarily through the work of the British Conservative Party, PiS (Poland) and the Czech Civic Democratic (ODS) party, it positioned its shared Euroscepticism as a form of 'respectable radicalism' (McDonnell & Werner 2018). However, recent studies note that the departure of the British Tories, the proportional importance of PiS (with 27 of the 63 MEPs) and the electoral surge of Fratelli d'Italia and Vox (Spain) in the 2019 election account for what Gaweda, Siddi and Miller describe as the increased influence of "members with a post-fascist or radical right background" and an "...ongoing ultra-conservative, nationalist and anti-gender equality shift in the ECR..." (2022).

The Identity and Democracy group was founded after the May 2019 elections and became the fifth largest group in the EP on the strength of these results. It is comprised of parties with well-established track records of radical nationalist and far-right politics, such as Lega (Italy), Perussuomalaiset (True Finns), AfD (Germany), Rassemblement National (previously the FN, France) and the Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party). The significance of this twin grouping in the EP is described by Kantola and Miller:

“...EP’s political groups have no direct equivalents in national parliaments. Formally, political groups need to be made up of at least 23 MEPs from seven member states that share ‘political affinities’. In the 8th EP the electoral performance of radical right populists was unprecedentedly successful and particular radical right populist delegations were also willing to collaborate to form political groups. Previously their political differences had prevented such cooperation (McDonnell and Werner, 2019: 15; Mudde, 2019). Though radical right populists’ electoral success in 2019 was less than had been anticipated, collaboration made the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, the fourth largest group in the EP.” (2021: 784)

The infographic below, from the European Parliament, illustrates the expansion on the right in the composition of MEP group affiliation:

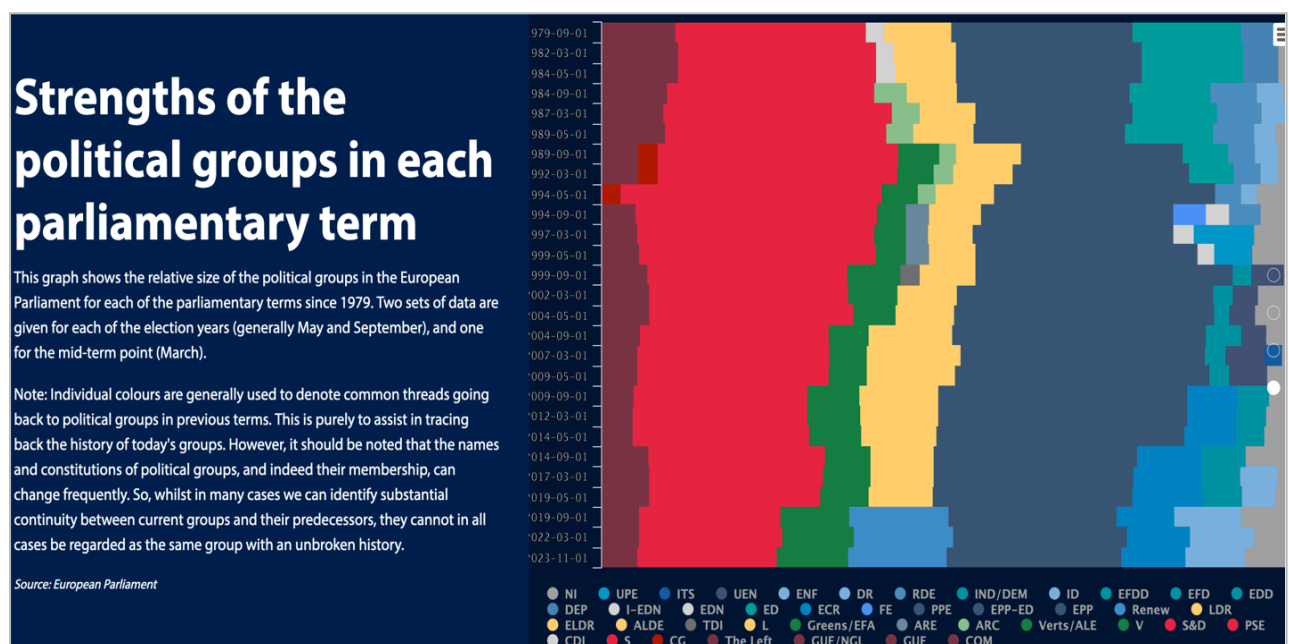


Figure EP1: Illustrating shrinkage of left parties (red) and proportionate shift to right and centre right MEPs 1989-2022.⁵¹

The successful formation of EP groupings allows MEPs access to parliamentary speaking time, resources, important committee positions and ultimately to “...have more changes to influence the internal life of the EP...” (Servent 2019). In the case of radical right groups, other parliamentary groups have maintained a cordon sanitaire on forms of cooperation, though this is widely regarded as a porous and strained, if important, principle and practice (ibid.). In the case of radical right groups, it underlines the need to examine both parliamentary proceedings, and other routes through which radical right actors can

⁵¹ Source: European Parliaments Trends: <https://facts-and-figures.europarl.europa.eu/trends>

prosecute anti-gender politics. As Kantola and Miller note, political groups in the EP have traditionally been studied through roll call votes and the quantitative study of political behaviours. However, to engage the tactical dimensions of RRP (Radical Right Populist) activity requires examining a wider range of formal and informal practices shaped by specific parliamentary opportunities. They give the example of the ‘blue card’:

“The impact of RRP extended to other parliamentary practices, such as blue cards. An MEP can raise a blue card to ask to make a comment on another MEPs’ speech. It is up to the MEP speaking to decide whether they accept the blue card, listen to the comment and respond. Blue cards thereby give members an opportunity to express directly opposing views in the plenary (Corbett et al., 2016: 67; 232). It was felt that blue cards were harnessed by radical right populist MEPs in the plenary to enact ‘bad manners’ (Moffitt, 2016: 41–5) to distance themselves from the politically correct ‘establishment’ European politics.” (2021: 789)

In summary, therefore, the EP study design was required to find ways of engaging with an expanded radical right parliamentary presence in what is widely described as a more polarised and antagonistic EP. To do this clearly requires examining a number of different modes of activity in the EP setting. And, at the same time, this institutional and actor-led approach must be reconciled with the need to examine these practices as integrated to a transnational ‘strange assemblage’ of anti- gender politics, that is, to remain aware of how anti-gender politics is not the sole preserve of the radical right.

Methodology

The European Parliament differs significantly in its composition and processes from national parliaments, most notably in the extent of its multilingualism, and the organisation of politicians from national parties into political groups within the parliament. The former issue is further complicated by the absence of monolingual, official transcripts, the latter by the patterns of re-composition in political groups which took place between the two parliamentary terms being researched, 2014-19 and 2019-2024.

This methodology chapter describes the issues considered and decisions made in designing a study that, in translating the project aims and research questions to this specific research focus, could engage the multiple ways in which anti-gender discourse is articulated, inserted, circulated and reproduced within interrelated European Parliament fora and processes.

The objectives in mapping and explaining anti-gender discourses and policies are supported by research question RQ1: *What are the political manifestations of anti-gender, how are they formed and articulated transnationally, and how are they informed by intersecting categories of inequality?* In pursuing these questions, focus is on “the production and circulation of gender-equality repressive strategies and discourses by political and media

actors and in public debate”. In the proposal, the European Parliament was chosen in order to explore how ‘anti-gender discourse’ circulates at ‘supranational and transnational scales’. Given this, the first stage in the process of research involved developing adapted RQs):

RQ1: How do MEPs associated with radical right parties and blocs attempt to articulate anti-gender politics through their contributions to plenary debates and related documentation, and how do they publicise these articulations to relevant movements or networks, and seek to capitalise politically on them in public debate?

RQ2: To what extent and in what ways do issues and motions pertaining to gender and sexual equality in the EP provide an opportunity for the articulation of anti-gender politics, and what evidence of discursive and political strategies do these contributions provide? In addition, how do issues and motions pertaining to migration, racism, interculturalism and diversity provide an opportunity for the articulation of more overtly intersectional forms of anti-gender politics?

At the same time, further guidelines for the research were developed from an initial pilot analysis of sample plenary transcripts, and the literature review addressing radical right actors in the EP. These were (a) to pay attention to the specific modes of speaking and participation facilitated by the plenary agenda of the EP and assess the possibilities and limitations of these modes for the articulation of anti-gender politics, and (b) to pay attention to the occurrence and meaning of contemporary ‘trigger issues’ for anti-gender politics, documenting their projected significance and effects, and assess their relevance to strategic interventions in plenary debates – ‘gender studies’, ‘feminism’, ‘gender ideology’, ‘intersectionality’, ‘trans ideology’. Methodologically, it was decided to condense these elements into a two-part study.

Part 1 conducts coding and content analysis on a corpus of EP plenary debates, focusing on how anti-gender discourse is articulated in this context, and how patterns of consistency, development and change over time can reveal tactical approaches. This content analysis can be developed in the future through discourse analysis.

Part 2 maps actors’ articulation of anti-gender from the EP plenary to other parliamentary and extra-parliamentary platforms. The methodology for this ‘actor mapping’ is outlined at the start of that study.

Plenary debates study

The EP plenary study is guided by the objective of *examining how specific issues and motions related to gender and sexual equality and freedom in the parliament provide an opportunity*

for the articulation of anti-gender politics and assessing the extent and significance of this opportunity.

The first step in this study design tested different kinds of keyword searches in the *EuroParl* plenary debate archive. The archive allows for searches in the title of debates, and within the text of debates. For relevance and efficiency of selection, the corpus building was restricted to keyword searches that appeared in the title of plenary debates. The keyword search was expansive, both as an exploratory exercise and to try and find the forms of language more/less likely to appear in debate titles and official EP documentation. On this basis, we grouped debates into thematic categories which were refined also during the process of coding. The categories selected were:

Debates on the *Istanbul Convention (IC)* / Debates on *LGBTIQ+ rights*⁵² / Debates on *sexual and reproductive health and education (SRHE)* / Debates on *gender mainstreaming (GM)* Debates on *racism and migration (RM)*

The final debate selection was partly purposive, in large part because when a random sample was tested it featured debates including the keyword but which were thematically irrelevant (e.g. many debates on gender mainstreaming were highly technical considerations of legal instruments for pay parity and were not relevant to code). The project design proposed a research time frame of 2015-2022, and this time frame was used to sample across the two parliamentary periods.

Across these thematic categories, a total of **58 debates** were selected for analysis, of which the following 51 occur in the main categories:

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHE): 10 / Gender Mainstreaming (GM): 13 / Istanbul Convention (IC): 7 / LGBTIQ+: 8 / *racism and migration (RM)*: 13

Within these debates, a total of **1183 speeches** were analysed for coding:

SRHE: 290 / GM: 315 / IC: 240 / LGBTIQ+: 338

These debate/speech sample sizes compare favourably with other EP studies of the same scale – Forchtner and Lubarda's (2022) study of climate change communication by the far-right in the EP has a corpus of 792 plenary speeches, Berthet's (2022) study of debates about the IC and gender equality in the EP has 533. The next phase consisted in developing a series of coding questions: How is 'gender' articulated (as a problem)? / What are the

⁵² to which debates on *hate speech*, a previously separate category, were merged, because the impetus for the vast majority of these debates involved forms of discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people

consequences of the problem? / Who is held responsible for this problem? / What is the proposed response or solution to the problem?

Two random debates were selected for an *initial inductive coding analysis* where the unit of an analysis is an argument articulated in a series of consecutive sentences. Inductive coding is a ground-up approach where you derive your codes from the data while being guided by the research objectives. Coding was conducted by the researchers simultaneously in real-time through test-coding (batches of 4), comparison and consolidation, and code finalisation. On this basis, the coding questions were refined as categories, code colours were assigned, and extra categories were added:

Coding categories
Definition of Gender as a problem Consequences of gender as a problem Actors held responsible for this problem Proposed solutions or responses to the problem The “real” problem(s) gender distracts from [deflection] The “real” threats to women and feminism in Europe Anti anti-gender arguments

Table EP2: Coding Categories for EP Debates

The categories added were two further ‘tactics’ categories that became apparent in the test reading and that opened up the analytical space to further examine the ‘intersectional’ dimensions of anti-gender rhetoric. At the same time, it became evident that a record needed to be added of ‘anti anti-gender’ arguments that demonstrate over time the specific ways in which MEPs have drawn attention to, preempted and responded to anti-gender discourse.

Through a process of AI transcription, translation checking and manual coding, from 58 debates and 1183 speeches **409 items of coded content** were gathered and categorised:

Category	N=
Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHE):	92
Gender Mainstreaming (GM):	129
Istanbul Convention (IC):	60
LGBTIQ	128
Total:	409

Table EP3: *Coded Content in EP Debate Analysis*

Given their ‘intersectional’ relation to the main coding categories, it proved counter-productive to code the ‘racism and migration’ debates according to the same schema. Instead, these were set aside to be analysed qualitatively at a later point in the project, for the intersection of anti-gender with arguments about race, racism and migration.

Some code categories proved to be quite unambiguous, such as anti anti-gender, whereas others produced many instances of coding ambiguity, most prominently the relationship between ‘definition of gender as a problem’ and ‘consequences of gender as a problem’. The reason for this is somewhat obvious, in that most speakers tend to articulate the problem and its consequences together. In these instances, the coders checked with each other to ensure that the instance was included in the most relevant category.

A note on translation strategy is necessary. MEPs may speak in an ‘official language of choice’ in the EP, which usually means their national language(s), or in English/French. The EP translation and interpretation service produces an initial transcript of a plenary debate, which is followed sometime later by the upload of an official transcript which has been approved by the language services of the national representations. However, at no point is a monolingual transcript of plenary proceedings published.

This fact was overlooked at the project design phase and developing and implementing a translation strategy for a corpus this big proved to be a significant extra step in the research design and implementation. To define the approach, a review of how comparable studies approached the question of corpus translation was carried out. Forchtner and Lubarda, for example, took the following approach:

“The two authors and a research assistant coded both basic stances and specific arguments separately; differences were discussed before a decision was made. At times, problems arose regarding the language of these texts: while most of them were available in languages covered by the authors, the latter relied on their networks to obtain translations whenever this was not the case (2022: 14).

This approach appears to be representative of a lack of sustained attention to the question of translation in the field (primarily political science). For this reason, an approach that involves several steps in translation and checking was devised:

1. To obtain a basic monolingual transcript, the interpretation streams of the plenary debates were run through Speak AI transcription software. This laborious process involved requesting the videos; downloading and storing them; time-stamping the videos to ensure that only relevant content was transcribed (many of the videos issued by the Commission’s media centre were

- unedited live streams, often 13+ hours long) and to minimise the problems created for the software by longer videos;
2. Transcripts were reviewed to minimally ‘clean’ them and to insert speakers’ names when checked against the roll call of speakers in each debate; and
 3. Extracted material chosen for coding was fully cleaned by comparing the transcription of the AI interpretation with that published on the Parliament’s website and where required, matched against a machine translation (Google translate) of the quotation plus a check with consortium members according to language competencies (a three-cycle quality review process).

The actor mapping study did not raise similar translation issues, as the ‘questions for written answer’ must be submitted in either English or French.

In what follows an analysis of four thematic studies is presented.

Plenary debates on the Istanbul Convention

Introduction

Writing in July 2022, the *Deutsche Welle* journalist Stephanie Burnett⁵³ asked the following question: “The Istanbul Convention seeks to end violence against women – but in recent years it has become increasingly politicized. Turkey has withdrawn from the treaty, and other countries may follow suit. But why?”

The Council of Europe ‘Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence’ was ratified by its Committee of Ministers on 7 April 2011, and opened for signature by member states on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. It has consequently become known as and is consistently referred to in press and political discussion, as the Istanbul Convention (henceforth IC).

Though sometimes confused with the European Council of the European Union, The Council of Europe is a separate 46-member international organisation primarily focused on ‘upholding human rights and democracy’. As of 2022, 34 out of these 46 member states have ratified the convention, which entails that “...they must adopt measures to fulfill their commitment to preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence...”⁵⁴ based on four policy pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies.⁵⁵ The IC is the first legally binding international instrument of its type,

⁵³<https://www.dw.com/en/istanbul-convention-how-a-european-treaty-against-womens-violence-became-politicized/a-56953987>

⁵⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/key-facts>

⁵⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/coe-istanbulconvention-infographic-en-r04-v01/1680a06d0d>

committing states to a framework of legal and policy measures and monitoring and reporting duties.

At the time of writing, the IC has been signed by all EU member states and ratified by 21 (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia have not ratified it). In parallel, the EU has instigated a ratification and accession procedure, which is legally complex, and which provides the framework for understanding the rapid process of overt politicisation mentioned above. In 2014 the European Parliament took the lead in asking the European Commission to launch the process of EU treaty accession. Consequently, the IC has been debated sporadically within the EU Parliament, and these debates provide the corpus for this study. In 2017 the EU signed the convention as a first step towards accession, and in 2019 the parliament sought legal opinion from the European Court of Justice to ascertain the legal basis of accession. The court ruling in 2021 identified these bases while also noting the need for ‘additional time to achieve political support among member states’.⁵⁶

Opposition to the Istanbul Convention (IC): an initial overview

This reference to ‘additional time’ is an oblique reference to the accelerated and multi-faceted politicisation of the IC in recent years. Ostensibly, opposition to the IC hinges on the inclusion of ‘gender’ in the language of the treaty, and specifically the following articles.

Article 3b provides a definition of gender as deployed in the IC and it is the emphasis on social construction, assumed to be a direct contradiction to ‘biological fact’, which consistently recurs in oppositional discourse: “gender shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.” Relatedly, *Article 6* makes reference to the need to include a ‘gender perspective’ in the “implementation and evaluation of the impacts of this Convention.” On its official IC website⁵⁷ the Council of Europe recognises the ways in which the very mention of gender has become the focal point for significant ideological reaction:

“Under the convention, the use of the term “gender” aims to acknowledge how harmful attitudes and perceptions about roles and behaviour expected of women in society play a role in perpetuating violence against women. Such terminology does not replace the biological definition of “sex”, nor those of “women” and “men”, but aims to stress how much inequalities, stereotypes and violence do not originate from biological differences, but from harmful preconceptions about women’s attributes or roles that limit their agency. Hence, the convention frames the eradication of

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<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-push-for-european-democracy/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention>

⁵⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/key-facts>

violence against women and domestic violence in the advancement of equality between women and men.”

Irrespective of such clarificatory attempts, the claim that ratification of the IC involves some form of legal commitment to a ‘theory of gender’, and that this commitment constitutes a breach of sovereignty – understood, as evident below, in multiple interlocking political/cultural/gendered/racialised ways – forms the political and discursive basis for manifold attacks on, and campaigns against, the IC. As a recent investigative report by The Advocates for Human Rights Group, *A Rollback for Human Rights: The Istanbul Convention Under Attack* notes, the coherence and vehemence of the repetition of this message across media and public platforms has had significant, high-level effects: “...for example, in 2018, Bulgaria’s Constitutional Court declared ratification of the convention unconstitutional based on a faulty determination that it would require recognition of ‘gender’ as a social construct, which the Istanbul Convention does not.” (2021: 6)

There is very recent literature on the politics of the IC’s politicisation and rejection (e.g. Kriszán and Roggeband 2021), and on its treatment in the European Parliament (Berthet 2022). As a point of orientation for this data presentation, we draw here on the functional framework provided by the Advocates for Human Rights Group report, which consistently underlines the ‘speed of influence’ of the network of campaigning movements which has succeeded in gaining significant political traction. Noting the extent to which US-based and other European ‘far-right religious organisations’ have funded and supported campaigns against the IC, the report underlines the coordinated and mutually reinforcing strategies employed across national contexts and through international networks. To quote from their summary of ‘opposition positions’:

“Research and interviews reveal that ‘gender ideology’ propaganda is one of the primary factors fueling the backlash to the Istanbul Convention. The ‘gender ideology’ fiction is an umbrella concept used to oppose women’s equality, LGBTI rights, and SRR. The opposition seeks to brand different human rights initiatives as promoting a threatening ‘gender ideology’ that will destroy traditional values... This threat must be recognised for what it is: a transnational socio-political movement that exploits people’s stereotypes, fears, religious beliefs, concerns over migration, and nationalism.... In particular the opposition often uses the well-being of children to foster unfounded hysteria of the harms of ‘gender ideology’ and specific human rights. The opposition derides the human rights framework as reflecting a ‘gender ideology’ that will undermine the traditional family, erode fundamental cultural values, and erase national identity.” (2021: 3-4)

This report’s conclusion that there have been coordinated ‘disinformation’ campaigns about the IC, is seconded by Hillary Margolis of Human Rights Watch, who observes that:

“The main thing we’re seeing is a disinformation campaign about the convention and what it represents and what is intended. In a lot of ways this convention has become a victim of this broader attempt to be used for political gains; to demonise women’s rights and LGBT rights. It’s distorting the convention to create a panic around the idea that families are under attack and values and national systems are under attack, when of course that is entirely untrue.” (Burnett op.cit)

The results of this accelerated politicisation are stark and wide-ranging. In May 2020 the Hungarian Parliament rejected ratification⁵⁸ of the IC, explicitly refusing the reference to gender as an ‘ideological approach’ and to the convention’s obligations to receive refugees who are persecuted because of gender or sexual orientation, which may ‘speed up or simplify immigration to Europe’. In July of the same year, the Polish government began the procedure to withdraw from the treaty. In July 2021, Turkey withdrew from the IC, a move which generated significant domestic protest and international news coverage. In its report on the withdrawal, Amnesty International⁵⁹ noted that “The Turkish government and its supporters have said the Convention threatens ‘family values’ and ‘normalises homosexuality’, claims which have been echoed by several governments, including Poland and Hungary to justify their attempts to roll back rights.”

This context informs our choice of Istanbul Convention debates as a thematic focus, as given the extent and intensity of this recent mobilisation it clearly offers an opportunity to articulate anti-gender politics, and it does so over the time span defined for this research.

EP debates on the Istanbul Convention

The distribution of plenary debates in our corpus reflects, to some extent, the relatively accelerated ‘politicisation’ of the IC referred to in the previous section. Our corpus samples all debates that featured the IC as a key term in the plenary debate title, and this search returned two 2 debates in the 2014-19 EP, and already five to date in the 2019-2024 EP. The following debates were analysed:

Date	List of debates on the Istanbul Convention
23.11.2016	EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women
12.03.2018	The fight against violence against women and girls and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by EU member states

⁵⁸

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/05/hungarys-parliament-blocks-domestic-violence-treaty?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

⁵⁹

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/07/turkeys-withdrawal-from-the-istanbul-convention-rallies-the-fight-for-womens-rights-across-the-world-2/>

25.01.2019	EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence
25.11.2020	The Istanbul Convention and violence against women
25.11.2021	The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the state of play of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention
19.10.2022	Fighting sexualised violence – The importance of the Istanbul Convention and a comprehensive proposal for a directive against gender-based violence
23.11.2022	Eliminating violence against women

Table EP4: List of Debates on the Istanbul Convention

The debates until 2020 are primarily driven by the ratification process, the debates after this point are predominantly held, for symbolic and political reasons, on the 25.11 and can be understood as attempts by convention-supporting MEPs to mark a lack of progress on the accession process.

Data presentation

The data for this analysis is drawn from 240 speakers, 45 of whom were from RRP groups (radical right groups), constituting 18.75% of all speakers. From this 64 contributions were categorised as follows:

Contribution Count	Debate coding category
11	Definition of Gender as a problem
14	Consequences of gender as a problem
3	Actors held responsible for this problem
2	Proposed responses or solutions to the problem
6	The "real" problem(s) gender distracts from [deflection]
10	The "real" threats to women and feminism in Europe
18	Anti anti-Gender Arguments
Total: 64	

Table EP5: Istanbul Convention Debate Contributions

A debate-by-debate analysis of anti-gender discourse is presented under each of the code categories below and the detailed Table can be consulted in [Appendix A: Table AA2 \(EP2\) – ‘Istanbul Convention coded debates’](#). In what follows, a debate-by-debate analysis of anti-gender discourse is presented under each of the code categories. It is immediately

evident from this that anti anti-gender contributions are most consistently articulated within and across debates, averaging 2.6 per debate, and at least 1 per debate.

Definition of 'gender' as a problem

23.11.2016: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

Given the wider context, it is perhaps surprising that the most extensive expression in this category is encountered in the very first debate coded. It is also the most widely distributed instance, with contributions from non-ratifying/rejecting countries (2 Polish MEPs, Marek Jurek and Jadwiga Wiśniewska, both ECR, and the Slovak Branislav Škripek) supported by Daniela Aiuto (a one-term Italian MEP from the now-defunct EFDD) and Beatrix von Storch (also EFDD).

For Aiuto, the problem is that the treaty introduces "...for the first time in an international treaty the social definition of gender, which becomes binding on states that ratify the Convention."

Aiuto's contribution is in a form that recurs across the corpus, where an MEP from a ratifying country expresses support for non-ratifying colleagues less through overt ideological affinity than by expressing support for subsidiarity or some form of sovereignty. While this lays claim to a clearly democratic principle – within EU discourse – it does so here by repeating the conspiratorial notion, expressly contradicted by the CoE, that a 'social definition of gender' becomes legally binding on acceded states. In Von Storch's contribution the significance of the 'social definition' is also to the fore, and she continues to articulate an explicit 'biological' and common sense counterpoint which oscillates between scientific and religious points of reference:

"The Istanbul Convention wants to establish that the gender of a person is a social construct. So, sex comes about through man himself, through education and training, through the tides, through the sun, moon and stars. Man makes himself God."

Von Storch continues to reproduce the conspiratorial claim advanced by Aiuto, while also demonstrating how the purported imposition of 'gender' through the IC can be linked to any issue in which a notion of gender is implicated:

"The Istanbul Convention wants all national legislation to be based on this gender-gaga-crap. No sane person can agree with that. Gender mainstreaming, that is the plague of this century. This is affluent waste that belongs to the rubbish heap of history."

The first explicit mention of ideology comes from Jadwiga Wiśniewska, who is one of the most active MEPs on this issue across the span of both parliamentary terms, and who introduces two further key motifs that occur throughout the debates:

“Gender ideology is at play here. This gender ideology says that any gender has some sort of cultural background, and the violence against women is allegedly a result of a patriarchal society and this needs to be changed and replaced by some leftist ideas. This is clearly visible in some western European countries where violence reigns.”

Gender ideology is held to advance an analysis of the causes of violence which not only rejects the given state of the social order, but which does so for expressly hegemonic purposes. This contribution is the first glimpse of a *patterned imaginative geography of imposition*, with a hint of the association of gender ideology with communism/new totalitarianism which is commonplace in interventions from Polish and other south/eastern European MEPs. While this MEP is rarely racialising in her analysis, the implication here in the context of the borders crisis of 2015-16 cannot be read in isolation from the explicit articulation in other code categories - that western Europe’s ‘migration policy’ has increased violence against women.

The final two contributions in this debate explicitly reduce gender to ‘gender ideology’ – According to Branislav Škripek: “It (the convention) introduces gender and gender ideology...”; and Marek Jurek echoes his co-patriot Wiśniewska’s contribution in more compressed form: “This is a Marxist ideology document which is against the family which is considered a space for violence...”

Jurek here articulates a position that will become consistently articulated in Polish arguments for treaty withdrawal – that any suggestion that violence takes place within family relations is not about preventing violence against women, but about ideologically weakening the status of the family (Wilczek 2020).

12.03.2018: The fight against violence against women and girls and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by EU member states.

The second debate in this theme is notable for the comparative lack of articulations of ‘gender as a problem’ arguments, and while references to ‘gender ideology’ occur in other categories (see below), it is noticeable that the contributor total in this debate is restricted to two, the consistent contributor Wiśniewska, and the two-term Bulgarian MEP Angel Dzhambazki (also ECR, see ‘consequences’ code category).

Wiśniewska contributed twice on this question, firstly, and early in the debate, setting out some now-familiar elements, fashioned to a point that is also widely, and strategically repeated across the corpus, namely that opposition to the IC is solely about the inclusion of

gender (ideology), and that thus it is this ideological insistence which is solely responsible for delays in ratification:

“What we’re talking about here is the implementation of a left-wing ideology. The targets set here are preventing violence, protecting victims, making sure that perpetrators are prosecuted. We’re not questioning any of that. Of course not. But all of this is embedded in an ideological context. It seems to me that this is a gender vision of society, if you like. Where gender is socially defined, it’s a concept. It’s not actually a biological fact, it’s a concept.”

In common with other such contentions, the status of a ‘biological fact’ does not require further explanation, and the underlining of concept/construction serves not just to emphasise the artificial nature of gender, but also the problem of its imposition, as it is, Wiśniewska continues in a later contribution,

“...ideological baggage.... [is part of] an attempt being made to put forward a certain definition that doesn’t seem to share broad support amongst the populations...”

Here the imposition is not just one of West on East, but an international(ist) elite project that is straightforwardly ‘unpopular’ among populations, thus drawing on the well-documented right-populist appropriation of the *volonté générale* (Taggart 2000).

25.01.2019: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence

The 2019 debate occurs in the year where the EU process of accession becomes mired in legal as well as political considerations, and where organised and high-level opposition commands marked public attention. Given this, it is notable that there is less articulation of ‘gender ideology’—related discourse at this point, however the occurring instances are from Slovak and Bulgarian MEPs who speak directly from a position of national relevance and involvement. It is also noticeable that both of these contributions are more openly prejudiced, and targeted in their prejudice, than the preceding material.

Milan Uhrík is a non-aligned MEP who at the time of this debate belonged to the far-right Slovak party Kotleba - People’s Party Our Slovakia, and he at first rehearsed the ‘if it weren’t for the gender theory’ performance of reluctant opposition:

“The Istanbul Convention is good in many ways, but it abuses the topic of women’s protection to promote a perverted gender ideology, because in this convention, a woman is not defined biologically, but as a role and a pattern of behaviour created by society. This means that according to this convention transvestites will already be officially considered women and society and other people will have to pretend they

are blind and treat these transvestites the same as normal women. Commissioners, where do you want to take Europe?”

Uhrík’s intervention is not just the first instance of a transphobic argument in this thematic corpus, but also evidence of the ways in which the imposition of ‘gender ideology’ can be related to, instanced through, and held responsible for any issue of pertaining to gender and sexuality – it is ‘perverted’, and thus produces perversions.

The Bulgarian MEP Angel Dzhambazki, with a background in the national conservative Bulgarian National Movement, is a two-term MEP but one who only begins to appear in these debates in the post-2019 parliament, after which point he is, like Wiśniewska, a near-constant contributor across the debate corpus. In the following, he underlines the sex/biology duality, while articulating two discursive dimensions that also become more frequent over time.

The first is the rhetorical notion of LGBTIQ+ as an ‘alphabet soup’ of gender options, and the second is an argument that gains in traction over the debate timeline, which is that the IC has not diminished or eliminated gender-based violence in ratifying states, and that therefore this failure not only renders the IC useless, but proves that its primary intent is ideological imposition:

“I heard all these numbers that you are quoting today (referring to gender-based and domestic violence statistics quoted previously in the debate) but these are numbers from countries that have ratified the convention. How does the convention help? Why doesn’t it work? Because it has another goal, another task. Here we have two topics mixed in, violence against women and the absurd LGBT etcetera etcetera abbreviations and the change in the role of gender. But sex is not gender. Sex is biology. Maybe you’ll be surprised but there are still states in Europe that believe that family is a union between a woman and a man, and we are not prepared to change it.”

25.11.20: The Istanbul Convention and violence against women

This debate is the second to be held on the symbolic date of 25.11, and the first to be held as a marker of a lack of progress in the accession process. There is only one coded contribution here, again from Angel Dzhambazki, who reiterates a by now-familiar narrative of what gender ideology means and what it seeks to enact, while also intensifying the tactic of equating social construction with a fanciful proliferation of genders and sexual identities, and labouring this point through what is assumed to be absurdist exaggeration:

“The Istanbul Convention does not protect women from domestic violence, it is a cover for imposing the new gender ideology, according to which gender is not a biological but a social characteristic. For me there are only two genders – male and

female. I cannot in any way agree that there is a third, fifth or tenth gender and that these are social constructs. Our children need to know what is normal and what are the true roles of man and woman, and that the family is made up of a man and a woman.”

While reprising the idea that the IC and gender are a threat to children and normality, Dzhambazki also continues to reproduce a trope that can be traced across not just parliamentary debates, but also to wider political and campaign:

“...The Istanbul Convention is a Trojan horse that, under the guise of fighting violence against women, promotes dangerous feminist ideas...”

Here, the smuggled contents of the horse are *feminist*, in other instances, it is the imported, foreign provenance of the ideas, or their ‘Marxist’ character. However, what is of note here is that this is the first usage of a metaphor that – according to time-bound Google searches – has been associated with the IC for many years, before beginning to circulate more insistently amongst anti-abortion and pro-family activist networks.

A study of Latvian press coverage of the IC from 2016 identifies the ‘Trojan horse’ frame as one of the most prevalent employed by what are described as ‘nationalist anti-gender voices’ (Zitmane 2017); a notable early consistency given that while Latvia is a non-ratifying state, Latvian MEPs do not feature at all in the corpus. The EU policy news website *Euractiv*, covering the 2018 decision of the Bulgarian constitutional court (referenced above), summarises that: “In several EU member states, notably in Bulgaria and Slovakia, the convention’s critics claim that the Council of Europe document is a Trojan horse aimed at introducing a ‘third sex’ and ‘same-sex marriage.’” From this point on, but particularly after 2020, the metaphor is transnationally widespread in activism – from the slogan of the “Stop Gender Stand for Family” campaign of the International Youth Coalition – and in wider political rhetoric, with one Polish government minister greeting the 2020 announcement of the intention to withdraw by describing the IC as a “left-wing gender Trojan horse (in) our system, and it’s high time for withdrawal.”

A more structured research process would be required to ascertain the ways in which this metaphor has been circulated and translated, however as an interim assessment it clearly represents the high-level reproduction of a profoundly conspiratorial notion that is also malleable – the content and consequences of what is being smuggled can vary, and be adapted.

23.11.2022: Eliminating violence against women

The final articulation of ‘gender as a problem’ occurs in the most recent debate, and is a statement from the ECR MEP Margarita de la Pisa Carrión. A member of the far-right Spanish party Vox, she was elected in 2019 but only took her place as an MEP after Brexit in 2020.

Given the importance Vox have placed on forms of anti-gender politics in Spain (Euractiv 2023),⁶⁰ it could have been expected to see a parallel engagement in the EP by the clutch of first-time Vox MEPs who occupy a relatively powerful position within the EP, however this sustained transfer of mobilisation has not as yet materialised.

The exception is de la Pisa Carrión, who from 2020 appears regularly in this corpus. She is also the chairperson of an ECR policy working group on “Family and Life” launched in March 2020. Here, she compares the IC to campaigns on domestic violence laws in Spain, and articulates an argument which recurs across the corpus, which is that it is solely *the act of introducing the concept of gender* that creates division between women and men:

“This is part of a mentality where we try to be very hard with men in general, but very soft when it comes to those criminals who are most dangerous for women. This isn’t the first time that we’ve suffered the unjust consequences of ideological laws. If they want to protect us, they need to ensure that the real aggressors are kept away from their victims. I would call all the political groups who promote gender ideology, I’ll call them to wake up and recognise the perversity of this whole concept of gender violence...let’s not create an opposition between men and women.”

Consequences of ‘gender’ as a problem

23.11.2016: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

As noted in the methodological discussion, the coding line between ‘gender as a problem’ and the ‘consequences of gender as a problem’ is often ambiguous, for the obvious reason that many actors articulate both together, and through a consequential logic. Take, for example, Von Storch’s contention in the 2016 debate above, that “The Istanbul Convention wants all national legislation to be based on this gender-gaga-crap,” which is coded in the former category but could as easily be coded under ‘consequences’.

The reason for coding it in the first category is that it proved to be the first instance of a highly derogatory way of defining gender, whereas the point about legislative sovereignty that Von Storch makes is the dominant contribution in this category, as illustrated by the following straightforward argument made by Marek Jurek (ECR): “What we’re talking about is to give the European Union another, yet another instrument to interfere with the political and legal systems of our member states.”

⁶⁰ Fernando Heller ‘PP uncomfortable but compliant with VOXs gender violence negationism: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/pp-uncomfortable-but-compliant-with-voxs-gender-violence-negationism/>

A more developed version of this argument is provided by Branislav Škripek (ECR), who nuances the sovereignty in question to include that of ‘parents’ rights’:

“...[the IC] encroaches in education and affects the rights of parents, and by ratifying the protocol, we would undermine the legal systems in the member states without solving the roots of violence, and this would weaken the trust of citizens in the European Union.”

Anna Záborská, a Slovak Christian Union party member and member of the EPP group – included here because her invocation of sovereignty depends on repeating the conspiratorial idea that the IC requires a national-legal integration of the concept of gender – goes further, speculating on future ‘identity policies’ as a consequence:

“The Istanbul protocol would introduce the gender definition into our legal system, which is unknown to the Charter of Human Rights or international legislation. And this could be followed by the introduction of other policies based on identity. And I believe that this manner of thinking polarises the society because it allows us to distinguish between us and them.”

This now-familiar trope, that it is the idea of gender that produces difference and division, is also rehearsed by Daniel Aiuto of the EFDD group: “It seems absurd that an instrument such as the convention which should be bringing us together is actually dividing us.”

12.03.2018: The fight against violence against women and girls and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by EU member states.

The one clear instance in this debate comes from the Bulgarian MEP Angel Dzhambazki, who is referring here to the then-ongoing political and legal deliberations about the treaty in Bulgaria:

“The Bulgarian position is due to what we have just heard in this room. What you said proves these positions are purely political. I understand that some of you want to play the political left or the political right, but you haven’t lived under communism. Of course we want to fight against violence against women. But the convention contains some gender ideology elements and we do not agree with them. It’s not only Bulgaria that doesn’t agree. The United Kingdom doesn’t agree either. So please, you have to show respect to the internal order of every society.”

Dzhambazki rehearses the equation of ‘gender ideology’ with communism as a new form of totalitarianism, before adding an integralist dimension to sovereignty as not only the legal standing of states in the international order, but as an organic property of the nation.

25.01.2019: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence

In this debate Andżelika Możdżanowska (ECR) repeats the opposition between the imposition of artifice and organic, traditional values:

“The Istanbul convention goes far beyond its declared scope. And I want to believe that the convention is not a purposeful indoctrination aimed at eradicating our traditional values in order to replace them with some grand vision of a new man. We need to respect our differences, this is one of the European values.”

The French ID group MEP Annika Bruna reprises the argument that the only issue which divides proponents and opponents of the IC is the inclusion of gender theory:

“...this just case [of combating violence against women] is misguided in imposing the Istanbul Convention which addresses, certainly, violence against women, but which equally intends to oppose a harmful ideology. In effect, this convention intends to place gender theory in study programmes at all levels of instruction, thus imposing hazy ideas unrelated to women’s rights.”

25.11.2021: The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the state of play of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention

Lívía Járóka (NI) asserts that once again it is only the imposition of ideology that creates political problems:

“Violence against women must be removed, that's above and beyond politics, the Istanbul Convention is important. As an anthropologist, it's important that the binding nature must be acknowledged as creating ideological components that are not acceptable to Christian communities. Symbolically, it cannot create European unity, as it does not provide a consensus-oriented solution, but ideologically, you also understand and feel that it creates a very big fight.”

Angel Dzhambazki returns to familiar refrains as to ideological imposition and gender propaganda, while adding a form of racialised justification which occurs more frequently in subsequent coding categories, and which extends the imaginary of elite imposition to include migration (multiculturalism as an experiment):

“This is propaganda in which ideology was introduced under the legitimate sign of fighting against violence against women. You know this very well. An ideology that is part of the triad along with climate hysteria and the utopian ‘greenism’ of some idea of a new world order you are trying to impose. An ideology that will be swept away, of course, by your new friends, the poor refugees. It will happen and it is inevitable. Now, if you doubt about the propaganda in the Istanbul Convention, please tell me a

little bit more about the statistics concerning violence in Islamic neighbourhoods in France. Now if you really want to combat violence, you should do this through the penal codes of the member states, not through crazy propaganda and crazy attempts to change our societies through what is known as gender ideology.”

19.10.2022: Fighting sexualised violence – The importance of the Istanbul Convention and a comprehensive proposal for a directive against gender-based violence

In this debate Margarita de la Pisa Carrión returns to a theme she has articulated previously, that gender theory is unfair to men and therefore a form of anti-equality:

“Faced with the drama of violence let’s analyse the causes: alcoholism, addictions, affective disorders, hedonism, radical cultural ideas that denigrate women. To foster respect we have to educate in virtues, build healthy ties, not hypersexualise society or objectify people. Gender ideology stigmatises and criminalises men in a general way. It is an unfair topic that destroys real equality between men and women and causes fear and mistrust.”

It is possible that her reference to ‘radical cultural ideas that denigrate women’ is a reference to trans issues, which are overtly referred to as an extreme instance of gender theory in action in this subsequent contribution by Angel Dzhambazki:

“There is an ideology in the Istanbul Convention which is unacceptable to some of us, and that is why we oppose this document, and at the same time we tell you not to take the just cause of protecting women’s rights as a hostage for ideological changes aimed at family and tradition....how do you claim to support women’s rights, yet encourage an athlete who was born male to compete in a women’s league, in swimming, in boxing, in wrestling, or whatever.”

Actors held responsible for this problem

This coding category yields relatively little in this thematic study, but not because it proved to be irrelevant. Rather it is because within the discourse of ‘gender ideology’ the responsible actors are either implied or, as in multiple cases in the previous two sections, bluntly stated but without elaboration. In a relation where something is being imposed, there is always an agent of imposition. Those held generally responsible are ‘the left’; gender is a result of ‘left-wing ideology’; and across this theme this is exaggerated on two occasions to include ‘Marxism’ and in further instances to extend to ‘communism’.

This coding category will provide fuller results when examined across the thematic corpus as a whole, as it will also then allow nuance as to who is considered part of this ‘left’ in these instances. It is also worth noting here the near-exclusive blame apportioned to ‘the left’, whereas ‘feminism’ is rarely articulated as responsible for ‘the problem’.

Proposed responses or solutions to the problem

This category also yields little discrete material, primarily for the reasons that:

- a. Opposition to the IC focuses on criticising it and blocking it; there is no pressing political need to propose an alternative when the problem is artificial imposition on otherwise internally ordered and coherent societies. This is emphasised in this code in the debate of 12.3.18, where Angel Dzhambazki extends the argument to the “need to respect Christian family values”;
- b. The affirmation of sovereignty/subsidiarity is considered to be an inherent solution, as it re-states established powers and procedures. This is developed by Jadwiga Wiśniewska on the 23.11.2022, where she argues that the IC debates should shift to ‘exchange of good practices’ and that, for all the criticism levelled at it, Poland has “...an obligation to separate the perpetrator from the victim, and this has to be done immediately after a crime, and I think that this Polish practice should be used in all member states.”

Much more typical is a kind of composite statement, here from Branislav Škripek on 23.11.2016, who reiterates the key dimensions of ‘mandatory introduction’ and sovereign interference, before urging unspecified ‘other approaches’:

“The convention forces the 14 member states that have not yet ratified it to agree to the mandatory introduction of the term ‘gender’ as a social construct and to the promotion of gender ideology... with interference in education, including the rights of parents... therefore I urge you to support other methods of stopping violence in our society but not by pushing this controversial convention.”

The ‘real’ problem(s) gender distracts from

This coding category - and the subsequent one on ‘real problems’ - demonstrates the ways in which racialising deflection and feminist appropriation are pronounced if not significant dimensions of anti-gender politics in this corpus.

23.11.2016: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

A lengthy intervention is made by the UKIP MEP Janice Atkinson (ENF) who targets ‘Muslim migrants’ as a way to conflate anti-migration politics with a more generalised Islamophobia. Her reference to ‘Rotherham’ is coherent with a pattern apparent across codes, where reference to an event in one location – heavily mythicised and poorly represented – is used as evidence of what lies in store elsewhere unless steps are taken to ‘drain the swamp’:

“Madam President, you are not addressing the silent agenda, and I do not call on anyone in here to do anything, because you cover up the fact that young migrants, often of Muslim backgrounds, are over-represented in the violence against women statistics – which, by the way, is not the same as claiming that all Muslim migrants are prone to this type of behaviour. Their crimes against women, each year, in my country: female genital mutilation, 5,700 reported cases; honour killings, around a dozen; polygamy, around 20,000 illegal marriages; false marriage, 1,200 reported each year; child marriages, 5,000 to 8,000; and all this is done in the shadow of Sharia law. It took years before the Rotherham child abuse case was brought to light in the UK, out of fear of being labelled racist. In the UK we still have a parallel society of Sharia courts operating right under our noses. In fact all over Europe we see the same pattern. Those claiming to champion women’s rights are in denial and attempt to sweep this problem under the carpet. No amount of EU law or funds will make a difference until this is addressed. The truth is that by letting millions of young migrant men with Muslim backgrounds into our countries, we have submitted our women to these attacks. It is a form of terrorism. No more cover-ups, no more mitigating circumstances, no more political correctness. Like President-elect Trump, I would like more scrutiny of those you are letting in, but in the EU that won’t happen, so in order to protect our women, we need to drain the EU swamp and then make Europe great again.”

25.11.2020: The Istanbul Convention and violence against women

The Lega MEP Silvia Sardone (ID) articulates a trope which is both familiar from wider political discourse and pronounced in this corpus, that the liberal/left politics of women’s rights is hypocritical because it is characterised by silences and taboos as to the prevalence of specifically ‘Islamic’ abuses:

“Words are no longer enough to counter the submission of women, which occurs with female circumcision and the obligatory Islamic veil, all things for which, too often, the same political party is silent. Words are no longer enough to denounce the ridiculous penalties for rape in too many countries. We need more tools to report, we need more certainty of the penalty. In a nutshell, I would say, less pro-68 feminist propaganda and more facts.”

Similarly, the ID member Guido Reil focuses on ‘Islamic migration’ while making a stronger claim as to the unassimilable nature of the ‘migrants’ in question, an argument that carries clear echoes of the differentialism characteristic of ‘new right’ racism and which is a feature of AfD discourse:

“Certain taboos should be broken on the issue of increasing violence against women (which is) primarily related to immigration from certain countries and regions of

origin... research in Beirut pointed to the link between violence against women and societal factors such as women's lack of political and economic participation, discriminatory legal systems and impunity for violence against women and girls. In some Middle eastern countries, 70% of women are victims of sexual violence. This makes social progress impossible. A survey conducted in Morocco in 2019 by the Ministry of Social Affairs found that around 54% of all women experience violence. As I said, immigration from these countries and regions inevitably leads to increasing violence against women in Europe."

25.11.2021: The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the state of play of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention

Further evidencing the prevalence of contributions from ID members in this category, Gunnar Beck warns against the 'mission creep' of gender ideology and the lack of equality inherent in not equally focusing on violence against men:

"Of course women should be protected against violence. However, why only women? Men are as likely to suffer domestic violence as women. Why don't they merit protection? Second, some states subject to ratification, because they fear the courts, may interpret the Convention too broadly and apply it to gender matters unrelated to domestic violence."

The 'real' threats to women and feminism in Europe

23.11.2016: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

This debate featured two contributions from RN (FN) MEPs, then members of the parliamentary group ENF, that draw on a specifically French appropriation of republicanism=equality=feminism. Firstly Steev Briois, who also references 'Cologne', which in this period has come to stand for the threat of hyper-sexualised, 'mass migration', while also activating a prevalent French discourse of Islamic 'communitarianism' resulting in the establishment of parallel societies:

"You have allowed Islamic fundamentalism to prosper in Europe and they are supporting polygamy and forced marriage and Sharia law. You were the people who organised the migratory flows to the European Union through relocating migrants with, as a consequence, an explosion in sexual aggression, such as in Cologne last year."

Sophie Montel also focuses on Islam as the main if not sole threat to women in Europe: "The status of women is falling back, Islamic fundamentalism is putting down roots, and attacks on the physical integrity of women are reaching tragically high levels."

12.03.2018: The fight against violence against women and girls and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by EU member states.

The Sweden Democrats MEP, then of EFDD and subsequently ECR, furthers the Islamophobic imaginary which dominates this category, with a further reference to the problem of 'taboos', while also drawing a contrast with 'women in Iran' which re-occurs topically throughout the corpus:

"Honour-related violence is also increasing, despite the fact that many politicians have long tried to deny that this type of violence exists. Today, women in Sweden and around Europe dress to an even greater extent in veils and burqas, while women in Iran throw away their veils in protest against oppression at the risk of their lives. Brave women, but where is Europe and what is the EU doing? All forms of violence and oppression against women is a brutal form of discrimination and a violation of human rights."

25.11.2019: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence

Christine Anderson (ID) rehearses the argument that the problem is Islam, which does not belong in Europe:

"This is a phenomenon spreading throughout Europe, groups of men, and to test their manliness against the yardstick of the violence with which they defend their honour. Let's get rid of these symbolic expressions of concern that doesn't get rid of violence. It's this macho culture that is wrong, that doesn't belong in Europe. Islam, ladies and gentlemen, should, should simply not be here in Europe."

Jadwiga Wiśniewska makes a similar argument of deflection while not reproducing the overtly Islamophobic discourse dominant in this category:

"Europe is a very important centre for human trafficking and over 10,000 forced marriages are marriages of girls under 15, and this is paedophilia. So human trafficking, paedophilia, physical and mental violence, all this is happening in Europe, although it is legally prohibited. So I do not believe that more regulations will end these terrible, brutal issues. The Convention is not the solution."

25.11.2020: The Istanbul Convention and violence against women

In this extract, Christine Anderson rehearses an argument more commonly associated with MEPs from non-ratifying states, that the continuing realities of gender-based violence in accession states goes to show that the Convention itself is a distraction:

“Interestingly, and apart from the little pinches of ‘gender’ ideology proposed by Article 3(b) of the Convention, studies are showing that it falls short of attaining its goals. For instance: Just in Sweden, the National Council on Crime Prevention reported that the number of people killed in domestic violence doubled between 2017 and 2018. Belgian Interior Minister Pieter De Crem also denounced an increase in domestic violence during the same period, in other words before victims were locked in with their abusive partners because of confinement measures. Sweden and Belgium have ratified the Istanbul Convention, as well as Turkey, the country where it was adopted and where the rate of femicide is skyrocketing! This makes me want to ask you the following question: is there really an added value to this instrument?”

25.11.2021: The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the state of play of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention

This lengthy intervention by Jorge Buxadé Villalba, of Vox and the ECR group, reprises the argument as to the practical uselessness of the IC, while reproducing the ‘real threat’ of ‘Islamic immigration’ – with another reference to ‘Cologne’ – and the problem of how gender theory sets men and women against each other:

“The European Union allocates billions of euros a year to promote equality —or so it says. We have women's observatories, equality commissions, non-governmental organisations, government organisations, ministers, counsellors, commissioners and even chairs at universities, but it is impossible to find an official figure of what is happening. We don't know if violence against women is increasing or decreasing, but listening to you, it seems to be increasing, which means that your gender policies are useless. In fact, reality tells us the opposite: in 2015, when massive Islamic immigration was allowed into Germany, there was a drastic increase in violence against women. We are clear about it: violence against women is combated with border control, support for families and severe penalties against criminals and abusers. You do the opposite: you pit men against women, talk about "toxic masculinity" and consider all men, in general, potential rapists.”

Jadwiga Wiśniewska returns to the idea that there is a widespread denial of other crimes against women and girls:

“We must speak out about violence and help break the silence of its victims. Every third woman in the world has experienced physical, psychological, economic or sexual abuse. Unfortunately, women and girls in Europe also continue to experience the very special and cruel violence of genital mutilation, and underage girls marry adult men in the European Union as well. I would like to express my regret that this issue was not raised either in the Commissioner's speech or in the position of the European Commission. Are you pretending that these cruel crimes do not exist?”

23.11.2022: Eliminating violence against women

Guido Reil (ID) interjects the now-familiar argument that stopping migration from ‘certain countries’ will essentially solve the problem:

“We have mass migration of young men from numerous different countries which are totally anti-feminine, anti-women countries, we have to stop this type of migration...(in response to a blue card question)... it has to be accepted that this is a part of the culture where these people come from, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and Syria and numerous different countries of that particular nature.”

Anti anti-gender arguments

As noted, this category was added to ensure that while the focus is on the discursive tactics of anti-gender politics, that this focus does not cause results to be taken out of the overall contexts of debates and the ‘balance of forces’, and thus be exaggerated for power and impact. Equally importantly, what this category demonstrates over time is reflexivity in response to anti-gender discourse, a process of tactical and also principled refutation and opposition that also contributes to an analysis of how anti-gender arguments work. The arguments in this category fall into pre-emptive discourse (where the speaker previews and refutes a common anti-gender tactic prior to its articulation) and responsive discourse (where the speaker sets out to actively refute a contention).

Due to the scale of data, for this report an illustrative sample of the material is presented.

23.11.2016: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

Angelika Mlinar, (ALDE): “We are not gender ideologists, we are human rights defenders.”

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (PPE):

“I note with regret that our extreme right colleagues from France, the populists, are using women who have fallen victim to violence as a campaigning tool, which is a scandal. And I would like to ask the following question: what do you say to the thousands, the millions of women, white or not white, who have fallen victim to violence?”

12.03.2018: The fight against violence against women and girls and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by EU member states

Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the Commission:

“The Convention has generated very intense public debates where there have been misconceptions and misleading arguments. For example, these concern the use and

translation of the term gender. Let me be very clear on this. This is about preventing and combating violence against women without other hidden purposes. It is not an instrument for shaping gender perceptions or ideologies.”

Christine Revault d’Allonnes Bonnefoy, (S&D):

“You've got countries saying no, we're not going to ratify it. It's actually the best instrument available to us. And so they have to come up with excuses. They say, oh, this is about gender ideology. They start inventing consequences of ratification, but they're pure inventions. It's not about ideology, ladies and gentlemen. It's about defending human rights.”

Terry Reintke, (Verts/ALE): “Gender as a notion is not a hidden ideology but enabled.”

Malin Björk (GUE/NGL):

“Colleagues, let's face it. We are experiencing a major backlash on women's rights in the European Union and those who are attacking women's rights have now chosen the Istanbul Convention to be one of the battlefields in this discussion. And they are doing that for purely ideological reasons. They are not doing that on any scientific or any real arguments. They are doing that because they want to push forward their ideology, taking away our rights.”

“The Istanbul Convention is not an ideological battle, other than the one to end violence against women and girls, and that is perhaps political and ideological enough. It does not give rights to LGBTI people either. I must say that I am appalled by the homophobia that I have heard. Those who attack the Istanbul Convention are attacking women’s rights and LGBTI rights. They attack all of us. But it will not work because we will stand up to you. We will make the world a safe place for women, girls and LGBTI people.”

25.11.2020: The Istanbul Convention and violence against women

Arba Kokalari (PPE Group):

“But unfortunately the convention and the fight against violence against women is under attack by a great deal of unfair disinformation. Some say that, oh, the convention supports destructive gender ideology. Some others say, ooh, the convention will introduce the third sex.”

25.11.2021: The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the state of play of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/Ale):

“When an increasing number of countries decide to attack the Istanbul Convention and to use disinformation in order to undermine the protection of women and LGBTI people, the EU and its institutions must more than ever be exemplary and ambitious, not only by reaffirming our shared values on equality and fundamental rights but also by using the tools that we have to reach when they are under attack...in May 2020 the Hungarian Parliament has rejected the ratification of the Istanbul Convention under the pretext that it promotes destructive gender ideologies and illegal migration. At the same moment, civil society organisations reported an alarming increase in reports of domestic violence during the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Today it is not even possible to understand the extent of gender-based violence in Hungary as the government simply does not collect data on this issue. Instead of properly funding services for victims of gender-based violence and enacting adequate legislation to eradicate gender-based violence the Hungarian government spends its energy in rejecting any international text in excluding the word gender. Every time they want to protect some women but not others, every time they avoid the word gender, the word intersectionality, the word minorities, they do not really want to act, they are just using this. And every time they use also the word ideology, they’re just using the combat of women for their own purpose and they’re not doing anything.”

23.11.2022: Eliminating violence against women

Terry Reintke (Verts/Ale): “Even in moments of absolute vulnerability, they will not help us because our lives do not matter enough. They will actually let us die because the fundamentalist ideology matters more than our lives.”

Karen Melchior (Renew) [blue card question for Guido Reil (ID)]:

“Thank you very much for your intervention. I think it’s important that we look at the facts, and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights had a 2012 survey that showed that 33% of all women have experienced violence against them based on their gender. Do you claim that this is only from refugees, or should we look at where the violence against women comes from – that it is an integral part, unfortunately, of all parts of our society?”

Malin Björk (The Left):

“We have countries here like Poland, where we have an abortion ban and where women can die even when they are in hospital, like Izabela Sajbor. And we have Malta, which also has a total abortion ban. And in both countries, of course, those who help women to get access, to get the right to decide over their bodies, those

people that help, they are persecuted and criminalised. Shame on you! Shame on you, patriarchal, inhuman politicians that persecute those who help.”

Bartosz Arłukowicz (PPE):

“I regret that in Poland the government is considering withdrawing from this international agreement. This is another proof that the government ignores the expectations of Polish citizens.”

Findings

- Debates on the IC are a consistent site of anti-gender arguments, and the disputed references to gender in the convention facilitate a wide range of tactical interventions as to the projected ideological intentions of this inclusion. Thus, arguments about imposition, which vary from the conspiratorial (‘trojan horse’) to the defence of sovereignty, remain consistent across this thematic corpus.
- The convention’s references to gender are nearly always associated with the idea of ‘gender ideology’ in this corpus. The prevalence of ‘gender ideology’ as a point of reference in the EP is noted in Berthet’s study, where it is argued that “...the most illustrative attack against gender equality is through the rhetoric of gender ideology, used by anti-gender actors to depict the norm as a foreign ideology...” (2022: 681). What emerges through these coding categories is the relationship between this pronounced rhetoric of the imposition of a foreign ideology with the fluid associations made with it – a vast range of issues and references can be made evidence of the influence of gender ideology;
- While anti-gender discourse remains generally consistent across the time period of these debates, there is no evidence of significantly extended mobilisation on the IC in the EP over time, the wider political context and the increased electoral share of the RRP groupings notwithstanding. Nonetheless, this pattern must be interpreted in relation to the political tendency of RRP MEPs to remain ‘non-attached’ (Servent 2019), that is, to signal their distance overtly or tacitly from the EU through non-attendance. The pattern of attendance is very time-consuming to calculate and is not a priority for this study, however it is discernible in several transcripts where the pointed absence of RRP MEPs – either from the start of a debate, or following a mass exit – is referred to by other speakers.
- The debates gathered here all proceed from motions supportive of the IC. However, the preponderance of debates take place in the context of high-level governmental and international opposition to and action on the IC. This arguably bolsters the legitimacy felt by IC opponents in voicing their EP engagements. This accounts for the

noticeable level of participation from RRP MEPs in non-ratifying/rejecting nation-states. Nonetheless, the European geography of IC acceptance/rejection does not map neatly onto MEPs nationalities, as domestic supporters of the IC in non-ratifying/rejecting nation-states regard the EP as an important venue for articulating this support. Similarly, RRP MEPs from ratifying states are equally exercised in support of their group colleagues from Poland, Bulgaria, etc.

- While incorporating resistance was not previewed in the research objectives, tracking the extent of it became crucial to this data presentation. It is not just in keeping with RESIST's project aims, but crucial for understanding the extent and impact of anti-gender discourse in context. For example, in their study of the radical right and gender in the EP, Kantola and Lombardo propose to analyse 'framing strategies' through qualitative sampling, "...not aimed at determining incidence or prevalence" but "interpretative dimensions" (2021: 569). While this approach allows for a fine-grained analysis of radical right discourse, it (a) runs the risk of exceptionalising and indeed amplifying the radical right by extracting them from contexts and political relations where they are fiercely opposed, and (b) considers anti-gender rhetoric outside of the dialogic and antagonistic relations through which it is produced and reproduced, that is, it is shaped over time through interaction with anti anti-gender discourse.

Plenary Debates on Gender Mainstreaming

What is gender mainstreaming? As defined by the European Commission in 1996, it means "not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality." Gender mainstreaming as a political strategy aims to tackle structural inequality and gendered institutional practices by considering gender in all aspects and phases of policy making, and requiring all actors to promote gender equality (Ahrens 2022). Gender mainstreaming is not just about women, but about ensuring that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed.

The EP's gender mainstreaming strategy was formally launched in a resolution adopted in 2003. When the European Union endorsed 'gender mainstreaming' as its official policy approach to gender equality, there was much hope that it would accelerate progress in the area of gender equality. Two decades on, concerns remain about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels. Despite diverse party positions and the intensification of gender problematising, gender mainstreaming is well institutionalised in the EP, at least compared to many national

parliaments (Aherns 2022: 325). The European Parliament regularly assesses its own progress in this area, and the FEMM (*Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*) committee reports on gender mainstreaming in Parliament regularly.

For this section of the study 13 plenary debates pertaining to Gender Mainstreaming between 2015 and 2022 were analysed:

Date	Plenary Debates pertaining to Gender Mainstreaming
07.10.2015	Renewal of the EU Plan of action on Gender equality and Women's empowerment in development
02.02.2016	New Strategy for gender equality and women's rights post-2015
01.03.2017	Gender pay gap
30.05.2018	Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020
14.01.2019	Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament
22.10.2022	Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy
16.12.2020	The need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality
21.01.2021	The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period - The EU Strategy for Gender Equality - Closing the digital gender gap: women's participation in the digital economy
09.06.2021	Promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers
15.09.2021	Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU
13.12.2021	Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence
08.03.2022	EU Gender Action Plan III
08.03.2022	Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020

Table EP6: List of Plenary Debates pertaining to Gender Mainstreaming

Debate Coding for Gender Mainstreaming

In summary, five debates from the 2015-19 parliament were examined, and eight in the current 2019-2024 sitting. This involved 325 speakers, of whom 76 were from RRP groups, comprising 23.3% of the total. This is 4.5% higher than the Istanbul Convention debates (18.75% of speakers). The average number of speakers across the sample is 25 with the RRP contributing 5.5, so just under a quarter of all speakers in these debates on average are from

the RR. From this, 123 coded contributions were examined with the following distribution across codes:

Count	Code Description
52	Definition of Gender as a problem
10	Consequences of gender as a problem
11	Actors held responsible for this problem
5	Proposed responses or solutions to the problem
15	The "real" problem(s) gender distracts from [deflection]
7	The "real" threats to women and feminism in Europe
23	Anti anti-Gender Arguments
123	Total

Table EP7: *Gender Mainstreaming Debate Contributions*

Note: N=123

Definition of gender as a problem

07.10.2015: Renewal of the EU Plan of action on Gender equality and Women's empowerment in development

Mentions of 'gender ideology' are present in this first debate, expressing a concern that it is being exported to developing countries, for example from Branislav Škripek, (ECR):

"We impose on these countries gender ideology and the culture of death, and it is important to listen to Pope Francis who recently said that the population of the poorest countries of the Third World need to provide for basic needs and security. Home, work, land and freedom. They do not need all kinds of quota or fight against stereotypes. We have to respect the law, history, culture and traditions in third countries. We cannot impose our ideology on them and various anomalies and models of styles."

And Mylène Troszczynski, (ENF):

"...in this report, you also call for specific actions to uphold the rights of sexual minorities, such as LGBTI people. Do you believe these developing countries really need this and how far will you go in your imperialist fantasies?"

The following quote by Beatrix von Storch (ECR), in writing reveals a common argument that 'equality' has come to mean 'minority' issues being prioritised over heteronormativity:

“The institutional control of values and norms through instruments of development aid is a specialty of the EU. After the Noichl and Tarabella reports, the report on the "Renewal of the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation" is another example of nonsense on which the EU spends the money of the citizens of the Member States. The report not only supports gender manipulation by the information offices of the “EU Foreign Ministry”, but also propagates the depiction of marriage and motherhood as facts of discrimination. This is not just nonsense, this is total nonsense! Once again, the FEMM Committee not only violated the principle of subsidiarity, but also proved that this House has special rights for migrant women, women living with the HIV virus, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women (LGBTI) and women with Advocates disabilities - but unfortunately has no tolerance for straight people and families. The plenary followed the committee's view. Of course, I did not vote for the report.”

02.02.2016: New Strategy for gender equality and women's rights post-2015

Here also any initiative aimed at equality is configured as a zero-sum game that disenfranchises given majorities in favour of ideological preferences for ‘minority issues’. Jadwiga Wiśniewska asserts that:

“The left wants to promote ideological gender questions. To make children sexual beings to promote LGBTI. To change the definition of gender and the family, you have led to a situation in which traditional families may feel discriminated against because we Always hear that they're not modern enough. But they're not European enough, they're obsolete. The number of Regulations in terms of anti discriminative measures adopted by the European Parliament is huge, so there is no need to adopt any new ones. My group is against the resolution of the Left. We propose a different approach, a more rational one Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to get back to our roots To base ourselves on the values on which the European Union has been constructed, let's not be ashamed of our Christian heritage. It's a source of wisdom and strength.”

This zero-sum rationale is taken further by Arne Gericke (ECR) who insists on prescribing the ‘gender equality project’ as exceeding the boundaries of ‘real’ equality:

“...but we're not really working on genuine equality. The definition is wrong. We're not into facilitating gender issues. If we have sex education in primary schools and promotion of abortion, it doesn't mean that you can chop and change your own gender. What we want is equality between men and women, nothing more.”

01.03.2017: Gender pay gap

This statement, from Janusz Korwin-Mikke (NI) and posed as a blue-card question, received media attention at the time:

“Do you know which was the place in the Polish theoretical physics Olympiad, the first place of women, of girls? I can tell you: 800th. Do you know how many women are in the first 100 chess players? I can tell you: not one. Of course women must earn less than men because they are weaker, they are smaller, they are less intelligent, and they must earn less. That's all.”

30.05.2018: Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020

Jadwiga Wiśniewska makes a connection between the ideology of the IC, the narrative of excessive attention being paid to ‘sexual minorities’, and her opposition to abortion:

“I think that the report is very ideologically couched. It talks about the Istanbul convention, talks about sexual minorities as well in almost every paragraph. The previous speaker spoke about the introduction of reproductive rules as a condition for equality. What are we talking about? About the fact that abortion should be available at any time? Ladies, do you really think that the basic condition for equality is the introduction of access to abortion? It is not in this direction and not through the prism of gender ideology that we, as the Union, should support gender equality and women's empowerment. Women really need real support, they need to be heard and be able to act in this way to support them through education, change their fate, but certainly not through a systemic change of approach to gender issues.”

The insistence on ‘bringing ideology in’ is also made in this debate by a series of PPE members – so not RRP - including Bogdan Brunon Wenta (PPE):

“So anytime we speak about reproductive health, we speak about ending pregnancy, performed upon a request by woman's reproductive health is mentioned in both proposals. Of resolutions, the committee proposal mentions it nine times and the alternative five times. Both texts work on the protection of LGBT persons. However, the resolution should be focusing on improving the position of girls and women, regardless of their sexual preference. Both texts contain ideological paragraphs which go beyond the theme they should be on. Therefore I won't be able to support.”

And Michaela Šojdová (PPE):

“In the draft report I see more ideological issues than specific proposals. How to help women's societies that do not respect women's rights where lack of education prevails, others where we have to promote human rights and secure safety. So everybody must support first of all where violence is a part of everyday life like

Sudan, Libya, Syria. Well, in this country support for abortion is not a solution.... It's not really about the report, it's more about ideology. And I don't think that this is the right forum or right place for that kind of discussion nevertheless."

14.01.2019: Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

A common trope in these debates is to collapse equality into homogeneity, as Arne Gericke (ECR) queries:

"Where is the diversity when women and men are made identical? We should celebrate the differences that make us men and women. Let's let everyone decide personally which profession he or she would like to pursue. It could also lead to more men on the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality."

Mylène Troszczynski, (ENF), in vehemently opposing gender quotas, makes a related argument by arguing that women are demeaned by attempts to combat gender stereotyping:

"Are you so blinded by your party ideology not to see this reality? It is however obvious that our credibility as women is violently called into question with such [quota] measures... Another rubbish in this text, the importance, according to you, of deconstructing gender stereotypes in our communication, no longer using masculine or feminine but degendered and inclusive language so as not to stigmatise anyone and especially not LGBT people."

Bruno Gollnisch (NI) demonstrates how these themes can be brought together, using exaggerated scenarios to disparage the presumed excesses of gender and its impact on natural, given sex categories:

"It condenses the characteristics of so-called "political correctness" in this matter. It stems from the idea that the roles of men and women, naturally complementary, must be in everything, always, everywhere, absolutely identical. The only thing that matters to you is that there are absolutely as many men as women everywhere, whatever the vocations, tastes, aptitudes, sensibilities of each other. Parity everywhere, but then, how to count the third, fourth, fifth sexes, and what place for these LGBTI, whose mouths are also full of you, if I dare say? The result is a guilt and infantilization of all deputies and, of course, of men."

Anna Záborská further projects this, in focusing on gender neutral language, as a form of cultural imposition (PPE):

"According to the submitted text, I should address you gender neutrally. However, in my native language I have no choice: I have to decide whether to address you as

women or as men. And neither the members of this parliament, nor its leadership, nor its interpreters have the right to change the language, which has been naturally developed for hundreds, maybe thousands of years, by political orders.”

Udo Voigt (NI) equates gender with a presumptively neoliberal politics of individualisation, thus further extending the ways through which ‘gender’ is being artificially imposed:

“Luckily, more and more voices are being raised that, like me, reject your twisted denial of natural sexes and the associated negation of the differences in every human being and also dare to say so openly. Yes, for me a family consists of a man, a woman and children. Europe will only have a future if we finally reverse the abnormal politics of hyper-individualization and recognize that genders are more than social constructs.”

The solution to this artificiality is, according to Michaela Šojdová (PPE), to protect women’s natural position:

“I think our goal really has to be equality between women and men. Protecting women in their natural role – and that is the role of mother. Let’s support women so that they can develop their professional careers, let’s support women in their dignified lives, in their maternal role, so that they can properly care for their families.”

Eleftherios Synadinos (NI), who until the year before this debate was a member of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, blends Greek cultural patrimony with Biblical scriptural argument:

“God created man and woman in the image and likeness. We did not expect foreigners to preach to us the equality that ancient Greek literature and Greek Orthodox Christianity have been teaching for millennia. It is an oxymoron that the bureaucrats of Brussels, who are so keen on diversity, try to convince for the absolute equalisation and elimination of every normal difference.Yes to equality, no annihilation or abolition of the two sexes. Yes to equal opportunities, no to institutional discrimination and codified acceptance of racism and sexism. Yes to meritocracy, no extra favouritism in favour of a select few.”

22.10.2020: Gender Equality in EU’s foreign and security policy

Guido Reil (ID) commences the debate with a joke that seems to relativise the seriousness of climate change by linking it to the ‘ideological nonsense’ of gender equality:

“And apparently, climate change is particularly bad for women. Particularly for women and girls when we look at the Fridays for the Future. There are a lot of girls

who are active in this? I'm not sure why it is that women and girls are so affected and so affected by climate change. So, I am making a small joke here, of course, but this whole thing is just intolerable. We're talking about creating these posts specifically for women, and we have to stop with this ideological Nonsense.”

Charlie Weimers (ECR) produces the first mention of ‘woke’ in the corpus, and his mentions of ‘radical feminism’ and ‘intersectionality’ evidence the appearance of a practised, transnational repertoire of dismissal:

“Mr President, we used to think that sex should not be an obstacle, nor a factor, in recruitment. Not anymore. This report on gender in foreign policy obsesses over individuals’ sex. It calls for binding quotas for management positions, it references gender mainstreaming, also known as radical feminism, 24 times, and intersectional analysis, a.k.a. Balkanisation, seven times. It calls for increased funding and staff to implement gender ideology, with a full-time gender adviser in each EEAS Directorate. I suppose the title ‘political gender commissar’ was already taken. The irony is, of course, that you can’t have your woke, gender mainstreaming cake and eat it too. What’s the point of quotas anyway if gender is a fluid concept? If you, like I do, believe that merit, not identity politics, should be at the heart of recruitment policy, then vote against this report.”

Virginie Joron (ID) draws on another line of imagined imposition, this time from Europe to the rest of the world:

“I think that Europe must first put its own house in order and protect all its daughters before wanting to impose its egalitarian ideology on the other side of the world.”

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR) explicitly links this process to ‘gender theory’, and holds it accountable for the creation of conflicts through its insidious ideological work:

“Mr. President, gender ideology is an assault on sanity, a virus that tries to get into all areas, infecting laws and institutions, misconfiguring reality itself and creating a culture of victimisation without sense or hope, as is the case in this report. , which mixes very important and serious issues, such as aspects that affect human rights—the sex slave trade, female genital mutilation, the marriage of girls—, with gender theories at the service of other power interests, manipulating consciences , and is presented as a wolf in sheep's clothing. In this way, instead of inspiring, we export outside our borders philosophies and models that confront and polarise relations between men and women, provoking conflict, hatred and resentment. We only offer abortion as a source of progress. We want our foreign and security policy to reflect the principles and values that gave rise to the European project, without falling into

false fashion theories that cloud human consciousness, preventing a culture from releasing its best expression.”

Elżbieta Kruk (ECR) explicitly links these developments to ‘leftist feminism’ and positions an attention to gender as a form of sexism in and of itself:

“This report is an emanation of this never-ending willingness to segregate people into different categories with so-called positive discrimination is applied here for the purposes of the leftist feminism. We see declarations that someone's gender is of significance. This is discrimination. Very pure and. Strict so everyone should be given the same chance to you, to their competence and favouritism of certain groups is in direct contrast with common decency. So we see this alleged care. For women, this is stricter power play here by the left.”

16.12.2020: The need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality

It is a feature of exaggerated discourse in these debates that it makes connections across, and slips between, targets in the anti-gender spectrum. Here, Nicolaus Fest (ID) takes the idea of gender’s social construction as licence for a wide-ranging mockery:

“It will make you happy: I am speaking to you today as a woman. When it came to shaving, I felt like changing gender and extending the shave to my legs – you have to be flexible. If gender is – as gender activists claim – a mere social construct, then the demand for equality is a contradiction in terms. Because you don't have to be gender equal, you can just do it. Dear women, lesbians, transsexuals or whatever: just become men or whatever you want. It's up to you - just do it. Then - according to your own ideology - all equality issues are solved immediately. Since they are resolved, there is no need for a permanent forum of the Council for Gender Equality.”

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR) echoes Fest’s sarcasm in returning to the theme of artificial imposition on otherwise natural categories and identities:

“It's unusual how people are trying to impose a range of things like that, any scientific basis, and that they will fail because they go out against nature. And yes, you recognise yourself because the efforts are setting up ministries or councils dedicated. The ideology of gender equality will not have the outcomes you're trying to achieve. But we don't even know whether actually trying to get to the aim is to manipulate, to confuse. So that people cannot understand their own lives, you know, for you, women are a cultural product there. They can be built by social engineering, but we're not puppets that can be removed for women and today to do not feel as though they identify the new gender roles. Look, we need to respect people's identities. Respect femininity. Respect maternity. This has been done in civilizations

for years and years. Let's focus on real problems. Let's allow people to be people, not just products of your imagination.”

21.01.2021: *The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period - The EU Strategy for Gender Equality - Closing the digital gender gap: women's participation in the digital economy*

Annika Bruna (ID) characterises the imposition of gender ideology as an authoritarian move that takes no regard of merit:

“Your strategy of gender equality is much more about differentiation than legitimate equality between the two genders. For you, any difference between men and women are simply stereotypes that need to be corrected. Your ideology is becoming authoritative. The nations or NGO's who do not share your objectives on intersectionality are denounced. You even want to impose quotas, a policy that's against meritocracy and which denies legitimacy of what it's trying to remove.”

Filip De Man (ID)'s metaphor-laden intervention is explicitly civilizationist in configuring gender as a threat from within:

“It seems that maybe even a game of cards is gonna become the object of this gender issue, because the king is worth more the King's Guard now. And maybe the issue of fraternity versus sorority. I think that we are really missing the point when the Ottomans are at our doorstep, there's the issue of cultural wars, where capitalists and the left really want to undermine the civilization, this really unique civilization, and they're trying to undermine it through this nonsense, through this gender nonsense. But I'm going to make one concession, ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to say a man and a woman.”

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR) returns to a theme she has previously articulated, framing feminism and gender as confusions that create antagonistic difference in society:

“What does gender equality mean in connection with gender ideology and gender perspectives? Well, no one knows because it's not coherent. Now, sometimes we use the concept of gender to refer to women, yes, as a victim, others to split the biological sex from the person, inventing many different categories and also ways of feeling. This is an emotive theory with no scientific basis and it's against nature. We are talking about an ideology that seeks to promote equality, but then it only flags up differences. It creates an abyss of difference, pitting women against men, leading to solitude and despair. Let's admire the beauty of our complementarity, relationships of trust.”

Benjuma Benjuma (PPE) also implies that 'we' are at risk of manipulation, an intensification of the imposition narrative:

"Why don't we listen to people's desires with respect to our natural identity? Let us praise femininity, maternity, let's protect life. All civilisations have done that. We're not gonna be manipulated. We're not products of genetic engineering. Since I arrived in this Parliament, there's never been a single session when we haven't debated or voted on some report connected to gender equality, and I'm wondering whether this saturation might not end up devaluing such an important issue such as freedom and equal opportunities, and instead giving a false perception that in Europe women are victims and for that reason we need special protection. No, in Europe, women we're not born victims because in Europe we have liberal democracy and its freedoms and rights."

Continuing the critique of 'special protection', Christine Anderson (ID) sees also in education a push to institutionalise gender ideology:

"The portion of articles suggests to combat cyber violence through 'comprehensive sexual and relationship education'. This is yet again a way of pushing for more 'gender ideology' under the guise of protecting women, and ultimately putting the needs of the digital labour market above women's choice of career."

09.06.2021: Promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers

Christine Anderson, (ID) argues that descriptions of systemic socio-economic disadvantage is to patronise women as victims and perpetuates stereotypes:

"It often talks about external factors that women have no influence over. So then politics and politicians have to act. I think this gives a really negative image of women as being completely helpless and unable to affect their own futures. This report, 20 pages long, just portrays women as helpless. That's not tackling stereotypes, that's strengthening them. The fact that women themselves aren't even being asked for their opinion here, I think, is very clear that this isn't actually aimed at women. What this is about is creating a gender balanced CO2 neutral nonsense for the future where women don't really have a say. So stop pushing your ideology on people. Let people just be people."

Vincenzo Sofo, (ECR) uses his intervention to ridicule gender recognition legislation as it applies to gender quotas, employing a rhetorical tactic of stretching the logic of an opponent to its limits so that it appears absurd and indefensible. He positions Queer people as a transient, 'made-up' entity that ultimately harms women, a category siloed from queerness in this argument:

“Thank you, colleagues. In this report, it's asked basically quotas to be imposed, particularly for LGBT people, Roma people, for businesses and universities and so forth. I don't want to talk about the instrumentalization of women in STEM in order to placate feminist and LGBTQ lobbies. However, I do want to say that we have to accept that men and women exist. According to some people, it seems that whether you're management isn't our own choice. So tomorrow if I say that I feel like a woman, does that mean I'm going to have the right to be included in these female quotas. And then if I say I could be a man the next day and then a female the day after that, I could be transgender, pangender or a million other made-up labels. We have. I'm going to have an ad hoc made-up quota for all of them. It's going to be more quotas than jobs by the end of it. Then there's going to be this grotesque circuit and then women are the one who will actually be affected by this in the end anyway.”

15.09.2021: Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR) advances a tactic that treats gender analysis not only as an artificial imposition, but as an obstacle to properly dealing with pressing issues:

“But I also want to make it clear that I am against an instrumental approach to such a serious problem. The fight against violence against women must not become a tool of ideological struggle, and this is unfortunately an ideological project. Please note that the concept of gender is not a treaty concept, nor are concepts such as patriarchy or LGBT. As a result, there can be many inaccuracies in the application of the law, and the lack of clarity in criminal law creates uncertainty and potential for abuse. Need for protection from violence. This is a very important challenge. Too serious to impose an ideology under its pretext. The implementation of such concepts is not only not conducive to the prevention of violence, but may even be an obstacle to the implementation of effective solutions. Thus, it will have the opposite effect to that declared.”

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR) follows with a claim that gender ideology undermines the family:

“After achieving recognition of gender equality, we are adopting proposals that destroy this. National law covers all types of attack on any kind of person. It is just the ideology of gender that is now going to actually bring about a backward step inequality. It's not really protecting women. No, the intention is to show such suspicion between men and women to undermine the family. To show children the relationship between their parents as a power struggle, it will end up dividing agencies of children between parents. Interference in rights and freedoms,

particularly the freedom of expression, quite apart from freedom of conscience, which is one of the foundations of human rights themselves.”

Simona Baldassarre (ID) frames feminism as a dangerous ideology, turning the culpability back around and claiming this work is more dangerous than protective to women:

“We too are convinced that protecting women from violence is crucial, therefore it is inconceivable that the left should exploit such a delicate issue to carry on their ideological battles, which have nothing to do with the protection of women. ...Let's say it clearly: today the aim is to introduce discrimination based on gender identity as a minimum standard in national penal codes. So if I say that every child needs a mom and dad am I discriminating? If I believe that surrogacy is an aberrant practice, should I be charged? ...There is even an attempt to use education as a picklock to impose an ideology on the new generations. I'm sorry to disappoint you, but in Lazio, where I come from, we have already blocked guidelines for schools that had the same objective. Colleagues, if we want to talk seriously about violence against women and discrimination, we are at the forefront, but if the only intention is to impose ideological dictates, don't count on our support.”

Of note is the “picklock” metaphor, echoing the “Trojan horse” metaphor used to describe the Istanbul Convention. This combative framing of feminist policy seeks to position it as not only malevolent but also duplicitous, surreptitious and always at odds with and in opposition to the imagined rational, natural, heteronormative European legal person, and the familial communities they produce.

13.12.2021: Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence (debate)

Nicolaus Fest (ID) appeals to “rational opposition” in pleading for feminist actors not to ask for too much and that current national law is more than sufficient in protecting against cyberviolence:

“The author Karl Kraus of Austria said ‘You can go too far in search of the ideal’, and that's what's happening in this report. It uses a term like cyber violence, but I'm not clear what it means at all. By way of an explanation, there's reference to another favourite term ‘hate speech’ and ultimately it's all about unfavourable or unlike opinions being excluded. Any kind of criticism based on gender or abortion is covered by cyber violence first and foremost. And Mrs Spirek, your statement more or less confirmed that and secondly is still not clear what this. Rule will mean on a cross-border basis in different countries in the catalogue. Of the cases in Article 83, you would usually expect serious crime or drug crime to be covered. Perhaps Mrs Dalli can tell us how many cases do we have of people in Denmark, women in Denmark or people in Portugal insulted by people in Poland. I don't think you could

provide an answer to that even today, because there are very few cases where this happens. I think the national rules are sufficient. National criminal law and the national protection of women suffice, and this arrangement provided here is superfluous and highly dangerous for freedom of speech.”

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR) asserts that Gender Based Violence clouds the clarity needed to prosecute and fully protect women and girls:

“I'm against all violence, but we need to respect the powers under the European treaties and we can't make this into an ideological thing as far as this report is concerned. He doesn't talk...about violence against women and children, it uses the words 'gender based' and that might give rise to problems when it comes to implementing this. And we need... we might not get the requisite guarantees and legal safe security because this term is not clear, it's not being clearly defined today. For me personally, it is sad that once again such an important topic as violence against women and girls has been spoiled with unnecessary ideological intrusions.”

Livia Járóka (NI) intensifies this line by positioning any discussion of gender-based violence as divisive:

“Unlawfully attacking member states, filling them with ideological phrases, making accusations that actual agreement is impossible, and starting a division between the member states of the Union, which is very sad, because our countries, including Hungary, are also committed to the fight against gender-based online violence. The protection of our children and families is the most important thing in the online space as well.”

An almost exact replication of argument used by non-ratifying member states for the Istanbul Convention is articulated by Isabella Tovaglieri (ID):

“But we can't agree that the progressive majority in this House is correct in using this as an opportunity to try to advance its own political agenda putting forward at European level. Legislation which has been rejected out of hand in the Italian Parliament in a very similar form and is not supported by these 15 Member States because they don't like the definition of gender in the report...We are not afraid to agree on various aspects of this dossier, in particular on the need for transnational management against cyber violence. But only if we abandon an ideological approach to adopt a pragmatic and shared vision will we be able to achieve the goals we all aim for.”

08.03.2022: EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)

Questioning the language of the treaties, and therefore the legal standing of this policy, is advanced by Beata Kempa (ECR):

“The term gender does not appear in any treaties at all, it has no legal explanation, it is vague when it comes to conceptual issues, and is not primarily binding on Member States and European institutions. But of course it is worth talking about, above all, to ensure equality.”

Guido Reil (ID) returns to the theme of gender-based analysis involving ideological intervention: “As usual, you mix everything up and fight against phantom enemy images. As a right-wing party, we are naturally in favour of equality between men and women.”

Christine Anderson here demonstrates a by-now clear tactic of associating gender with elite ideological intervention that backfires on what it purports to support:

“Mr President, dear colleagues, the Gender Action Plan III report is full of big concepts and ideas, but we could break it down to the real and biggest issue: submitting the bodies of millions of poor women across the world to surrogacy, using their vulnerability to blackmail them into selling themselves off to the desires of clients from the most privileged parts of the world and then having the audacity to call it 'sexual rights'.....You claim you want to fight gender stereotypes, yet you are reinforcing those stereotypes by repeatedly referring to women as a vulnerable group. Please spare the women your hypocritical pity. Instead of empowering women to be strong and self-confident, you degrade them into helpless beings in dire need of the administration's help. Surely you couldn't be any more misogynistic than that. And here, too, for the record, out of the 705 Members of this House, only 17 are currently present. That is a shame in and of itself.”

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, on behalf of the ECR Group, states this with even more clarity, adding that the problem with gender is that it corrupts both heritage and the given order of society:

“Mr President, the external action of the European Union in the fight against inequality cannot be based on ideological theories that undermine human identity: gender ideology is perverse, degrades women, pits us against men and destroys the family and society. Third countries that need our support have the right to be respected in their identity and not be contaminated with atrocities such as the promotion of abortion. It is manipulation, blackmail: exporting these theories corrupts their culture and traditions, as is happening here in Europe. We are in favour of promoting economic and social rights, equality, guaranteeing the autonomy of women and girls, but always respecting their essence and their greatness, never in opposition to men or in a permanent conflict between the sexes: We achieve

progress together, man and woman, complementing each other. We denounce practices that denigrate the dignity of women, that affect her freedom. This action plan does not show this concern. Let us transmit all the good that our European cultural heritage has left us, let us not deprive them of enriching themselves with the wisdom of our roots in Christian humanism. This text, however, seems to me ideological and raises questions. In effect, they are the main objective of imposing that 85% of all the new actions abroad of the European Union are not gender equality as the main or important objective.”

Consequences of gender as a problem

09.06.2021: Promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers (debate)

Vincenzo Sofo (ECR) makes reference here to a familiar trope, that gender fluidity is essentially superficial and ‘made up’:

“And then if I say I could be a man the next day and then a female the day after that, I could be transgender, pangender or a million other made-up labels... I'm going to have an ad hoc made-up quota for all of them. It's going to be more quotas than jobs by the end of it. Then there's going to be this grotesque circuit and then women are the one who will actually be affected by this in the end anyway.”

15.09.2021: Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU (continuation of debate)

Dorien Rookmaker (ECR) asserts that the focus on gender is counter-productive in violence prevention:

“This proposal seems to expand the powers of the EU. In doing that, the victims become part of the political game. Because I don't believe in the necessity of an EU wide approach and that this form of violence is not a Europe cross-border issue. I'm going to vote against this. Gender Based Violence doesn't need to be included in Article 83, of course. Improvements can be made nevertheless sharing best practice, more transparency in the Member States on the progress made here. It has to be clear to one and all, but living safely, working safely should be the norm.”

Nicolaus Fest (ID) associates this with the promotion of ‘buzzwords’ that detract from the efficacy of the legislation:

“If we reject this bill, it is for substantive reasons alone: firstly, Article 83 covers serious criminal offences such as terrorism, organised crime, drugs and human trafficking. Gender-based violence doesn't really fit in there. Secondly, the offences under Article 83 must have a transnational dimension. Here you have never

explained how and why this should be the case here. And there must also be a special need for a European regulation. I can't see them here either. In short, there is no reason – no reasonable reason – to include gender-based violence in the Article 83 catalogue...In addition, it is not clear what gender-based violence actually is. The report names patriarchal structures, male dominance and even psychological violence. These are buzzwords, but not clear legal terms. And criminal law needs very clear legal terms. This is even a constitutional requirement, because criminal law norms must be defined.”

13.12.2021: Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence (debate)

Ladislav Ilčić (ECR) associates ‘gender ideology’ with what he sees as the over-sexualisation of society:

“Violence begins when women are viewed as sexual objects and a good part of the political spectrum promotes sexual desire whereas it diminishes the value of true marital love. This culture begets sexual violence and in response to this violence, the same ideologies offer the deepening of this ultra-liberal culture through the Istanbul Convention and gender ideology which endanger human dignity and identity. This is not the right path. Let us promote human dignity for all.”

08.03.2022: EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)

Christine Anderson (ID Group) advances the theme of gender ideology as a form of colonial exploitation that breaches (cultural) sovereignty:

“Under the threat of taking away humanitarian aid, Members of this House are ready to mould Third World countries into a copy of what they fantasise Europe to be, without any regard for the right to self-determination, especially the one of women they claim to defend. While insisting to be the home of human rights, embracing diversity – lifting it as a banner just to show the world how great we are – we are about to vote in favor of enslaving women from all over the world under the pretense of saving them from sexual violence. Yes indeed, we have lost all sense of shame.”

Actors held responsible

The range of actors held responsible for the problem of gender in this theme are on a familiar spectrum from (07.10.2015) ‘Islamic fundamentalism’; (02.02.2016) ‘the Left’; (14.01.2019) ‘far-left populism’; (22.10.2020) ‘radical feminism and intersectional analysis’; ‘Balkanisation’; (14.01.2019) ‘Feminism is a disgrace to women’; (21.01.2021) ‘both capitalism and the Left’; (09.06.2021) ‘Feminist and LGBT Lobbies’; (15.09.2021) ‘The Left’; (13.12.2021) ‘The progressive majority’; and (08.03.2022) ‘Radical Islam’.

Proposed responses and solutions

It is notable that the category of alternative solutions is almost non-existent in this data, except for a normative statement on 21.01.2021 from Annika Bruna (ID): “We are attached to equality between men and women, their differences and their complementarity.”

The real problem gender distracts from

01.03.2017: Gender pay gap (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR) points out that international concern over the situation in Poland distracts from news of real advances in equality:

“For many months now, European institutions are enjoying a witch hunt against my country and also some clichés about the situation in Poland are circulating. Same applies to the political situation. These are only innuendos, and the recent report of PricewaterhouseCoopers is a clear case in point. And this clearly says that Poland is in the avant-garde of Countries of the pay gap of only 7% now the PwC clearly states that if we maintain this trend of changes, the pay gap will be removed as soon as 2021.”

30.05.2018: Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020 (debate)

In a blue card question Michaela Šojdrová (PPE) conflates the right to abortion with the prevention of sexual violence:

“You have also called for giving women abortions or the right to abortions as a solution. Do you really think that abortion is the best solution that will prevent further rapes or more rapes? Aren't there better solutions that would prevent this from happening?”

14.01.2019: Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament (debate)

Mylène Troszczynski (ENFA) suggests that attention to gender is a distraction from more pressing threats:

“At a time when Europe is no longer able to protect its citizens because of borders that millions of migrants easily cross, at a time when Mr Juncker, through his free trade treaties, is [causing] unemployment of millions of Europeans, at a time when communitarianism and Islamism are poisoning our countries and threatening the lives of our citizens, your priority for the upcoming elections is the deconstruction of gender stereotypes in the name of inclusion.”

The tactic of comparing gender mainstreaming to more pressing issues is rich vein of contribution in this coding theme, as it is a very common tactic of relativisation:

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR): “If we really were to focus on gender-related problems, then one of the main, if not the main topic, would be the issue of combining work and family life - this is a problem that women face.”

Anna Záborská (PPE):

“What is worse, they also overshadow meaningful initiatives, for example to improve the position of women in the working environment, zero tolerance for sexual harassment or valuing the work of women and men regardless of gender. My fourteen years of experience in European politics clearly show that we repeat this theme every election period, and at the same time show that the use of terms that people do not understand harms women in particular.”

21.01.2021: The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period - The EU Strategy for Gender Equality - Closing the digital gender gap: women’s participation in the digital economy (debate)

Dorien Rookmaker (ECR):

“Let's concentrate on the important issues discrimination of women on the labor market, the housing market, the health service, education, and above all, discrimination by Member State governments. Let's focus on these five important battlegrounds and stop with searching for new topics.”

08.03.2022: EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)

Christine Anderson (ID):

“The FEMM committee, euphemistically called the "high-level group" in the report, wants to once again enforce gender parity in politics and elsewhere, but of course only in the boardrooms, but never in road construction, garbage collection or among sewer workers.”

Sara Skyttedal (PPE):

“There is a war in Europe, but it is not a war of the sexes, as one might think when reading the report on gender mainstreaming. I hope that Parliament can choose to focus on the real equality issues instead.”

This tactic is complemented by focusing how any attention to gender mainstreaming could deflect attention from men’s issues:

Isabel Benjumea Benjumea (PPE):

“We are experiencing a war in which there are men, mainly men, although there are also many women, but mainly men, fighting for our freedoms, and we are here lamenting the representation of quotas within the European institutions”.

Guido Reil (ID): “When female politicians experience insults, disparagement and threats, it is appalling, but it affects many politicians – regardless of gender.”

The real threats to women and feminism

07.10.2015: Renewal of the EU Plan of action on Gender equality and Women's empowerment in development (debate)

In this coding theme, the danger of Islam and Islamism is the key real threat which is consistently articulated across time and debates.

Mylène Troszczynski (ENF):

“A lot of this violence does start in cultures which are characterised by Islamic fundamentalism and is also found in Europe in the mosque. Words of one of the imams were reported in the newspapers. If a woman goes out without her honour, that's the Islamic veil, it shouldn't be surprising that the men abuse her. It couldn't be much clearer than that. So, this utopian ideal of equality to men and women is not to be found in those countries where there's forced marriage, there's forced sterilisation.”

02.02.2016: New Strategy for gender equality and women's rights post-2015 (debate)

Louise Bours (EFDD):

“Do I feel more empowered and safer than ever before? No, in fact I would argue the reverse is true. I am sure many of those women in Cologne, Sweden and elsewhere feel exactly the same. What did you think was going to happen when the EU opened the door to millions of people from countries and cultures where women are treated as second class citizens and LGBTI people are treated even worse?

The wilful cover-up at the facts surrounding Cologne and elsewhere by politicians, the authorities and the press shows you that European politicians care more about political correctness than actually protecting the safety and rights of women. The EU is clearly trying to deny that this kind of violence even exists.

What about trafficking? A UK Government report says that free movement within the EU is extensively exploited by organised criminals to bring human trafficking victims to the UK. Europol says free movement makes it more difficult to detect these

operations. It is the perfect environment for the criminal gangs to act with impunity. The current EU gender strategy is, and will continue to be, an absolute failure. Whilst the UK remains in the EU, women, LGBTI people and the rest of society are less safe and less secure.”

22.10.2020: Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy (debate)

This focus on Islam and Muslims in Europe intersects with references to the real threat of FGM, and the wider threat of immigration.

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR): “...very important and serious issues, such as aspects that affect human rights —the sex slave trade, female genital mutilation, the marriage of girls.”

21.01.2021: The International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the State of play on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR): “In the UK 500,000 women have undergone mutilation. Some girls are sexually abused. It is here in the UK that women's rights are not being respected and we should take care of that.”

15.09.2021: Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU

Virginie Joron (ID):

“On the other hand, the burned women, the acid attacks, the gang rapes in the cellars, I have never read it in the novels of Flaubert or the theater of Molière. From now on, in Sweden, in Austria, in France, our girls are afraid to go out alone in skirts at night. Why two out of three sexual assaults in transport in Île-de-France are the work of foreigners? Why in Germany, half of the suspects of gang rapes are foreigners, Afghans in particular? Why are these crimes rarer in Eastern Europe, while these countries are poorer? Do we have the right to talk about this explosive report from the Swedish Ministry of Justice which reveals that foreigners born in Africa or the Maghreb are three to five times more involved in rape? Do we have the right to say that enough is enough? Read the horrifying tale of Shaina's ordeal. This 15-year-old girl was the victim for years of multiple rapes and violence committed by young people in a Parisian housing estate. The one who gave him the finishing blow was called Driss. After impregnating this teenager, he stabbed and burned her alive. Because for him, he did not want his mother to learn that he had made a "bitch" pregnant, because he was a Muslim. Let us first think of these crimes, of these women far removed from any ideology.”

08.03.2022: EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)

These debates focused on arguing that real gender inequality is in the countries Europe has 'mass immigration' from.

Guido Reil (ID):

"If you really want to fight for women's rights, then travel to the countries from which the EU has seen so much immigration in recent years. Gender inequality is still very real there. You would have my full support immediately. Instead, you convince young women that any setbacks they experience are due to their gender. This is narcissistic and prevents personality development and growing up."

Anti anti-gender arguments

01.03.2017: Gender pay gap (debate)

Iratxe García Pérez (S&D):

"Well, according to what you're saying and according to your theory, I wouldn't have the right to be here as a Member of Parliament, and I know that you're very upset and very concerned about the fact that we women can represent citizens on an equal footing with you. Now I think I need to defend European women against men like you?"

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE):

"Now today's debate is very telling. Only four men have participated, one of them to insult us. So people need to change their attitudes. It's everyone's problem. It's a social problem for men and women."

30.05.2018: Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020 (debate)

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE): "We have to combat injustice suffered by women around the world, and that is what this report is about it's not about ideology."

Liliana Rodrigues (S&D):

"We will see the DPP minority blocking this on an ideological basis consistently and the conservative spirit. In this context, it is turning into a tool to be used against LGBT people, against women, against others, including the case of abortion in cases of rape. Gender equality is not about ideology. It's about justice. Thank you."

14.01.2019: Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament (debate)

Blue card to Sośnierz from Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE):

"You have just used a stereotype of the situation of women...Women are absolutely prepared for all kinds of jobs and responsibilities. And, precisely, what we are denouncing here is that we do not have the same opportunities....For this we are also working in the European institutions, so that there are fewer accidents on the roads. Surely, if there were more women driving, the situation would be better."

Eleonora Forenza (GUE/NGL), domanda "cartellino blu" [blue card]:

"Onorevole Troszczynski, we still have an enormous gender pay gap at the level of the European Union and of the Member States. How do we deal with this, not to mention gender stereotypes? Third question, you were talking about a recruiter first. Here, I don't want to be a share of a male recruiter, I want to change the recruiter and ensure that the recruiters are men and women, this is done, I hope it is convenient, precisely by changing gender stereotypes and overcoming them."

Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz (PPE):

"I am a bit surprised that the importance of something like breaking gender stereotypes is being questioned in this House. If 100 years ago the first suffragettes had not broken gender stereotypes, the President would not be chairing these debates, the Commissioner would not be representing the Commission, and we, the Members, would not be speaking in this House, simply because there would be no women here at all."

Evelyn Regner (S&D), Frage nach dem Verfahren der blauen Karte [blue card]:

"Ms Wiśniewska, a quick question for you: are you aware that the title of the report is 'Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament' and not "Reconciliation of work and family life" or some other x—random topic?"

16.12.2020: The need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality (debate)

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (GUE/NGL):

"We need firm responses to the far right and to the religious conservatives groups who use the idea of the ideology, ideology of gender equality to violate women's rights. We need a. A coordinated strategy, or we will be the generation which lives worse than our predecessors, will take ourselves back to the 18th century."

Karen Melchior (Renew):

“Black, Muslim and trans women, we are all women. And we demand that our governments remember women. Good intentions must be transformed into action, so fuck the patriarchy.”

Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE): “Are all initiatives aimed at equalising opportunities and protecting the discriminated gender denied under the guise of fighting ideology? Yes.”

Marc Angel (S&D):

“Madam President, a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality and equality was never more needed than today. The COVID—19 crisis has shown us again that too many inequalities exist between women and men. Too much discrimination subsists for, amongst others, people with disabilities, people of colour and LGBTI persons. The most vulnerable people are often victims of intersectional discrimination. So let me also clearly also state that gender is not an ideology, as the very right—wing benches of this hemicycle always want to make us believe. No, it is about identity.

The S&D Group will stand against those who want to ban this word in European documents, and the same goes for intersectionality. Yes, multiple discrimination also exists in our Union, and we Socialists and Democrats appreciate that Commissioner Dalli insists that all equality strategies and policies from the Commission must talk to each other.”

21.01.2021: The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period - The EU Strategy for Gender Equality - Closing the digital gender gap: women’s participation in the digital economy (debate)

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, (GUE/NGL):

“Member States such as Poland and Hungary have used the pandemic as an opportunity to introduce new measures. To limit access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, attacking on transgender and intersex people's rights and to roll back on important work to combat gender-based violence. They use the Istanbul Convention as a scarecrow. And they eliminate the word gender from official policies as if there was a new witch hunt. And women and their rights are the hostages. I don't understand why so many politicians want to overlook questions of gender and they close their eyes and don't want to see. That there are also people that have other sexual preferences and they think that if we remove the word gender from. Our documents and laws. We will somehow solve all the problem.”

15.09.2021: Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU (continuation of debate)

Malin Björk (GUE):

“Some people think it's OK to restrict our lives in this way. Sometimes they give pretext to this, but basically they don't believe that. This is sufficiently important, but they're not gonna win. Every piece of progress has been a fight for organisations for our own survival. They're the ones who pushed this on, together with parliamentarians, people who are allied to our cause, and that is the same today. I'd like to thank all those feminists who have ceaselessly fought the good fights to make sure that there's been action within the parliaments as well.”

13.12.2021: Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence (debate)

Maria Noichl (S&D):

“To deal with this topic, which is like a cancer throughout Europe, and to deal with violence against women on the Internet, because freedom of speech on the Internet in Parliament, freedom of speech at home, in the family or in the workplace, is for men and women alike, and they should be able to exercise it without being attacked on the Internet.”

08.03.2022: Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020 (debate)

Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE):

“What was a largely supported achievement 10 years ago, the Istanbul Convention, is questioned today in some political parties, in particular in central European countries, where ruling parties reject even the word ‘gender’, and we heard it tonight. This anti—gender attitude means that gender equality is rejected as a recognition of human rights for women. We should include these issues in our dialogue with national parliaments.”

Vera Tax (S&D):

“Chairman, ‘Vera, why do you keep worrying about women's rights? There is a war going on in Europe. Where are your priorities?’ I get this question more and more often and actually always when it comes to gender equality. Right now, European women and men in Ukraine are fighting for their country, trying to save and bring their children to safety. Some women are even forced to deliver their baby on the subway. In any crisis, be it war or a pandemic, it is women who are hardest hit. Every time again. The numbers speak for themselves.”

08.03.2022: EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, on behalf of The Left Group:

“Mr. President, today is March 8 and we have to stop to think, once again, about the challenges that women face: ending violence against women, guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights, promoting women's leadership and investing in for humanitarian action with a gender perspective, for example. And we are going to work on it, even though the far-right forces, who also sit in this Parliament, are determined to prevent it. I say this because the Action Plan, of which we are reporting today, has been vetoed by four governments in the Council, which say they reject the term "gender": centuries of reflection and feminist struggle aired with a stroke of the pen.”

Findings

- Anti-gender arguments are a consistent presence in this thematic corpus of debates, however there is no straightforward evidence here of increased articulation of gender as a problem from 2015 to 2022. The average number of coded interventions for these debates is four, the largest total, ten, was recorded when “Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament” was tabled as a debate;
- The invocations of gender as an ideology or imposition remain consistent in this corpus, which allows the regular reproduction of similar arguments as to its conspiratorial or undemocratic character. It is presented interchangeably as superficial and a distraction, and as a serious threat to culture, society, and sovereignty;
- Anti anti-gender (refutations of misogynist intervention from RRP) are also double the average at that time (up to four in contrast to usual two interventions.) Thus, there is a strong correlation between the number of RRP (Radical Right Populist) speakers present and the number of counterarguments, i.e. “anti anti-gender interventions”. It is unsurprising that the Left and Centre Left along with the Commission’s Rapporteurs on Equality Strategy would organise to strategically counter anti-gender narrative, but it is still insightful to quantify this correlation across a sample of Gender Mainstreaming debates spanning seven years. Interestingly, anti-gender interventions average at four per debate (this is when only counting “Gender as a problem” coded material so it is likely higher) whereas anti anti-gender interventions average at two leading to the question if counter tactics are losing quid pro quo against the volume of anti-gender interventions in the European Parliament. More research is needed to ascertain whether the Anti anti-gender strategy is to focus on countering each actor with a counter argument rather than contest each overtly anti-gender intervention. Another plausible reason for the AAG actors having half as many counterpoints is that refusing to engage is

noted as a strategic choice (Kantola and Miller: 2021; Cullen 2020) along with coalition building and rulemaking.

Plenary Debates on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

SRHR is a project and product of reproductive justice, a critical feminist framework catalysed by a resistance to patriarchal reproductive politics. The three core values of reproductive justice are the right to have a child, the right to not have a child, and the right to parent a child or children in safe and healthy environments. The framework moves women's reproductive rights past a legal and political debate to incorporate the economic, social, and health factors that impact women's reproductive choices and decision-making ability. The United Nations defines SRHR as:

“Taken together, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) can be understood as the right for all, whether young or old, women, men or transgender, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, HIV positive or negative, to make choices regarding their own sexuality and reproduction, providing they respect the rights of others to bodily integrity. This definition also includes the right to access information and services needed to support these choices and optimise health.” (UN Women 2020: 4)

The European Commission has been trying to standardise access to reproductive healthcare since 2016 with notable backtracking from countries such as Hungary and Poland, culminating in disruptive protests during plenary sessions (e.g. 05.10.2016) from Polish Women's Rights Activists. The Commission's current position can be read in a press release issued by the FEMM Committee in June 2021 entitled 'EU countries should ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health':

“With 378 votes in favour, 255 against and 42 abstentions, plenary states that the right to health, in particular sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), is a fundamental pillar of women's rights and gender equality that cannot in any way be watered down or withdrawn.

Parliament declares that violations of women's SRHR are a form of violence against women and girls and hinder progress towards gender equality. It thus calls on EU countries to ensure women are offered high quality, comprehensive and accessible SRHR, and to remove all barriers impeding them from using these services....” (FEMM Committee 2021: 5)

Rapporteur Predrag Matić (S&D, HR) said:

“This vote marks a new era in the European Union and the first real resistance to a regressive agenda that has trampled on women's rights in Europe for years. A majority of MEPs have made their position clear to member states and called

on them to ensure access to safe and legal abortion and a range of other sexual and reproductive health services.”

RRP actors cite freedom of religion/conscience to refuse reproductive medical treatment, on a spectrum from refusing or restricting access to contraception to banning access to safe abortions on a state level. We analysed ten debates: eight about SRHR and two pertaining to banning sexual education (15.06.2017 and 21.10.2019). They are listed chronologically below:

Date	Plenary Debates relating to SRHR and sexual education
10.09.2015	The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings (debate)
05.10.2016	Women’s rights in Poland
15.06.2017	Observance of the International Day of the Family: promoting the role of parents in safeguarding
12.02.2019	Experiencing backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU
21.10.2019	Criminalisation of sexual education in Poland
23.06.2021	Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women’s health
20.10.2021	The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland
15.12.2021	Plans to undermine further fundamental rights in Poland, in particular regarding the standards of the European Convention of Human Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
20.01.2022	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union
04.07.2022	US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and Women’s health in the EU

Table EP8: *Plenary Debates relating to SRHR and Sexual Education*

Debate Coding for SRHR

Consult **Table AA4** (EP4) – ‘SRHR coded debates’ for the detailed data.

Count	Code Description
31	Definition of Gender as a problem
5	Consequences of gender as a problem
9	Actors held responsible for this problem
7	Proposed responses or solutions to the problem

8	The "real" problem(s) gender distracts from [deflection]
6	The "real" threats to women and feminism in Europe
27	Anti Anti-Gender Arguments
79	Total

Table EP9: Code Descriptions for Plenary Debates relating to SRHR and Sexual Education

Note: Total=79

In summary, five debates were examined from the 2015-19 Parliament, and five in the current Parliament, from a total of 290 speakers; 72 from RRP groups, comprising 25% of total. In the total of 79 coded contributions, there is a doubling of anti-gender interventions from 2016 onwards, peaking at six in 2021. There is a consistent level of deflection throughout the ten-debate sample i.e. “this is not really about sexual reproductive rights, this is about protecting the most vulnerable person, the unborn child/young school children...”. Anti anti-gender interventions are consistent throughout with a notable peak in debates clearly tabled by the left and centre left and explicitly feminist MEPs e.g. ‘The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings,’ and ‘Experiencing backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU’.

Definition of gender as a problem

This first debate in this category commences with a tacit rejection of sex disaggregation, a theme evident throughout the corpus.

10.09.2015: The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings (debate)

Louise Bours, on behalf of the EFDD Group:

“Eurostat says that 68% of people trafficked are women, and this is indeed a shocking percentage. However, surely the aim should be to end trafficking altogether, not worry about what gender specific measures the Commission should take from the movement rules makes trafficking easier for those who deal in human exploitation.”

05.10.2016: Women’s rights in Poland (debate)

Michał Marusik, (ENF) advocates for national autonomy on abortion rights, decrying the Commission's lack of respect for individual member’s judicial processes. This is a theme and line of argument that appears across the corpus and is one of the key points of contention when trying to get reproductive justice legislation through the European Parliament.

“You do not respect those principles whereby the rights of life is an inherent part of life in a country with this rule of law. We have applied constitutional law in Poland and [...] for you Women's rights, it is the same as access to abortion.

For me, it isn't.

There are 50 million abortions, which I find a shocking figure. If you look back to the Second World War, far fewer people died in a World War over a period of six years. So this annual figure, it amounts to a number even greater than the population of Poland or Spain. Anyway, this is genocide. People are saying that the Islamists are preparing to invade us at the moment. And there we for our sort are defying the word of God. God said go forth and multiply, and we're doing the opposite through abortion. And we're trying to kill our own civilization through things like abortion.

This gender equality doesn't mean that there cannot be positive discrimination. So we could apply the principle positive discrimination to the unborn fetus. For those fetuses that haven't seen the light of day, they might be women. So maybe we should stop female fetuses from being killed. Maybe that's a way of protecting women ...And since both parents have the same rights after birth, they should have the same rights before the birth, because the baby doesn't belong to the mother, it also belongs to the father.

However, there is a huge moral and legal problem all around the world. This is linked to abortion. However, everyone's freedom ends where the freedom of others begins, a woman's right to choice ends where a child's right to life begins. “

15.06.2017: Observance of the International Day of the Family: promoting the role of parents in safeguarding good-quality education for their children

Vocalising transnational alliances, Beatrix von Storch (ECR) is explicit in her support of the Orbán government and vision of a heteronormative family and voices a strategic move away from the “path” that the Commission sets out in the Noichl report:

“You notice that this is the exact opposite of what seems to be religion here in this house. The European Union prefers to support day nurseries like those in the Eastern Bloc and the GDR. Mothers shouldn't worry about their small children, but they should realise themselves at the workbench, because only that is true achievement and career. And in the Noichl report we actually decided that marriage – of course only traditional marriage and not gay marriage – and the role as father and mother are dangerous to health. That is probably also the reason why the responsible Commissioner Jourová is not sitting here today, but the Commissioner for Health. family health risk. The EU simply does not want to recognize the importance of the family and the role of father and mother...

...But there are Member States that are on the right track. Hungary, for example, recently held a demographics summit under the Orbán government. They had previously launched a series of family policies that do just that - empowering fathers and mothers to care for their children and for early childhood education. So there are these Member States that have taken the right path, and I wish for Germany and also for the European Union, but especially for my country Germany, that we take this Hungarian path in matters of family policy. And that means that we have to move completely away from the path that is being followed here in this House and turn towards the path that the United Nations is describing: The most important things in life for a child are father and mother and families and not the state as supreme authority; that's the belief here, that's fundamentally wrong."

12.02.2019 Experiencing backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, (ECR):

"I do not agree with the main assumptions and the key elements of this resolution, first of all because it aims at restricting the freedom of speech by appealing to criticise the same Istanbul Convention, it also condemns the family policy and maternity policy. I do not agree with the assumption in this resolution saying that the abortion or the rights of sexual minorities could be understood as a deterioration of women's rights.

At the same time, we have to make sure that we don't cross any lines, because you have strong feminists, of course. People approach things in their own way, take things into their own hands. Of course the right to life is extremely important. The life of an unborn child's most vulnerable group in the world may can't fight for their own rights, and reproductive and sexual rights are not a right, but rights of the Unborn child, the retrograde movement, it's not something that I can agree with, as the authors say. Because we have to make sure that it's not down to ideology and just a question of time. These are timeless issues and of course subsidiarity is something needs to be recognised...

...It is unfortunate that this was abused to criticise conservative policies. As a member of Christian Democratic Party, I say this protects women's unborn children. It protects all life, which is why in the interest of life, we should be in favour of policies that protect maternity and parents."

Marek Jurek (ECR) appeals to the canon of traditional European curricula in maintaining the status quo:

"Article 14 of the Convention says that the schools will be used to promote non

typical sexual roles, while the parents' rights are to say no to such treatment. Article 14 says that. Schools are to eradicate tradition and customs which promotes stereotypical roles of women. Perhaps the *Odyssey* will have to be banned because Penelope waited for her husband for too long. How can you say that countries which did not approve the Convention tolerate the aggression? It's not your country, it's in Germany rather than in the Czech Republic that we have forced marriages."

21.10.2019 Criminalisation of sexual education in Poland (debate)

This debate is the most overt conflation of sex education with paedophilia, highlighting the widespread mobilisation of parent's groups and radical parties in Spain, Poland and Hungary in particular, to ban SRH education in schools.

Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, (PPEI) says:

"I'm also surprised that we are conducting a debate here in this Parliament on sex education in Poland, so that Polish children have the opportunity to defend themselves against paedophilia and against unwanted pregnancies. Pope Francis said: "Sex is a gift from God. Sex education must be taught in schools." He said this out of concern for the young generation, and unfortunately, I have the impression that school sex education in Poland today under the rule of PiS has become a very suspicious thing. In fact, some say that the lack of sex education protects against paedophilia.

The fact is, the people of Poland seem to have a government which is taking the education of its children seriously and it wants to protect them against this perverse left-wing ideology. Members of Parliament who have used their power to bring this onto the gender of the European Partnership is ashamed of themselves. Be ashamed of yourself. (2) So this is about breaking barriers towards victims, and this is the ideology you promote so that victims cannot protect themselves."

23.06.2021 Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health (debate)

An example of tactics from opponents to SRHR is apparent in the below quotations:

Predrag Fred Matić, Commission's Rapporteur: "We've received hundreds of mails, messages and letters. They even sent me some bizarre dolls. They've even called me Hitler. And those are the same people who talk a lot about goodness, peace, love and mercy."

Simona Baldassarre, (ID) asserts her authority as a medical doctor in rejecting sexual

education:

“Today we are talking about an ideological divisive report, the shadows. Amazed that not even 60% of the ID amendments have been taken into consideration[...]This text proposed unthinkable things, that gender has to come into all schools in Europe. As a doctor as well as a politician, I think it's absolutely absurd. The Italian Constitution protects the right to conscientious objection. [...]The right to life is being placed under attack and we have a responsibility to shoulder here our future, our culture, our identity, our at stake. There is nothing more serious than the defence of life. “

Milan Uhrík (NI) ensures to consistently address the parliament as the binary and question the public spending of money for ‘sex change operations’:

“Ladies and gentlemen. This motion appeals to us to support the LGBTI community and that we should do this as a primary school. There are recommendations here to recommend Sex change operations, that this should be paid for out of the public purse. In this report, it says that there can be men who fall pregnant. They want the European Union to find money to fund campaigns about abortion, but no money for women who don't need abortion. On the other hand, campaigns which will convince women not to have an abortion, are deemed to be extreme or extremist. With all due respect, I think I've never seen such a wrongheaded report in my life. This is not a report that should be found in the legislative it should be found in the bin.”

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE) uses the interesting phrase ‘ideologizing human rights’:

“Do you really think that this strengthens Europe and democracy? Look, distributing letters of rights, being addicted to being right, sending those who don't think like you to the galleys, imposing and winning instead of convincing and agreeing, or ideologizing human rights do not help Europe or democracy anymore.”

Miroslav Radačovský (NI):

“The report of Mr. Matić is the result of liberal extremism and that's why we can't support it or accept it. I believe that women's rights are very important as are LGBTI rights, but above all our children's rights and the rights to life. The right to have their natural mothers and fathers.

Children's rights are inalienable. Brussels can't decide on their health, and this is something that should be decided on by Member States and by individuals. Colleagues, members of the European Parliament, children are not a thing, they

are human beings.”

Gilles Lebreton (ID):

“Given the threat of Islamism, the Matić report could have used the opportunity to reaffirm this without causing controversy, and yet it doesn't. Under the pretext of saying that women have rights, it interferes in Member States' competency by trying to impose on them a rather arguable concept of family based on an intersectional approach, without respecting the rights of each Member State to freely legislate on abortion.”

Cristian Terheş (ECR):

“To report also in this claim that men can give birth and they should, and I quote, ‘benefit from measures of pregnancy and birth-related care’, period. Making such a claim makes the EU a laughing stock across the world. We need therefore to respect and safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of everybody to protect and promote the actual European values, and vote therefore against this report.”

20.10.2021: The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR):

“Abortion can't possibly ever be a positive thing, and so it's not a human right, it's not a fundamental right, it's not something you should be fighting for. It's something which people suffer around. Therefore, a fetus and a newborn are entitled to protection? The right to life is sacrosanct, as indeed the Polish Constitutional Court has stated and ruled.”

Balázs Hidvéghi (NI): “You should finally accept that not every idea that you may have or come up with becomes automatically a human right.”

Beata Mazurek (ECR):

“During the debate on Poland, you mentioned [Pope]John Paul second. Allow me to refer to something he said, the protection of life. because the protection of life was a key element of his teachings...He's also man and woman, and Jesus Christ identified himself with the weakest. So how can we not see Jesus Christ's presence in the unborn child, which is the smallest, most fragile and incapable of protecting himself or herself against the violation of his or her rights?”

Izabela-Helena Kloc (ECR): “In Poland I understand that in your Death culture that you

celebrate needs to play this game. But a conceived child and the rights of that conception do not seem to be taken into account. We can just assassinate them.”

15.12.2021: Plans to undermine further fundamental rights in Poland, in particular regarding the standards of the European Convention of Human Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, (ECR) explicitly demarcates what is in the remit of the Commission and what violates subsidiarity and asks for more evidence, denying and attempting to delegitimize the claim that Poland is flouting fundamental human rights:

“This is not a European Union competence...Indeed, treaty, treaties, this can't be a pretext. I'm very sad. I was very sad listening to what you said in your speech, because it was full of manipulations and lies. I would like to protest. I don't know what to say when the EU Commissioner wants to spread fake news and lies. You had talked about the free zones for LGBTQ+. Can you give us actual addresses please? Some specifics? Where are these so-called Free zones supposed to be where there is no access for these people. You should really apologise to the local authorities. Every week. It's time to find new instruments and legal instruments and so on to try and force a certain people to accept your globalist agenda.”

20.01.2022: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union (topical debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR) doubles down on the separation of human rights and sexual and reproductive rights:

“...now people are saying that abortion is a human right. Well, that's not the case. There is no law in Europe about that. On the contrary, there is a convention on the rights of the child under the edges of the United Nations, where it says that an immature individual has to be cared for before and after the birth.”

Joachim KUHS (ID); Germany Alternative für Deutschland:

“Macron made it very clear what was behind his speech, it involved abortion, the killing of human lives. Now we celebrate this issue and its inclusion in the fund human rights? We should cry. Because this is a terrible violent act.we are undermining the very roots of Europe as well and I am convinced that if abortion is included in the FHR then Poland and Hungary will never be included in this particular group. It is quite clear that life is a right and it is not a case of

exclusive privileges for an elite or for migrants. In Western Europe we find ourselves in a position where Judeo-Christian values are being undermined and destroyed and the very cornerstones of our values are being chipped away at and we need to be very very clear what it is that links us and brings us together for the future of Europe. Abortion undermines this future so we want life with our children with our children's children in an atmosphere of freedom, respect and as a father of children I can't emphasise this enough these are the values that will glue Europe."

Guido Reil (ID) Alternative für Deutschland (Germany) contrasts the apparent laissez-faire approach to abortion with an apparent rush to 'force' people to accept Covid-19 vaccines:

"You talk about reproductive health and it sounds like a hygiene spray, like a fruit acid peeling or like a mole being lasered away. A routine procedure that is quickly forgotten. But actually you mean abortion. They act like it's a trifle, something you treat yourself to when you need it - a lifestyle product. In fact, you even pretend that having an abortion is an act of resistance to old white men. In reality, you are unscrupulously conducting propaganda and belittling a serious intervention that for many people is murder. In reality, you lure young, impressionable women into making the decision to have an abortion carelessly and far too quickly, only to realise 20 years later what they did. In reality, women across Europe pay a high price to bask in your ideological infatuation. All this is not surprising. They've been doing this for decades. Only your euphemisms have become even more shameless. The only thing that is surprising is that on the one hand you are demanding 'my stomach belongs to me', but on the other hand you want to mandate the upper arm. Your belly is your private affair and can be scraped out as you wish, but all of our upper arms have to be socialised and 'poked' – whether we want it or not. That's schizophrenic."

04.07.2022: US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and Women's health in the EU (debate)

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR): "Now we have the opportunity to look at abortion face to face without beautiful worlds and without ideologies which distort the reality of love and motherhood in pregnancy."

Miroslav Radačovský (NI):

"It's a question of conscience, a woman's character. It's a question of how he decides. A gardener who owns a garden can step on a seed that will grow into a beautiful flower. He can do it, it's his garden. It's his right, but it's actually barbaric, so that's all I have to say..."

And in response to a blue card: “As a human being, as a father of a family, and as a grandfather, I found it difficult to comprehend. And how? How can something be removed from our body when it is living?”

Patryk Jaki (ECR): “Someone has to protect the lives of the weakest. And we will do it to the end, because we are for the civilization of life, not for the civilization of death.”

Ladislav Ilčić (ECR): “The right to abortion is not a fundamental right. This is well known today, but our colleagues would like to deprive us of our freedom of speech.”

Consequences of gender as a problem

The RRP articulate the consequences for advocating for SRHR as violating member state autonomy, pulling Europe away from its Christian roots and towards a ‘culture of death’ and child sexual abuse.

21.10.2019: Criminalisation of sexual education in Poland (debate)

Patryk Jaki (ECR):

“If you don't agree that the paedophilia promotion should be sanctioned and this is a crime in most of the Member States, well, you are shouting at me because you know that I'm telling the truth. So, do you know people? People are nervous when they hear uncomfortable truths, and this is what you're doing. And this is, well, one more piece of fake news is that it's not a piece of legislation initiated by the government, but it's a civic project and so simply under law, it cannot be rejected before the first reading.”

Beata Kempa (ECR):

“And this is a civic project, let me repeat, and not a government one. So, Mr Biedron, are you here to promote paedophilia? Because this is about a ban on promotion of paedophilia in Poland. This is the subject matter of this draft law.”

23.06.2021: Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health (debate)

Christine Anderson (ID):

“But everybody who votes for this report will be voting in favour of a violation of human rights. Please come to your senses and prevent this from becoming a black day in the European Parliament's history. A dark day.”

Actors held responsible

The actors are named more explicitly in these debates, for example, Commissioner

Helena Dalli, and the Commission. Specific political genealogies are also invoked that seek to align advocacy of SRHR as the latest instance of a malignant history, e.g. abortion was invented by the Soviet Union, and used in insidious ways by the Nazis.

20.01.2022: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union (topical debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR):

“The first country in the world that introduced the possibility of abortion was the Soviet Union. Back in 1933, in fact, abortion became a right in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union having introduced this in 1932. And this was something that then spread throughout the East.”

20.10.2022: The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland (debate)

Balázs Hidvéghi (NI):

“...Today's debate is yet another example of the European Parliament's leftist and liberal forces interfering in the matters of a sovereign Member State. Yesterday you were attacking the decision of the Constitutional Court of Poland in a more than 4-hour long debate, but you fail to realise that the Polish Court decision was a direct consequence of your own harmful policies. You, the leftists in this House, are the greatest danger to European cooperation, exactly because you refuse to accept that there can be other views and opinions than your own, thank you.”

Proposed responses and solutions

12.02.2019: Experiencing backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, (ECR): “That is why I propose an alternative draft resolution where I underline the need to fill in the pay gap and pension gap.”

23.06.2021: Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health (debate)

Simona Baldassarre (ID) frames procreation as an invigorator of the European Project:

“Stripping women of their role as bringers of life simply relegates them to a cold world. Let us remedy this situation, let us correct things and vote in favour of life and see that with each childhood is born, we can once again renew our trust and belief in the European project. So, I plead with you to support ECR's resolution, the right to live is the competence of the Member States.”

04.07.2022: US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and Women's health in the EU (debate)

Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR):

"The trick now is to conduct the necessary debate in a dignified manner here in Europe as well. We do not do this by banning organisations from Parliament, as some advocate here. Those are tactics they use in dictatorships like China and North Korea."

The real problem gender distracts from

23.06.2021: Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health (debate)

Simona Baldassarre (ID):

"What does the EU do for young mothers or for families with difficulties to protect them from needing an abortion. If you really want to protect women, you have to create the conditions."

20.10.2021: The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland (debate)

Nicolaus Fest (ID) uses this as an opportunity to deflect the debate to the real issue of 'Islamic extremism':

"I have a few anniversaries that I would like to debate with you. For example, the anniversary of the attack on the Bataclan theatre by Muslim migrants, the anniversary of the attack in Berlin by a Muslim migrant, the anniversary of the New Year's Eve where thousands of women were abused by, yes, Muslim men. The anniversary of the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. The murder of Mr Paty, the attacks on London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Hamburg, Dresden, Nice, Vienna, Stockholm, etc. Etc."

04.07.2022: US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and Women's health in the EU (debate)

Patryk Jaki (ECR):

"Moreover, you want to teach morality to America, which you hate so much. But what have you really done to protect the lives of children in Ukraine? And let me remind you that Ukraine is the border of the EU, not the United States."

10.09.2015: The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings (debate)

Louise Bours (EFDD):

“Freedom of movement between countries that is enabling and encouraging this criminality, whether it's perpetrated against men, women, boys or girls, having no possibility of any checks at any border, obviously makes it easier than ever for people to be trafficked across our continent [...] Our citizens are looking to us to do but we must have avoid illegal migrants leaving their countries in the first place. We need to help refugees from war, but we can't take everyone in.”

The real threats to women and feminism

12.02.2019: Experiencing backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR): “...the need to fight against violence against women, genital mutilation, forced marriages. I point out that women should be more active in political life.”

05.10.2016: Women's rights in Poland (debate)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR):

“In this debate I think we should be concentrating on migration, the security and economic crisis. Why don't we debate the women's situation in Germany? Remember what happened on New Year's Eve a year or two ago in Germany? What happened at the Oktoberfest in Germany? Perhaps your left-wing conscience could be brought to bear. And when you think about what is happening to women in Germany, no, you seem to prefer to look at the situation in Poland. Back then we were talking about what happened in Germany on New Year's Eve. We talked about the fact that women had been attacked and even raped. Hundreds of women had been victims of violence.”

20.01.2022: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union (topical debate)

Silvia Sardone (ID):

“On New Year's Eve in Milan in my city, 12 young women were attacked, sexually abused. Saman Abbas, a Pakistani woman killed in our country because her family didn't want her to go out on the street without her veil and she wanted to flee an arranged marriage. Think of those women who are attacked in their own home just because they want to lead a Western lifestyle. Mothers, women who are not able to enjoy the lives all those well-meaning people on the Left believe they should because of immigration and the way the Islamic world looks at them. So, if we're talking about really defending women and women's rights we should forget about gender-based language.”

Assita Kanko (ECR): “Muslim women. Women from my background who mostly cannot even choose if and when they want to have sex, or if and when they even want to be married.”

Anti anti-gender arguments

The clarity and cohesiveness of anti anti-gender interventions is quite strong in the debates under the SRHR theme. It is the only example in the entire corpus that has an active protest register in the transcripts, when Polish women’s rights activists stormed the building and entered the gallery with signs and cries of “Support Polish Women” on 05.10.2016.

12.02.2019: Experiencing backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU (debate)

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission:

“Europe is confronted with increased populist and extremist trends which also manifest themselves in sexist and racist hate speech and in backward trends regarding women’s and girls’ rights.”

Iratxe García Perez (S&D):

“Bulgaria's not ratifying the Istanbul Convention and do you know what the Ultra Conservatives are now going to do? The PP in Spain has decided that in order to guarantee sustainability of pensions, women have to give birth. [...] This is not just an issue for women, this is a fight for a feminist Europe which moves forward, which doesn't give up and which works. “

Angelika Mlinar (ALDE):

“Ultraconservative, anti-feminist and religious groups systematically called gender equality into question and use religion, tradition, or culture to legitimate violations of women's rights.”

Malin Björk (GUE/NGL):

“There are Democratic moves toward a backtracking that the neoconservative extremists and Christian fundamentalists are enacting this, this hatred also against LGBTI and other minorities and it isn't only without ideas, but in particular with money.”

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE-Fraktion): “There are controls everywhere, and the state is looking suspiciously at anything which is called feminism or gender.”

Julie Ward (S&D):

“Mr. President, it’s important that the European Parliament addresses the current backlash against women’s rights and gender equality in Europe, particularly because some of the forces driving this backlash are represented in this House. Conservative forces are becoming stronger. They’re well organised and they have managed to convince more and more people that they’re on the right side of history. This is very dangerous. Attacks against sexual and reproductive health rights are becoming more frequent in Europe, with some countries even restricting access to contraceptives. Anti-gender campaigns push against the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention is slow and painful despite it being the best legal tool we have to fight against gender-based violence. Meanwhile, domestic violence continues to be widespread and normalised.”

05.10.2016 Women’s rights in Poland (debate)

This debate started with a protest of women chanting, ‘Support Polish Women’.

Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL):

“A government should not be able to legislate under the pressure of any particular religion, governments are guaranteed the rights of everybody and not just apply the law under the pressure of a given set of religious beliefs.”

Julie Ward (S&D), addressing the protestors, said:

“But faced with the worst kind of misogyny, depression and violation, you have found your voices and here in the European Parliament you have found a place to amplify that voice. You are now empowered and you must take courage and continue to occupy public space with your powerful, beautiful creative actions because the women that come after you and the women and girls in other countries who are also depending who are also under attack from the right wing repressive policies. They are also depending on you to lead the way. So thank you, continue to speak up, together we can be strong.”

15.12.2021: Plans to undermine further fundamental rights in Poland, in particular regarding the standards of the European Convention of Human Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (debate)

Margaritis Schinas (European Commission):

“The Commission considers there is a clear risk of a serious breach of the rule of law in Poland... it launched an infringement procedure against Poland in relation to the so-called LGBTIQ-ideology free resolutions adopted by several Polish regions, counties and municipalities, on the basis of a lack of sincere cooperation

on this topic. Let me be very clear, LGBTIQ free zones have no place in our Union. This is not our model of society. This is not our Europe. We now witness the introduction of a new national pregnancy database and an Institute for Family and Democracy and it is a new attempt to gain control over women's bodies, to reduce their autonomy and to interfere in personal family. But the European Commission has been silent for too long. We can no longer hide behind a false argument of Member States' competence."

23.06.2021: Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health (debate)

Helène Fritzon (S&D):

"The right-wing nationalists here in the Parliament, they are the ones who have been listening and encouraging these people, but they want to stop the right of abortion, stop the right to sexual education, the right to contraception and they must not win. Around the world and here in Europe, and indeed in this very Chamber, we see a very strong resistance against this. There are some who are against sexual education. There are some who are against the right to safe and legal abortions. And there are those who are against equal rights for LGBTQ people, equal equality and human rights. But we Socialists and Democrats are not among those. We are with you, Fred Matić."

20.01.2022: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union (topical debate)

Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé (European People's Party; Christian Democrats):

"Freedom to women and what they do with their body. Poland, 2020 the only member state to increase restriction to contraception in the past four years, and urgent contraception is deemed an abortion".

20.10.2021: The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland (debate)

Karen Melchior (Renew):

"Minorities and women are the other canaries in the coal mine of democracy. But are you listening? Have we heard that they've stopped singing? The right to abortion should not be a political battle. The fundamentalist orthodoxy, akin to the Taliban, won't stop there. There's another bill currently going through the Polish Parliament. That bill says that inciting someone to termination or terminating would be tantamount to murder or killing."

04.07.2022: US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and

the need to safeguard abortion rights and Women's health in the EU (debate)

Blue card speech directed to Miroslav Radačovský (NI) by Karen Melchior (Renew):

"I was a little bit surprised when I was listening to you speak and comparing women as human beings to gardens and gardeners. My body is what propels me into the world and what is the basis of my actions into the world, and it is crucial that we as human people are able to decide over our own lives and our own bodies. And I would like to hear you explain how you can compare women's bodies and their possibility to decide over their own lives to a gardener and a garden and a seed in the ground."

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE):

"If a government introduces legislation to restrict access to abortion, it is never a matter of chance. It is because there is an authoritarian or ideological government which is calling for control of women's bodies to control the population. "

10.09.2015: The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings (debate)

Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE):

"The large majority are the victims of sexual exploitation, 96% being women. The UN Convention on the Suppression of Trafficking establishes a direct link between public community and the exploitation of women. I see that some honourable Members of this Parliament use every opportunity to attack what constitutes a great, maybe the greater achievement of the European Union, the freedom of movement in a Europe without internal borders. I will repeat that Schengen is a part of the solution, it's not the problem."

The following example of anti anti-gender comes from an ECR member, a group that has contributed to copious amounts of anti-gender discourse in this data.

Assita Kanko (ECR):

"Frankly speaking, on the day when men will be able to give birth, on the day when men will be able to be pregnant and become mothers, then, on that day only, will they have the right to tell me what to do with my body. They will have the right on that day to tell my daughter what to do with her body. But today that is not the case. So please live with that. Women have the right to decide for themselves."

LGBTIQ and Hate Speech Debates in the European Parliament

Note: this is the collated and categorised data, no initial analysis has as yet been conducted. The interchangeable use of 'LGBTI' and 'LGBTIQ' is due to accurate quoting of the terms used in the debate database.

Debates analysed:

Sitting Date	Plenary Debates relating to LGBTIQ and Hate Speech
01.12.2016	Combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance
05.04.2017	Hate speech, populism, and fake news on social media: towards an EU response
26.11.2019	Public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zones
14.09.2020	Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law – LGBTI-free zones in Poland
25.11.2020	The new LGBTIQ Equality Strategy
10.03.2021	Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone
18.10.2022	Growing hate crimes against LGBTIQ people across Europe in light of the recent homophobic murder in Slovakia
23.11.2022	Legal protection for rainbow families

Table EP10: Plenary Debates relating to LGBTIQ and Hate Speech

See [Appendix A: Table AA5 \(EP5\) – 'LGBTIQ and Hate Speech coded debates'](#) for the detailed data table for this section.

Definition of gender as a problem

01.12.2016: Combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance

Beatrix von Storch (EFDD): "The Fundamental Rights Agency must be abolished. It is an outsourced arm of the EU Commission. This LGBT lobby tool promotes gender ideology."

14.09.2020: Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law – LGBTI-free zones in Poland

Patryk Jaki (ECR):

"I need to tell you something: we in Poland know this kind of ideology. In the past, the Communists used the language of 'I tell you...'. The Communists called

censorship 'the principles of freedom': the restriction of religious practice, the freedom of conscience. And today you call a left-wing bandit beating a man a child who has been arrested for his beliefs, and supporting the traditional family you call an 'attack on tolerance'. I tell you something, and I want to underline something: I am not surprised that the new monument in Germany of Lenin – a murderer, a tyrant – does not bother you. But the maintenance of family values in Poland does. Shame on you, shame on you!"

Maximilian Krah (ID):

"I can only applaud the Polish people to have a policy which is focused on families with daddy, mummy and children, and not on different minorities. Opposing the gender theory does not mean to suppress gay and LGBTI people, it just means that we don't want those theories taught in schools and universities and made the principle of politics. Poland and Hungary have decided to follow a conservative line, which is a sovereign decision of the people, and so do people have the right to follow that policy, and it is not an oppression of the treaties. I can only address my Polish friends: follow your way, you are right."

Hermann Tertsch (ECR):

"Enough of this persecution of Poland. Enough of the persecution of Hungary and any free European nation that dares to defy all the ideological mantras of this progressive consensus. This is not a debate on the rule of law. This, what it is, is the same as always: a lynching and an attempt to publicly humiliate a Parliament, a sovereign country that refuses to be pushed towards that social democratic consensus that they want to impose from here."

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński (ECR):

"It is impossible not to notice that politicians from a country where new ideologies are starting to resemble totalitarianism are trying to teach democracy to Poland. Children have masturbation lessons in schools and are encouraged to "denounce their parents if they commit homophobic crimes." It was already in the totalitarian USSR, where Pawka Morozov became a hero, handing over his parents to Stalin's henchmen only because they had different views than the communist authorities."

25.11.2020: The new LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

Simona Baldassarre (ID):

"So, it seems strange that we are trying to protect one category rather than the other. This is almost reverse discrimination. We want a Parliament that protects all citizens without distinctions of sex, gender, health, political or religious

opinions. We need to remember that every child has a right to a family, a mother and a father, and anything else is an inhuman practice, and that our children should not be subjected to gender ideology”.

Nicola Procaccini (ECR):

“...is it a racist statement? I think it is actually racist to divide people up in line with an infinite series of categories and subcategories, as this report does. LGBTI QRP. OK if you want to update the list. We've got now 9 initials there. And that's nine if you forget the old categories of male and female. So it seems a bit ridiculous and maybe a bit suspect...If I read page 20 of this report, it states that local organisations should

10.3.2021: Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone

Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR): “Well, I must say that this whole debate is absolutely absurd. It's simply showing that the Parliament's only interested in its ideology.”

Annika Bruna (ID):

“This weekend, a man was killed due to his sexual orientation and this is not going to be a problem that's solved because you think about an LGBTI freedom zone. And neither will it solve the problem of the expansion of radical Islam in Europe. Instead of condemning this, which your resolutions spare no word for, you instrumentalise this subject to push forward the political agenda you want to impose. The right for same-sex couples to have their children recognised across Europe. Every child is born of a mother and a father. That's a biological reality that is unquestionable. We will vote against your resolution and put forward a text that defends the rights and security of people as well as the sovereignty of the nations.”

Patryk Jaki (ECR):

“Of course, in Poland there are no such things as LGBTQ free zones. But I did enter an amendment. We want the EU to be a freedom zone for everyone, for people of every religion, every colour of skin. But it seems you're against that. You don't want tolerance. What you want is to try to undermine traditional values. You have a colonial way of thinking. You think that your traditions are better than our traditions. In Poland there are fewer hate crimes against homosexuals than here in Belgium or in the Netherlands. In Poland there's never been any penalties for homosexuality, but that was the case historically in Western Europe. So. Maybe your traditional record is worse. You now want to teach Poland your new culture, but our culture didn't produce any form of fascism.”

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR):

“– (start of speech off-mic) ... debates an issue which essentially does not exist. After numerous debates on so-called LGBTI-free zones in Poland, we saw that a lie repeated often enough became the truth. Using this lie, the liberal elites, which are represented by the narrow majority in this House, are now on the offensive. We are aware that you want to destroy the family as a unit of our societies. We know that you want to impose unnatural and dangerous ideas like the scientific fact that there are only two genders. We know that you want to erase all traces of traditional European and Christian values. What you should know is that we will not allow it. We do not need to proclaim the EU as an LGBTI Freedom Zone because the European Union is already the safest place on earth for LGBTI people.

What we do need, however, is the European Charter of Family Rights, which will strengthen the legal protection for traditional families and uphold the simple truth: a family consists of a mother, father and their children. You must know the deviant sexual practices and LGBTIQ ideology can and will open the door to child abuse and paedophilia, and we shall not allow it. Our peoples will stand for traditional European values and will be ready to hold them.”

Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR):

“You want to use this resolution to attack the Polish people because they don't vote the way you would like them to. Well, that's it in a nutshell. Do you think the progress is to create new categories and subcategories of sexual orientations that now it's called we have to tell fairy tales about princesses kissing other princesses and there's promoting surrogate parenthood and things like that? You think it's modern to turn every desire into a right?”

23.11.2022: Legal protection for rainbow families

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR):

“to quote Article 46, one of the Bulgarian Constitution: Marriage is a voluntary union between a man and a woman. Civil union is legal. And further down, children born out of wedlock have the same rights as children born in wedlock. This is the only thing that matters here. Ladies and gentlemen, you deal in political propaganda. You may be surprised. That the Bulgarian Institute the Constitution recognizes. Heterosexual marriage, that is a marriage between a man and a woman, and the identification number of the child can always be issued to the mother. So there is no impediment, actually. What you're trying to do here is change our way of life, and we cannot go for this. We don't tell you how to organise your societies or your families. The only thing we insist upon:

leave us alone and don't try to change us. Our marriage is between a man and a woman's parents are a man and a woman. This is our national will."

Vincenzo Sofo (ECR):

"So we've got two women, one Bulgarian, one British woman who decided by artificial insemination to have a child and then they go to Bulgaria to try and register the birth. But the international system does not recognise the two women as the parents of the child, so they immediately had recourse to a right of freedom of movement, but. They have done so in order to try and circumvent national laws, and this is anti democratic. Now all Member States, of course, you know, have to take account of the LGBT agenda and believe that they can then use the Schengen area and can then trump. Lawmaking sovereignty, so this threatens the legal orders of our sovereign states. And why would this Parliament want to do that if it flies the flag for democracy?"

François-Xavier Bellamy (PPE):

"No treaty has given this responsibility to the EU institutions. To respect the rule of law is about respecting democracy. And this would mean that we would have to recognize. surrogacy as well, because behind all the lofty words is a whole industry that profits by exploiting the most vulnerable women. Is this really progressive? What's strange? Progressiveness, a human life that will be part of a business contract. Yes. Behind this there are children. And I'm all very surprised that you've talked about Sarah and her not having a passport and that you're sorry about that. I'm very sorry that Sarah doesn't have a father. That's what I'm sad about."

Consequences of gender as a problem

26.11.2019: Public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zones

Maximilian Krah (ID):

"I'm wondering that you speak about hate speech against gay people. But now I have the impression we speak about hate at Poland...we thank the Polish nation a lot. They brought us freedom against the Communists and they now give us a new hope in Europe for a conservative approach in government."

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR):

"I see that over recent years Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria have been a thorn to you because they're different, because we still think that family presupposes a union between a man and a woman. But the propaganda of the LGBTI

community has gone too far. One in two of our reports seems to be dedicated to the LGBTI community or the Istanbul Convention. Look, we are against propaganda in our kindergartens, we do not support activities close to paedophilia. Why do you think your opinions weighs more than ours in Poland or Hungary or Bulgaria? This is Bolshevism, you're behaving just like Chinese communists."

14.09.2020: 'Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law – LGBTI-free zones in Poland'

Hélène Laporte (ID): "The initiation of the Article 7 procedure against Poland constitutes a humiliation, an inadmissible attack on its sovereignty."

Balázs Hidvéghi (PPE):

"For years, proceedings have been going on against Poland and Hungary by muddling the principles of a fair trial and impeachment, which are about ideological issues, serve only political purposes, and thus do not even meet the requirements of the rule of law. The rule of law cannot be held accountable by applying different standards to member states, by accepting accusatory reports ...The reality is that wherever a government with characteristic right-wing policies is formed, sooner or later accusations of the rule of law will emerge. This is the situation in relation to Hungary and Poland, but we have also seen this recently in the case of Slovenia and Bulgaria."

Hermann Tertsch (ECR):

"This report offends the sovereign Polish nation and is an exercise in infinite hypocrisy, since its rapporteur is a member of a party that today obscenely tramples on and has totally destroyed the division of powers in Spain, in alliance with the communists."

25.11.2020: The new LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

Joachim Kuhs (ID):

"In the German magazine Focus, Jan Fleischhauer asked how one could explain that Trump had gained voters among women and Latinos. And how it was possible that Trump this time round has received double the number of votes from the lesbian and gay community. Many people just want to be what they are, people like you and me, with all the rights that we have in our wonderful Europe, there is no need to bother them with our strategies."

10.03.2021: Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone

Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR):

“In many Member States, marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman. It's written in our Constitution. Regions are absolutely against these ideological officers who turn up in schools and tell them about absurd ideas, about some kind of liquidity of genders. I mean, this is against the Constitution in Poland and it does not comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It's our right to defend families. We cannot have this right. Infringed upon. This indoctrination cannot be allowed in schools. Well, what do they want? Do we want this kind of ideology to be brought to our schools against the wishes of parents? Well, this is simply illegal. What you're trying to do is to try and muzzle national debates, just like today's debate here. This is ideological madness. This does not [show] respect for people.”

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR):

“We know that you want to erase all traces of traditional European and Christian values. You must know the deviant sexual practices and LGBTIQ ideology can and will open the door to child abuse and paedophilia, and we shall not allow it. Our peoples will stand for traditional European values and will be ready to hold them.”

Actors held responsible

Overall, there is a compound ‘left threat’ held responsible for pushing a ‘LGBT agenda’. Below is a list of the actors held responsible:

Sitting Date	Debate Title	MEP	Actors held responsible
23.11.2022	‘Legal protection for rainbow families’	Vincenzo Sofo (ECR)	‘LGBT agenda’
10.03.2021	‘Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone’	Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR)	‘left-handed ideologists’
14.09.2020	‘Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law – LGBTI-free zones in Poland’	Beata Mazurek (ECR)	‘LGBT-free zones are a lie spread by left-wing activists’
26.11.2019	‘Public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zone’	Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)	LGBT advocates are behaving like Chinese Communists and are the ‘hard left leading the debate’.

Table EP11: *Actors held responsible for ‘LGBT agenda’*

The real problem gender distracts from

01.12.2016: Combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance

Vicky Maeijer (ENF-Fractie):

“There's no room for different opinions. You can only speak if you say something politically correct. But our freedoms were hard won. Anyone who disagrees with them is dubbed as racist or a phobic. This is a way of muzzling the opposition, the Brussels elite continues to paint patriots as extremists [...] Double standards being applied. Elections in recent months have shown this, and upcoming elections will do so too. So, we're seeing censorship and a restriction in the expression of a freedom of expression. You consider those who do not agree with your dominant liberal ideology as racists, while every day you show what you mean by democracy.”

05.04.2017: 'Hate speech, populism, and fake news on social media: towards an EU response'

Rolandas Paksas (EFDD):

“Gives rise to such discussions where an open and straightforward word is marked hate speech, where the representation of interests of the public rather than those of a handful, and indulging the policies serving that handful, are called populism.”

Matteo Salvini (ENF):

“Actually, there are 20 million unemployed people in Europe. There's Islamist terrorism, there is immigration that has got out of control. And what are you dealing with here in the European Parliament? And by the way, it's deserted. It's Wednesday afternoon as anybody here you're talking about hoaxes on Facebook, fake news, for goodness sake.”

Lampros Fountoulis (NI):

“We are in favour of freedom of expression, freedom of opinion. Coming on to populism? Populism is another term that has been created and generated by the political class to criticise those who seem to be closer to the needs of our citizens, the citizens are supporting us. Because of a populist reasons? No, I'm sorry, but you have no contact. You're out of touch with the people and the citizens.”

Bruno Gollnisch (NI):

“And if news, news really is fake, what's stopping you? Simply refuting it. Hate speech. That's stuff which goes against the dogmas you've tried to impose on us all. In other words, goes against political correctness.”

26.11.2019: Public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zones

Beata Kempa (ECR):

“Let's talk about the facts. LGBTI militants use provocation. Like a weapon during their marches, many acts of discrimination took place who are also tax directed against the Christian symbols of millions of Christians. The sacred images of the Holy Virgin were profaned. Surely these are hate attacks. We're talking about brutal attacks against Christians, against the clergy, and against symbols of Christianity.”

“I believe in mutual respect. We are all entitled to our dignity, but we cannot simply stand by in silence in the face of this violent and aggressive dogma of a group who attack anybody who doesn't agree with them.”

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR):

“In Spain, the newspaper which I'm sure you've all heard of, El Pais, which has become a propaganda tool, carried an article which said that heterosexuality is dangerous. The author of this article said that women should start carrying arms to defend themselves against men. This is hate discourse as well. Why is it for you that you only talk about one form of hate and you turn a blind eye to other forms?”

“Has the left got anything to say about the criminalization of men in Europe? I agree that we need to fight against hate discourse.”

Patryk Jaki (ECR) [blue card]:

“You spoke very eloquently about values and I'm sure that we could all agree with you. However, we are, I think, serious politicians and as a result I'd like to ask you to provide us with some details. Could you give us any examples where activities of members of the Polish Government led to the suicide of anybody in Poland?”

14.09.2020: Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law – LGBTI-free zones in Poland

Hélène Laporte (ID):

“The courage of the European Union would require not authority over Poland – we must first be able to verify – but a determination to stop all financing in favour of Turkey, which is violating Greek maritime zones and illegally occupying the north of Syria.”

Vladimír Bilčík (PPE):

“Mr President, this is a very emotional debate but the core issue is that Polish

justice is European justice, and the safety, dignity and freedom of all citizens in Poland – regardless of their gender and sexual orientation – is also about essential respect for the rights of all Europeans.”

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński (ECR):

“It was in Spain that the parliament recently voted to murder people, i.e. euthanasia, which in fact had already been used before for the oldest patients with coronavirus who were selected for treatment not by doctors, but by employees of nursing homes. This brings associations with another totalitarianism - the German death camps of World War II, where those who could no longer work were sent to the death chambers. People from such countries are trying to teach Poland.”

Elżbieta Kruk (ECR):

“Poland is accused of being intolerant when statistics show that it is in Western European countries that violence against national minorities resulting from anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or xenophobia is increasing. In Germany, for example, there are 5 racial attacks per day. Where are the equal standards?”

Beata Mazurek (ECR):

“Police brutally pacified demonstrations in Catalonia, not sparing women and the elderly. How does this relate to the right to assemble and peacefully manifest one's views? We could observe similar situations in France during the protests of workers and trade unions.”

10.03.2021: Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone

Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR):

“Are hate crimes really at such a high level? In which Member States are these numbers highest? The highest number of hate crimes is in Holland, owed more than 500 cases in Germany, more than 200 cases, 160 in Belgium. In Poland we had only 16 cases, in Lithuania, just two, so I think we should actually be talking about the Netherlands and Belgium here rather than the Eastern European countries. Western Europe is simply engaging in ideological propaganda right down to kindergarten age. You want to try and tell children ridiculous stories about gender. If you want to introduce censorship, you are the ones who are trying to change our language through political correctness. And what is the result of all this? Well, it's not a very good result. I think that we are seeing more hate crimes and attacks than ever.”

Patryk Jaki (ECR):

“Of course, in Poland there are no such things as LGBTQ free zones. But I did enter an amendment. We want the EU to be a freedom zone for everyone, for people of every religion, every colour of skin. But it seems you're against that. You don't want tolerance.”

Nicola Procaccini (ECR):

“Well, the title of this resolution, if it was the EU, was a freedom zone for everybody, whatever their sexual orientation, rather than saying LGBTIQ, well, we would have voted in favour of it. Because we're against any form of discrimination.”

The real threats to women and feminism

01.12.2016 Combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance

Kristina Winberg (EFDD):

“Many accusations are often labelled Racism, xenophobia, populism. These are terms that have a very clear meaning in a different setting, but if people wish to express their clear views on immigration? Then those words lose their meaning. Is it racism to want checks on immigration? To want women and children to be safe? Is it racist to love one's country and culture? Our citizens have seen enough to warrant their concerns and that cannot be viewed as populism. The EU acts as if it is fighting intolerance and will welcome in millions of immigrants from intolerant cultures. How can you ask our citizens to be more tolerant in the face of intolerance?”

05.04.2017: Hate speech, populism, and fake news on social media: towards an EU response

Gilles Lebreton (ENF):

“Ladies and gentlemen, pro Europeans, if you've got any sense of honour, save your energy to tackle the real danger, Jihadists. Respect freedom of speech and expression, even for your political adversaries.”

10.03.2021: Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone

Nicolaus Fest (ID):

“If you look at the situation in Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and elsewhere, homosexual couples no longer feel safe wandering through their streets holding hands. They're not under threat from Germans, Poles or Hungarians. They are coming under threat from Muslims but that's the elephant

in the room. No one's daring to say it because that would be questioning migration, and it really would be the way to tackle the problem and make our societies more liberal."

Anti anti-gender arguments

25.11.2020: The new LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

Marc Angel (S&D):

"This strategy comes at a very opportune moment because in several Member States of the European Union, for instance Poland and Hungary, the governments have organised a real witch-hunt against LGBTI people. This has even intensified during the pandemic because they want to divert attention from the failures in fighting the virus. This strategy, together with the EU Gender Equality Strategy and the intersectional approach is the best answer to counter the anti-gender movement – a movement made up of ultra-hard-core conservative politicians and their followers by religious fundamentalists, who stand for an outdated patriarchal society where women's rights and LGBTI rights have no place. Let me finish by recalling that being an LGBTI person is not an ideology, it is not an identity, and it is not a choice – but being homo, bi, trans and inter-phobic is a choice."

Sophia In't Veld (Renew):

"Please, Commissioner, also think about LGBTI sex workers, people who are very marginalised, very vulnerable; think of transgender persons, who still in five countries undergo unnecessary sterilisation, and people who, thanks to Covid measures, are back in an unsafe situation."

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE):

"Let's be honest, Europe's LGBTI community has been attacked on many occasions in recent years but, importantly, this strategy is now a comprehensive plan to create a Union of equality for all of us. We have to make sure that LGBTI citizens are no longer treated as second-class citizens in the European Union."

Silvia Modig (GUE/NGL):

"This is not an ideological question. It's not even a political question. It's about equality and inclusion. This LGBTIQ strategy is most welcome and we have waited for it for a long time. I'd like to thank the Commission."

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE):

"If we accept discrimination, we'll be accepting the strengthening of intolerance

before diversity will be accepting an attack on human dignity, will be accepting the normalisation of inequality, will be accepting a cancer against democracy.”

Evelyn Regner (S&D):

“Regions across Europe are trying to destroy our diverse society. It's particularly clearly happening where fundamental rights are under threat. And LGBTIQ people are the first to be affected in Poland. There's LGBTQ free zones in Hungary. The Constitution is set to be changed so that it takes away protections. Huge proportions of LGBTIQ people are affected by violence. The LGBTQ community are faced by hatred and unpleasant political discourses. Nobody should have to live a life undercover and hide their identity.”

Pierre Karleskind (Renew):

“Elsewhere there are zones in Poland and more recently in Hungary they tried to erase ‘LGBT ideology’. But as President Van der Layden has said, we cannot tolerate this world to erase these identities because it's not an ideology. It's an identity that some would like to erase.”

Malin Björk (GUE/NGL):

“The EU's LGBTQ strategy is a clear signal that stands out against the homophobic winds blowing in Europe. It seems that the right is constantly trying to restrict people's rights such as Poland's LGBTIQ free zones which make life a living hell for thousands of people. It seems that we're moving towards an extreme and disgusting level of intolerance, but beautiful words on paper will not do anyone any good.”

Cyrus Engerer (S&D):

“As a gay man, together with my family, happened to live in Europe, we should have the same rights, the same liberties and the same protection enjoyed by any other European citizen and family. In this, my first speech in this Parliament, I wish to address my LGBTQ brothers in Poland and Hungary, and in any other country in the world that denies these fundamental rights to its citizens. Here are the European Parliament who know what you are going through and we will not abandon you.”

Liesje Schreinemacher (Renew):

“We have heard about the awful attacks on pride marches and have seen the growing number of LGBTI-free zones, and within Europe we still have these unimaginable treatments such as conversion therapy and barbaric forced sterilisation. And can anyone tell me how we can allow people losing their

parental rights over their own child by crossing a border within the European Union? How do we rhyme the denial of parental rights of rainbow families with our European values?”

Monika Vana (Verts/ALE):

“Within Europe we still have these unimaginable treatments such as conversion therapy and barbaric forced sterilisation and can anyone tell me how we can allow people losing their parental rights over their own Childs by crossing a border within the European Union? How do we run the denial of parental rights of rainbow families? With our European values we simply cannot allow for these practices to go on any longer.”

The above anti anti-gender comments show a concerted effort to contest anti-gender discourse in the European Parliament. This is achieved in part by the consistency of such efforts, resulting in every anti-gender statement being met with a refutation either by a blue card or response amidst the debate.

Written parliamentary questions from RRP actors

In the EP procedures, Rule 138, Annex III, “Members can submit a specific number of questions to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union, for written answer.”

The fact that a written question must be answered in writing constitutes a tactical opportunity, and this study was based on the hypothesis that this function allows Radical Right Populist (RRP) MEPs to raise anti-gender related questions and to insist on answers to key political and discursive concerns in ways that is more difficult in plenary debate.

The study of written questions was conducted by studying the questions of a sample of 30 MEPs, and cross-referencing this with keyword search in the question database. For this study, publicly available written questions posed by the sampled 30 MEPs were collected from the European Parliament website. The sampled 30 MEPs included (a) ten of the most active MEPs in the plenary corpus (b) ten of the most active on Twitter (c) a balancing sample of ten MEPs chosen to ensure national/party/bloc representation.

The questions posed in writing by the selected 30 MEPs within the current parliamentary term (2020-2022) were collected. All the questions relating to the plenary thematic debate categories were included. 65 entries were made to the database, the date, the name of the person posing the written question, an indication of whether the question was submitted by an individual or a group, and the key anti-gender statements from those questions. Keywords were then cross-referenced across all questions, which allowed dividing them into groups.

Findings

Among the 30 MEPs sampled, 23 have used the option to submit a specific number of questions to the President of the European Council. For the remaining seven MEPs, including KRAH (ID), Bielan (ECR), Brudzinski (ECR), Krosnodebski (ECR), Rzonca (ECR), Nissinen (ECR), Dzhambazki (ECR), no anti-gender content was found within the given timeframe. The anti-gender issues raised in these questions can be grouped into the following major categories:

Questions pertaining to surrogacy, reproductive technologies and adoption of children by the same-sex couples

Questions pertaining to surrogacy, reproductive technology and the adoption of children by same-sex couples emerged most frequently in this search. Surrogacy emerges as an ‘unethical’ and ‘immoral’ practice exploiting women’s reproductive capacity, and ‘reproductive exploitation’ (Villalba, ECR) hindering women’s emancipation (Borchia, ID). The practice is depicted in terms such as ‘slavery’, or ‘human trafficking’ (Wisniewska (ECR) or the ‘sale of children’ (Kuhs, ID). Other procedures, such as in vitro fertilisation or artificial insemination are also questioned on the grounds of constituting ‘bioethical controversies’ (Wisniewska, ECR). Villalba (ECR) and Wisniewska (ECR) call for the concept of ‘parenthood’ to be clearly defined because “...it opens up a gap that could amount to ratifying the effects of reproductive exploitation in EU legislation.” Most of the surrogacy, reproductive technology and parenthood-related questions are submitted by groups.

Questions pertaining to the sovereignty of nation-state’s legal systems and the infringement of the EU upon the national value systems

Such questions as same-sex marriage, the adoption of children by same-sex couples, abortion and the ‘interference’ of the LGBTIQ+ communities in the upbringing of children were posed by multiple actors. Some MEPs, such as Patryk Jaki (ECR) Margarita De La Pisa Carrión (ECR) argue that these issues should be seen as an exclusive legislative competence of the Member States. Various MEPs used their questions to condemn the right of the EU to interfere in conviction-based issues, which are enshrined in the national constitutions.

Questions pertaining to specific ‘disputed concepts’

Multiple actors requested the commission to provide clarity regarding the definitions of certain concepts. Many of them were specifically linked to the EU-OACPS Association Agreement, which is the legal framework for EU relations with 79 other countries. Regarding the agreement, the commission was asked by Margarita de La Pisa (ECR) to propose a footnote to define terms such as:

“SRH, SRH services, SRHR and CSE and other reproduction-related issues, so that these are not interpreted in opposition to national sovereignty of the states in

matters relating to regulating abortion, and national policies, strategies and curricula in the field of sex education and human sexuality.”

Several actors asked the Commission to define the scope and the definition of the term ‘parenthood’ in order “to mitigate the risk of reproductive exploitation”. Furthermore, one question was asked by Christine Anderson (ID) in relation to the term ‘racism’ and whether it should be extended to include “reference to human biological gender”. Villalba (ECR) asked the Commission to explain what it meant by ‘gender transformative education’, linking it once again with the contention that education policy should be a matter of the individual EU member states.

Questions pertaining to freedom of expression and freedom of religion

Multiple MEPs accused the EU of employing ‘double standards’ (Margarita de la Pisa, signed by group) when it comes to freedom of religion, freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

For instance, the European Commission was blamed for publicly singling out individuals and organisations which defend the right to life (Hermann Tertsch, ECR). The Commission was asked to comment on a report published by the Greens/EFA on anti-gender equality movements in Europe (2020), which according to Tertsch, contained “ideological finger pointing”. Tertsch also criticised the public hearing organised by Parliament’s FEMM and INGE Committees to discuss the funding of anti-abortion organisations in the EU (2021). Such instances, according to the above-mentioned MEPs, are undermining freedom of thought.

The commission was asked to justify its presumed reluctance to support Christian values and accused of double standards when it comes to religion. Dominik Tarczynski, ECR, asked the Commission to justify its intent to protect “the freedom of religion of the Islamic community, while being reluctant to support and protect Christians to the same extent”.

Questions pertaining to transgender people

Questions about transgender people is another regularly recurring theme. For instance, Hermann Tertsch (ECR) asked the Commission to clarify its position regarding “the endangerment of women inmates by transgender women.” He asked the Commission to comment on the actions it is ready to undertake in order to ensure “that women are protected from sexual violence at the hands of biological men who are allowed inside women’s prisons on the basis of their self- proclaimed identity as transwomen?” Vincenzo Sofo (ECR) asked the Commission to comment on the discriminatory effect of the participation of transgender athletes in female sports competition on women’s athletes. Sofo referred specifically to the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 published in November 2020. Christine Andersen (ID) questioned transgender identity as a reason for claiming asylum in the EU states.

Questions involving children

Concerns about children have been integral to a broad variety of anti-gender questions/statements of MEPs. For instance, Joachim Kuhs (ID) asked the Commission to explain whether the “sexualization of children” is a practice compatible with European values and traditions. He referred specifically to the event entitled ‘Körper, Liebe, Doktorspiele – Wie Sexualerziehung im Kindergartenalter gelingen kann (The body, love, playing doctor – how sex education for nursery-age children can be successful), hosted by the Landratsamt Aschaffenburg. Patrick Jaki (ECR) argued that the right to the adoption of children for same-sex couples, and the upbringing of children, should remain the exclusive competency of nation states. Children were also regularly brought up in relation to various reproductive practices and techniques, including surrogacy, artificial insemination, IVF, abortion and surrogacy as well as defence against pedophilia (Hermann Tertsch, ECR).

Questions combining anti-gender and anti-immigration politics

Several MEPs stressed the threats to gender equality and women’s rights associated with immigration. For instance, Christine Andersen (ID) asked the Commission to address “... the link between the increase in honour-related violence against women and immigration from Muslim countries where there is no equality between men and women?” Guido Reil (ID) asks the Commission to address the increasing instances of child marriages in the EU he attributed to an increase in migration. Christine Andersen (ID) questioned the validity of assessment mechanisms for the Horizon 2020 budget given an award had been made to the Queer Muslim Asylum Spaces project. Anderson asks the Commission whether the project is capable of determining “who is really LGBTIQ and who is pretending in order to improve their chances of being granted asylum?” Simona Baldassare (ID) questioned whether the Islamic veil is compatible with the EU’s aims on equal opportunities.

Actor	Question/date/URL	Solo / Group	Key aspects/quotes
Patryk Jaki (ECR) (1)	<p>9.12.2020 Child trafficking in the European Union</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-006707_EN.html</p>	Solo	<p>“How can we accept the sale of children by their mothers in the EU in order to satisfy the need for third parties to possess children? This should not be happening – people should not be traded. This was one of the topics to which the recent two-day International Children’s Fair in Brussels was devoted. The media stated that the ‘Men Having Babies’ event was of an itinerant nature: it took place in Paris in September, in Taipei in October and in Tel Aviv in December. Human dignity should be a priority for the EU – the era of slavery and human trafficking is long past. We can only imagine the kind of trauma children will go through when they find out years later that they have been purchased. Will the Commission be taking decisive action on this matter?”</p>
Patryk Jaki (ECR) (2)	<p>4.03.2020 Rights of sexual minorities in Poland</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-001308_EN.html</p>	Solo	<p>“The Commission claims that the rights of sexual minorities are being violated in Poland. In my opinion, this claim is based mainly on media reports and data from far-left organisations. <...> On the other hand, decisions on issues related to the adoption of children by same-sex couples are an exclusive competence of the Member State, and the EU has no right to interfere in conviction- based issues. However, marriage is an institution enshrined in Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which is the supreme law in Poland. We also do not agree that LGBT communities should interfere in the upbringing of children, since, in accordance with the Constitution, the EU has no right to interfere in conviction-based issues.”</p>
Hermann TERTSCH (ECR) (1)	<p>5.03.2021 Pro-life individuals and groups singled out by political institutions</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-001279_EN.html</p>	Group	<p>“We have noticed how individuals and organisations are increasingly being singled out by the EU institutions for defending the right to life.</p> <p><...> In December 2020, the Greens/EFA Group published a report on anti-gender-equality movements in Europe, referring specifically to individuals and organisations. And to our surprise, on 25 March 2021 Parliament’s FEMM and INGE committees organised a joint</p>

	EN.html		<p>public hearing to discuss the funding of anti-abortion organisations in the EU.</p> <p>In view of this ideological finger-pointing which undermines freedom of thought:</p> <p>Does the Commission agree that pro-life supporters, MEPs and associations should have to endure being publicly singled out by political institutions?</p>
Hermann TERTSCH (ECR) (2)	<p>19.02.2020 Prostitution of minors in the care of an EU-funded Majorcan Government body</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-000984_EN.html</p>	Solo	<p>“Is the Commission aware that there is currently no independent assessment or scrutiny of the way European subsidies are used, with the result that cases of the prostitution, sexual exploitation and corruption of minors, such as the one referred to here, are proliferating and being ignored and covered up?</p> <p>Will the Commission take measures to tackle the fraudulent use of European funds intended for highly vulnerable groups (minors, unemployed people, etc.)?”</p>
Hermann TERTSCH (ECR) (3)	<p>25.12.2020 Stamping out new or resurgent paedophile content</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-007089_EN.html</p>	Group	<p>“Combating paedophilia must be an absolute priority. In France, 165 000 children are believed to suffer rape and sexual violence every year. However, in many countries messages inciting paedophilia are becoming increasingly common.”</p>
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (1)	<p>2.12.2021 Definition of the term ‘racism’</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005384_EN.html</p>	Solo	<p>“In the Commission’s view, can the definition of racism be extended, e.g. with reference to human biological gender?”</p>
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (2)	<p>16.11.2021 Male rapists in women’s prisons – soon also in the EU?</p>	Solo	<p>“What is the Commission’s position on the fact that this endangerment of women inmates is made possible by ‘gender identity’ laws, which exist in Europe as well as in America/ What is the Commission prepared to do to ensure that women are protected from sexual</p>

	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005128_EN.html		violence at the hands of biological men who are allowed inside women's prisons on the basis of their self-proclaimed identity as transwomen?"
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (3)	20.10.2021 Gendered language in the EU https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-004763_EN.html	Solo	"What is the Commission's view of gendered language and which form should be used and why?"
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (4)	30.06.2021 Violence against women in the name of honour – part 2 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-003364_EN.html	Solo	"It draws attention to the following groups of women who are unable to break out of the confines of their very closed community and are at increased risk of honour-related violence: Muslims, Roma and migrants. This contradicts the Commission's statement. 1.Why does the Commission avoid clearly associating the problem of 'violence in the name of honour' with these groups. 2.How can a problem be dealt with if its cause is hushed up?"
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (5)	28.05.2021 Possible inequality within the European Institute for Gender Equality https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-002834_EN.html	Solo	"According to the names on the list of staff members of EIGE, it would appear that a significant percentage of staff members are women. If that is true, it would indicate that while EIGE is outwardly in favour of gender equality, it fails to promote this principle internally".
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (6)	8.03.2021 Honour-related violence against women https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-001308_EN.html	Solo	"In addition to recording details relating to victims, are efforts being made to record offender characteristics such as cultural and religious background?How is the Commission addressing the link between the increase in honour-related violence against women and immigration from Muslim countries where there is no equality between men and women?"

Christine ANDERSON (ID)(7) with With Guido Reil (ID) (1)	24.09.2020 Immigration and violence against women https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-005214_EN.html	ID Group pair	“What is the Commission’s view of the statements by politicians and academics to the effect that in many Arab countries physical violence against women is deeply rooted and widely accepted?” “Does the Commission intend to keep a close eye on the issue of violence against women in the context of immigration?”
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (8)	29.05.2020 Combating female genital mutilation https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-003284_EN.html	Solo	“Parliament recently adopted a resolution on combating female genital mutilation (FGM). However, in spite of the efforts made by the EU and Member States, FGM appears to be increasingly common in at least some Member States, such as Germany.”
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (9)	6.05.2020 EU financial support for queer Muslim asylum seekers https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-002788_EN.html	Annika Bruna/ Nicolaus Fest	“It is, however, easy to claim to be bisexual, transsexual or queer for the purpose of getting asylum. How does this study determine who is really LGBTIQ and who is pretending in order to improve their chances of being granted asylum? Does the Commission intend to spend an equal or similar amount on understanding and tackling the challenges facing Christian asylum seekers, and if not, why.”
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (10)	15.10.2019 Gender Studies https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-003326_EN.html	Solo	“Does the Commission know how many universities or higher education institutes in the Member States have either full or part-time lecturers in Gender Studies on their staff? Can it provide a listing of these lecturers broken down into male, female or other gender”.
Christine ANDERSON (ID) (11)	15.10.2019 Increase in the number of ‘honour killings’ in the EU https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-003320_EN.html	Solo	“Is the Commission aware of how many so-called honour killings have taken place in the EU in the past five years? Please list according to country and number and by gender, origin and religion, and also by victims and perpetrators.”

Margarita DE LA PISA Carrión (ECR) (1)	3.02.2022 Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the new EU-OACPS Association Agreement https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000481_EN.html	Solo	“What does the term ‘sexual and reproductive health and rights’ and the concepts relating to this in the new EU-OACPS Association Agreement actually refer to; Is the Commission prepared to propose a footnote in the Agreement to define the terms SRH, SRH services, SRHR and CSE, and related issues, Margarita so that these are not interpreted in such a way as to undermine national sovereignty in matters relating to regulating abortion, and national policies, strategies and curricula in the field of sex education and human sexuality.”
Margarita DE LA PISA Carrión (ECR) (2)	9.12.2021 Mutual recognition of parenthood https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005517_EN.html	Group	“How does the Commission intend to fight against reproductive exploitation? Can it clarify the definition and scope of the term ‘parenthood’? How can it guarantee that the ongoing work on the mutual recognition of ‘parenthood’ will include sufficient safeguards to ensure the proposal does not present any opportunity to facilitate reproductive exploitation?”
Margarita DE LA PISA Carrión (ECR) (3)	31.05.2021 Freedom of religion and double standards https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-002867_EN.html	Group	“The Prosecutor General in Finland has charged MP Päivi Räsänen (former chair of the Christian Democrat party and former Minister of the Interior of Finland) with hate speech against homosexuals. Does the Commission agree that freedom of expression is one of the fundamental rights that distinguish European states from authoritarian states, and that limiting the expression of mere opinions amounts to censorship?”
Margarita DE LA PISA Carrión (ECR) (4)	5.03.2021 Pro-life individuals and groups singled out by political institutions https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-001279_EN.html	Group	“Does the Commission agree that pro-life supporters, MEPs and associations should have to endure being publicly singled out by political institutions?”
Joachim Kuhs (ID) (1)	7.06.2022 The Landratsamt Aschaffenburg is hosting a disgusting event entitled ‘Körper,	Solo	“Does the Commission consider the sexualisation of children, especially children of nursery age, to be a practice that fits in with our European values and traditions?”

	<p>Liebe, Doktorspiele – Wie Sexualerziehung im Kindergartenalter gelingen kann’</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002060_EN.html</p>		<p>Does it consider these disgusting activities clearly involving ‘exposure’ of young children to sex to be a possible breach of their fundamental rights and bodily integrity? And if so, should the people involved be considered paedophiles?”</p>
Joachim Kuhs (ID) (2)	<p>30.01.2021 Measures to protect children on the internet</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-000597_EN.html</p>	Group	<p>“The activities of the EU legislator do not, in fact, take into account all cases in which sexual abuse is directly consumed online, i.e. where child pornography is provided by the child following the establishment of a relationship of trust between <...> Will the Commission collect and study data on online paedophilia in order to promote a child- friendly use of the Web?”</p>
Joachim Kuhs (ID) (3)	<p>16.09.2021 Désir d’enfant</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-004271_EN.html</p>	Group	<p>“There, as in other places, clinics promoted in vitro fertilisation, and especially the chance to choose a future child’s characteristics, with the aim of creating a perfect embryo. <...> This practice consists of selling real babies and exploiting women and their reproductive capacity. Surrogacy is an aberrant practice and the practice of buying and selling children is disconcerting from both an ethical and moral point of view.”</p> <p>“Has it (EU commission) considered condemning these kinds of initiatives, since they do not fit with the idea of progress, guaranteed rights or women’s emancipation?”</p>
Guido Reil (ID) (2)	<p>24.05.2022 Combating child abuse</p> <p>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2022-001936_EN.html</p>	Solo	<p>“The German Child Protection Association, on the other hand, states that the majority of child abuse content is shared through platforms and in forums. Therefore, scanning private messages in messaging services or e-mails is neither proportionate nor useful. Moreover, the provisions are easy to circumvent. Chat Control is a monitoring tool introduced under the guise of combating child abuse.”</p>

Joachim Kuhs (ID)(3)	18.05.2022 Child marriage https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001858_EN.html	Solo	"A few decades ago, child marriage was mainly an Asian and African phenomenon. Unfortunately, owing to the rise in migration, it is also becoming increasingly common in EU Member States."
Joachim Kuhs (ID)(4)	18.05.2022 Forced marriages https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001857_EN.html	Solo	"Forced marriages affect all Member States. They often have a serious impact on the victims' social, sexual and emotional lives and in many cases foster extreme violence, such as rape, mutilation, human trafficking and even murder."
Simona BALDASSA RRE (ID) (1)	22.09.22 The case of Mahsa Amini: the Iranian regime's brutality against women continues unabated https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003157_EN.html	Group	"The case has shone a spotlight on women's rights in Iran, and has sparked a popular protest against the law on hijabs and against the Guidance Patrol."
Simona BALDASSA RRE (ID) (2)	27.04.2022 Gender equality panels in Ravenna for the 'Shaping fair cities' project https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001596_EN.html	Group	"Does the Commission believe that the Islamic veil, as worn by one of the figures portrayed in these 10 panels, and which symbolises the oppression and submission of women, is really a gender equality model that respects the EU's aims on equal opportunities?"
Simona BALDASSA RRE (ID) (3)	15.03.2022 Wombs for rent and the war in Ukraine https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2022-001015_	Group	"Ukraine is one of the main international destinations for the purchase of children through 'wombs for rent'. Given the current conflict, some clinics such as Biotexcom have moved underground pending the arrival of commissioning parents. In addition, some surrogate mothers have apparently been put under pressure to continue their pregnancy in countries

	EN.html		with a more flexible attitude towards wombs for rent.”
Simona BALDASSA RRE (ID) (4)	9.03.2022 Surrogacy fair in Milan: treating human life as a mere commodity https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000941_EN.html	Group	“According to press reports, a fair titled ‘Un sogno chiamato bebè’ (‘Making the baby dream come true’), which has already been put on in other European cities over the last five years, will be held in Milan on 21-22 May. Past editions have promoted various ways of having children including those involving the latest artificial insemination techniques, such as the illegal practice of renting wombs. At the event in Paris, couples hoping to become parents were offered surrogacy services where they could even select their baby’s eye colour, hair colour and sex, with prices ranging between EUR 49 000 and 100 000.”
Simona BALDASSA RRE (ID) (5)	7.03.2022 Repeated violations of freedom of thought and opinion at Rome City Council https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000918_EN.html	Group	“Rome City Council has ordered the removal of some posters that the association Pro Vita & Famiglia had put up as part of a peaceful campaign for International Women’s Day, aimed at promoting the right to life and condemning the deviant practices of sex-selective abortion around the world. The posters show a baby in the womb, with the words, ‘Power to women? First let them be born!’”
Gunnar BECK (ID) (1)	22.03.2022 The Conference on the Future of Europe and democratic principles https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001182_EN.html	Group	“Given the fact that participants are allegedly selected at random and that they are only representative in terms of geographic origin, gender, age and socio-economic background, but not political affiliation, how can political pluralism and political representivity be guaranteed, since these projects are characterised by self-selection bias?”
Gunnar BECK (ID) (2)	21.03.2022 Lack of diversity among the citizens selected to participate in the Conference on the Future of Europe	Solo	“Kantar supposedly performed an unbiased selection of participants, taking into account geographic location, gender, age and socioeconomic background. However, after an analysis of the participants’ background, it seems diversity is not guaranteed in terms of migration background, sexual orientation, gender identity, education level and economic

	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001161_EN.html		income. In particular, the Conference lacks the crucial input of ordinary day-to-day workers such as teachers, farmers or working-class labourers.”
Beata SZYDŁO (ECR) (1)	30.07.2020 Discrimination against local authorities defending family rights https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-004467_EN.html	Solo	“Meanwhile, six other town-twinning applications that were submitted with the involvement of Polish authorities which had adopted, according to Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli, resolutions on ‘LGBTI-free zones’ or ‘family rights’ were rejected for this reason. This Commission’s stance on this matter is unacceptable as it strikes at fundamental values, such as the ‘family rights’ referred to here, which should be afforded special protection in the EU.” “Is it because of the Family Charter that the Commission rejected six applications from Poland?”
Dominik TARCZYŃSKI (ECR) (1)	31.05.2021 Freedom of religion and double standards https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-002867_EN.html	Group	“The Prosecutor General in Finland has charged MP Päivi Räsänen (former chair of the Christian Democrat party and former Minister of the Interior of Finland) with hate speech against homosexuals. Why is the Commission intent on protecting the freedom of religion of the Islamic community, while being reluctant to support and protect Christians to the same extent?”
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR) (1)	28.09.2022 Deletion of a tweet containing a girl wearing an Islamic headscarf https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003222_EN.html	Solo	“This is not the first time that the Commission has normalised women’s submission in its communications. Does the Commission consider that forcing women and, in particular, girls to wear the Islamic headscarf is in line with ‘European values?’”
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR)	28.09.2022 Press release on	Solo	Can the Commission explain what it means by ‘gender transformative [...] education’, also with reference to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which the Commission also mentions,

(2)	Transforming Education Summit https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003221_EN.html		and one of the aims of which is to build educational facilities that take gender differences into account? With reference to the principle of conferral set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union, can the Commission name a single provision within primary law that confers upon the EU competences pertaining to 'sexual and reproductive rights'?
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR) (3)	28.09.2022 Protests by the Iranian people against Islamic law https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003220_EN.html	Solo	"Following the torture and killing by Iran's police of the 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, for failing to wear the Islamic veil correctly, thousands of Iranians have taken to the streets against the Muslim theocratic regime and impositions of Islamic law, such as the obligation to wear the hijab or the mere existence of a 'morality police'." "Does the Commission believe that there is an urgent need to rethink EU campaigns that normalise the imposition of the Islamic veil and even identify it with the European youth?"
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR) (4)	13.07.2022 EU idiosyncrasy in promoting Islam as a fundamental European value https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002576_EN.html	Solo	"On what basis does the Commission believe that the submission of women is a 'European value'? What European values does the Commission believe forcing women to cover their hair promotes?"
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR) (5)	9.12.2021 Mutual recognition of parenthood https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005517_EN.html	Group	"In 2020 and 2021, Parliament recognised reproductive exploitation as a violation of human rights and a form of trafficking in human beings, including for the purpose of surrogacy <...>. The vagueness of the legal language used by the Commission, which never speaks of 'filiation' and prefers the indeterminate concept of 'parenthood', opens up a gap that could amount to ratifying the effects of reproductive exploitation in EU legislation."
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR)	23.09.2021 Time to address extreme left-wing violence in	Group	"In Greece, this form of violence has been murderous, even against minors and pregnant women."

(6)	Europe https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-004370_EN.html		
Elżbieta RAFALSKA (ECR) (1)	3.08.2020 Intervention by Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, on the rejection of the applications of six Polish local authorities for the Town Twinning programme https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-004484_EN.html	Group	<p>“These local authorities have adopted resolutions on the protection of the family which are in accordance with Polish law, whose observance is supervised by Poland’s governors and administrative courts.</p> <p>These resolutions do not contain any discriminatory provisions, but they protect the rights of parents to raise their children in accordance with their convictions, and they also protect teachers from the imposition of unprofessional standards of behaviour in educational work and businesses from interference in the selection of employees or contractors.”</p>
Charlie WEIMERS (ECR) (1)	27.08.2021 Swedish study confirms the connection between migration and criminality https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-003972_EN.html	Solo	<p>“According to a report by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ)[1], people born in Sweden of Swedish-born parents account for 42% of those suspected of the offence of gross violation of a woman’s integrity (domestic violence). According to the report, Swedes whose parents were born abroad are five times more likely to be suspected of murder and manslaughter than Swedes whose parents were born in Sweden.”</p>
Charlie WEIMERS (ECR) (2)	9.1.2020 Islamist security threat https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-000121_EN.html		<p>“How have the numbers of Salafists in the EU Member States changed in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and how those numbers can be broken down according to age, gender, education level, nationality and country of activity; How many Salafists can be classified as politically and/or violence-oriented?”</p>

Vincenzo SOFO (ECR) (1)	9.06.2021 Participation of transgender athletes in female sports competitions https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-003044_EN.html	Group	<p>“Given this premise and in view of the fact that, in the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 published in November 2020, the European Commission refers to sport as one of the powerful tools for challenging gender bias and other stereotypes, can the Commission state:</p> <p>Whether the statement made in the aforementioned strategy can be taken as an implicit call to extend the participation of transgender athletes in female sports competitions?</p> <p>Whether it does not feel that allowing more and more transgender athletes to participate in female sports competitions could have a discriminatory effect on women athletes and that this is therefore at odds with the European Union’s pursuit of the full realisation of women’s rights?”</p>
Beata KEMPA (ECR) (1)	17.09.2021 Financial discrimination against Polish local authorities declaring their support for families https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2021-004289_EN.html	Solo	<p>“On what legal basis has the European Commission suspended financial support for projects carried out by cities and municipalities that have adopted resolutions on family rights?”</p>
Jadwiga WIŚNIEWSKA (ECR) (1)	9.12.2021 Mutual recognition of parenthood https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005517_EN.html	Group	<p>“How does the Commission intend to fight against reproductive exploitation?</p> <p>Can it clarify the definition and scope of the term ‘parenthood’?”</p>
Jadwiga WIŚNIEWSKA (ECR) (2)	14.01.2021 Surrogacy in the EU https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-000209_EN.html	Group	<p>“Surrogacy is a modern form of slavery, human trafficking, child trafficking and exploitation of women. Surrogacy also often involves other procedures, such as in vitro fertilisation, which raise bioethical controversies. It is money that determines the child’s gender and the waiting time for the child. 2015 EP resolution condemned ‘the practice of surrogacy, which undermines the human dignity of the woman since her body and its reproductive functions are used as a commodity ... [and] shall be prohibited and treated as a matter of urgency in</p>

			human rights instruments’.”
Simona BALDASSARRE (ID) (1)	27.04.2022 Gender equality panels in Ravenna for the ‘Shaping fair cities’ project https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-001596_EN.html	Group	“The aim of this project is to promote a culture of gender equality and respect for it, raise awareness of equal opportunities and combat gender violence, in line with the fifth goal of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Does the Commission believe that the Islamic veil, as worn by one of the figures portrayed in these 10 panels, and which symbolises the oppression and submission of women, is really a gender equality model that respects the EU’s aims on equal opportunities?”
Paolo BORCHIA (ID) (1)	7.03.2022 Repeated violations of freedom of thought and opinion at Rome City Council https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000918_EN.html	Group	“Rome City Council has ordered the removal of some posters that the association Pro Vita & Famiglia had put up as part of a peaceful campaign for International Women’s Day, aimed at promoting the right to life and condemning the deviant practices of sex-selective abortion around the world. 1.What can it do to prevent incidents such as these from reoccurring, thereby guaranteeing all citizens their right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom to receive or pass on information, without being censored or discriminated against on ideological grounds?”
Paolo BORCHIA (ID) (2)	10.11.2021 ‘Men Having Babies’ surrogacy conference https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005063_EN.html	Group	“Surrogacy reduces procreation to a mere trade in newborns and to the exploitation of vulnerable young women who, often through necessity, offer themselves for this deviant form of slavery that reduces their bodies to a commodity. It is a matter of great concern that surrogacy conferences are permitted at the very heart of the EU. Does the Commission intend to adopt a position on surrogacy as a serious violation of human rights?”
Paolo BORCHIA (ID) (3)	16.09.2021 Désir d’enfant https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-004271_EN.html	Group	“Surrogacy is an aberrant practice and the practice of buying and selling children is disconcerting from both an ethical and moral point of view. Therefore, we ask to the Commission, has it considered condemning these kinds of initiatives, since they do not fit with the idea of progress, guaranteed rights or women’s emancipation?”

Nicolaus FEST (ID) (1)	16.07.2022 Under-representation of men in tertiary education: EU failing to achieve its goal of gender equality https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002625_EN.html	Solo	"A Commission communication states the following: 'The promotion of equality between women and men is a task for the Union, in all its activities, required by the Treaties. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a human and fundamental right and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.' Is the over-representation of women in tertiary education possibly due to structural discrimination against men in this area?"
Nicolaus FEST (ID) (2)	16.07.2022 Breakdown of asylum seekers in the EU by country of origin, gender and age https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002623_EN.html	Solo	"What is the gender breakdown of asylum seekers by country of origin? In other words, how many asylum seekers from Afghanistan (and each of the other countries of origin) are male and how many are female? What is the breakdown of asylum seekers by age in each country of origin?"
Virginie JORON (ID) (1)	10.01.2022 Joan of Arc: a woman and an example for Europe https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000099_EN.html	Solo	"However, all the women selected were alive in the recent past. This practice reinforces the prejudiced view that women have always played a negligible role in history. Yet the most extraordinary heroic figure from history in Europe is a woman: Joan of Arc."
Virginie JORON (ID) (2)	10.01.2022 Anti-Christian hatred: the Commission ignores burning churches https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-000098_EN.html	Solo	"The dozens of church fires in France, conflagrations in the Cathedrals of Paris and Nantes, the beheading of women in Nice, priests' throats cut by two Islamists and a Rwandan applicant for refugee status who arrived illegally in 2012 and was not expelled tell a different story."

Table EP12: *European Parliamentary Questions articulating Anti-Gender Content*

¹⁴¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39152562>

EP Endnotes

¹ Ross L, Roberts L, Roberts DE, Derkas E, Peoples W, Bridgewater PD (2017). Radical Reproductive Justice. New York, NY: Feminist Press. [ISBN 978-1-55861-437-6](#).

² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. N.d. "Gender Equality Glossary". UN Women.

<<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=R&sortkey=&sortorder=>>. Accessed 20.12.22

³<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210621IPR06637/eu-countries-should-ensure-universal-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health>

⁴ "Comprehensive sexuality education: why is it important?" Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 719.998 - February 2022. This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/719998/IPOL_STU\(2022\)719998_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/719998/IPOL_STU(2022)719998_EN.pdf) accessed 21.12.22

Appendices

Appendix A – Parliamentary Data

European Case Study – Parliamentary Debate Data

Key	Coding Category	Code
	Definition of Gender as a problem	DFN
	Consequences of gender as a problem	CSQ
	Actors held responsible for this problem	ACT
	Proposed responses or solutions to the problem	SLN
	The "real" problem(s) gender distracts from [deflection]	PRB
	The "real" threats to women and feminism in Europe	TRT
	Anti Anti-Gender Arguments	AAG

Table AA1: EP1 – RESIST European Parliament colour-coded legend indicating Coding Categories

Date	Debate	Total speakers	Radical Right Populist (RRP) speakers	Coded contributions	D F N	C S Q	A C T	S L N	P R B	T W F	A A G
23.11.2016	EU accession to the IC	48	10	21	5	6	1	1	1	3	4
12.03.2018	Ratification of IC by EU member states	29	4	9	2	1	1	1			4
25.11.2019	EU accession to the IC and other measures to combat g-b-v	35	8	5	2					2	1
25.11.2020	IC and violence against women	17	5	4	1	1			2	1	1
25.11.2021	The IDEVAW and state of play of ratification	47	8	8		2	1		1	2	3
19.10.2022	Fighting sexualised violence – the importance of IC	30	4	6		2			1	2	1

23.11.2022	Eliminating violence against women	34	6	8	1	2			1		4
	Total	240	45	61	11	14	3	2	6	10	18

Table AA2: EP2 – Istanbul Convention Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)

Date	Debate	Total speakers	Radical Right Populist (RRP) speakers	Coded contributions	D F N	C S Q	A C T	S L N	P R B	T W F	A A G
07.10.2015	Renewal of the EU Plan of action on Gender equality and Women's empowerment in development (debate)	16	5	7	3		1			2	1
02.02.2016	New Strategy for gender equality and women's rights post-2015 (debate)	32	5	5	2		1				2
01.03.2017	Gender pay gap (debate)	38	8	8	2			3	1		2
30.05.2018	Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020 (debate)	29	5	10	5				2		3
14.01.2019	Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament (debate)	29	9	26	1	3	1	1	3	1	4
22.10.2020	Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy (debate)	18	5	10	5				4	1	1
16.12.2020	The need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality (debate)	23	5	8	3				1		4
21.01.2021	The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period - The EU Strategy for Gender Equality - Closing the digital gender gap: women's participation in the digital economy (debate)	43	9	15	8			1	2	1	1
09.06.2021	Promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers (debate)	18	6	5	4	1					
15.09.2021	Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU (debate + cont.)	31	7	10	3	3				1	1
13.12.2021	Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence (debate)	18	5	7	4	1					1
08.03.2022	EU Gender Action Plan III (debate)	21	3	6	3	1					1

08.03.2022	Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020 (debate)	18	3	12	3	1			4	1	3
	Total	325	75	123	52	10	13	5	15	7	23

Table AA3: EP3 – Gender Mainstreaming Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)

Date	Debate	Total speakers	Radical Right Populist (RRP) speakers	Coded contributions	D F N	C S Q	A C T	S L N	P R B	T W F	A A G
10.09.2015	The gender dimension of trafficking in human beings (debate)	15	2	9	1	0	0	1	0	1	6
05.10.2016	Women's rights in Poland	66	21	10	1	0	2	2	1	2	2
15.06.2017	2017 Observance of the International Day of the Family: promoting the role of parents in safeguarding good-quality education for their children	10	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
12.02.2019	Experiencing backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU	19	3	11	2	1	0	1	1	1	6
21.10.2019	Criminalisation of sexual education in Poland	29	9	10	1	3	0	1	0	0	5
23.06.2021	Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health	38	9	14	6	1	3	1	1	1	1
20.10.2021	The first anniversary of the de facto abortion ban in Poland	20	4	8	3	0	2	0	2	0	1
15.12.2021	Plans to undermine further fundamental rights in Poland, in particular regarding the standards of the European Convention of Human Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	25	6	8	4	0	1	0	1	0	2
20.01.2022	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union	39	9	9	5	0	1	0	1	1	1
04.07.2022	US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and women's health in the EU	29	5	10	5	0	0	1	1	0	3
	Total	290	72	92	31	5	9	7	8	6	27

Table AA4: EP4 – SRHR Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)

Date	Debate	Total speakers	Radical Right Populist (RRP) speakers	Coded contributions	D F N	C S Q	A C T	S L N	P R B	T W F	A A G
01.12.2016	Combatting racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance (debate)	47	3	13	1		2	1	3	1	5
05.04.2017	Hate speech, populism, and fake news on social media - towards an EU response (debate)	82	16	14		1			4	4	8
26.11.2019	Public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zones (debate)	69	15	12		2	3	1	4		2
14.09.2020	Determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law - LGBTI-free zones in Poland within the scope of the Rete Lenford case (debate)	29	8	24	4	3	1		5		11
25.11.2020	Istanbul Convention and violence against women (debate)	28	4	21	3	2			1		15
10.03.2021	Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone (debate)	41	9	29	7	3	3	1	1	1	13
18.10.2022	Growing hate crimes against LGBTIQ people across Europe in light of the recent homophobic murder in Slovakia (debate)	25	3	4				1	1	1	1
23.11.2022	Legal protection for rainbow families exercising free movement, in particular the Baby Sara case (debate)	17	3	11	3	1	1	1		1	4
	Total	338	67	128	13	12	10	5	19	5	59

Table AA5: EP5 – LGBTIQ and Hate Speech Coded Debates (see Table AA1 for code legend)

Radical Right Populist (RRP) Actor	Tweets relating to Istanbul Convention	Use of EP Footage on Social Media	Count of Footage used for AG Tweets	Anti-Gender Content
Patryk Jaki (ECR) PL 299.3K followers	0	YES	5	3
Hermann TERTSCH (ECR) SP 313.7K followers	0	YES	0	3
Christine ANDERSON (ID) GE 155.7K followers	1	YES	1	4

Margarita DE LA PISA CARRIÓN (ECR) SP 4.4K followers	1	YES	3	4
Angel Dzhambazki (ECR) BU 2.7K followers (frequent weekly posts)	2	YES	3	6
Joachim Kuhs (ID) GE	1	YES	7	2
Guido Reil (ID) GE	0	NO	0	0
Simona BALDASSARRE (ID) IT 441 followers	0	NO	0	0
Gunnar BECK (ID) GE 6K followers	0	YES	0	0
Maximilian KRAH (ID) GE	0	YES	0	0
Beata SZYDŁO (ECR) PL 449.1K followers	0	YES	0	2
Dominik TARCZYŃSKI (ECR) PL 95K followers	0	YES	0	3
Adam Belan (ECR) PL 56.5K followers	0	YES	0	0
Joachim Stanisław BRUDZIŃSKI (ECR) PL 124.4K followers	0	YES	0	3
Jorge Buxade Villalba (ECR) SP 129.9K followers	1	YES	0	2
Zdzisław KRASNODĘBSKI (ECR) PL 33.7K followers	0	YES	0	1
Elżbieta RAFALSKA (ECR) PL 38K followers	1*	YES	0	1
Charlie WEIMERS (ECR) SE 32.1K	1*	YES	0	1

Thierry MARIANI (ID) FR 101.8K	1*	YES	0	2
Antonio Maria RINALDI (ID) IT 82.3K	0	YES	0	1
Vincenzo SOFO (ECR) IT 3K followers	0	YES	0	2
Bogdan Rzonca (ECR) PL 4.6K followers	0	YES	0	1
Dorien ROOKMAKER (ECR) NL 2K followers	0	YES	0	1
Beata KEMPA (ECR) PL 29K followers	1*	YES	0	1
Jadwiga WIŚNIEWSKA (ECR) PL 22.7K followers	1	YES	3	1
Paolo BORCHIA (ID) IT 2.2K followers	1	YES	0	1
Nicolaus FEST (ID) DE 6.4K (more active in YouTube)	1*	YES	0	0
Virginie JORON (ID) FR 93.4K	1	YES	0	0
Johann Nissinen (ECR) SE No account	1	YES	0	0
Aurelia Beigneux (ID) FR 5K	0	YES	1	1
Total 30	11	28 YES/30 Total	29	36

Table AA6: EP6 – Quantitative Insights from Social Media Actor Mapping Nov-Dec 9 2022

Note: *Subtweet

UK Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data

Debate Title	Sitting Date	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
Gender Recognition	23.02.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-02-23/debates/9CA2E843-9254-4039-9BD5-DCA1E6C52D15/GenderRecognition	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Gender Recognition Act	21.02.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-02-21/debates/56E94FB0-8DC6-45A0-8EA7-F20208B3E175/GenderRecognitionAct	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Gender Recognition Act Consultation	24.09.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-09-24/debates/9A57DC36-172D-40CF-98D6-502F1B9A78F0/GenderRecognitionActConsultation	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill: Section 35 Power	17.01.2023	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-01-17/debates/6D599A0F-4300-47CE-8294-8F3BB136696A/GenderRecognitionReform(Scotland)BillSection35Power	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill: Section 35 Power (cont.)	17.01.2023	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-01-17/debates/C38A813A-B5E9-41E5-97AC-FAF39F161706/GenderRecognitionReform(Scotland)BillSection35Power	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Legal Recognition of Non-binary Gender Identities	23.05.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-05-23/debates/040FB4A1-8C3F-4F03-BB10-29FD4A6E24FE/LegalRecognitionOfNon-BinaryGenderIdentities	Trans Rights and Gender Recognition Act
Transgender Conversion Therapy	13.07.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-07-13/debates/5D6FE702-33B8-459D-845B-CC5E39E63D67/TransgenderConversionTherapy	Transgender

Transgender People: Discrimination	22.07.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-07-22/debates/14B188A8-367F-4FFD-A120-D1447E8895EC/TransgenderPeopleDiscrimination	Transgender, Gender Based Violence
Transgender Prisoners	12.01.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-01-12/debates/39EBE61A-4A96-4948-853F-B1A3B2964F00/TransgenderPrisoners	Transgender
Self-identification of Gender	21.11.2018	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-11-21/debates/BE06C5D4-E549-4F94-87B1-9B77F32EA155/Self-IdentificationOfGender	Transgender

Table AA7: UK1 – Cluster 2: ‘Debating’ Trans Lives

Note: There are 10 debates that fall under this cluster, 32.26% of the corpus

Debate Title	Sitting Date	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
Hungary: Same-sex Couple Adoption	24.11.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-11-24/debates/568D3B02-1FE1-44CB-9B09-8D391154150A/HungarySame-SexCoupleAdoption	LGBTIQ, Sexual and Reproductive rights
Maternity Outcomes: Migrant Women	25.01.2023	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-01-25/debates/33EEE10A-E674-4C1E-BBC4-1D99D315344F/MaternityOutcomeMigrantWomen	Migrant Women
Relationships and Sex Education	25.02.2019	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-02-25/debates/FF1A7445-8BE4-4FD3-AAA3-BCD6C2699B4A/RelationshipsAndSexEducation	Sexual Education

Legal Rights to Access Abortion	28.11.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-11-28/debates/629FE1B6-A596-4C54-B764-034455EBDAEF/LegalRightsToAccessAbortion	Sexual and Reproductive rights
Abortion in Northern Ireland	25.03.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-03-25/debates/63A0FA60-AC63-4F1C-894E-25222226F585/AbortionInNorthernIreland	Decriminalisation of Abortion

Table AA8: UK2 – Cluster 3: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education

Note: These 5 debates fall under this cluster, 19% of the corpus

Debate Title	Sitting Date	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
Conversion Therapy Ban	30.03.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-03-30/debates/D2DE2B8F-2C5F-49FE-91ED-E7BCC2FAF969/ConversionTherapyBan	LGBTIQ
Conversion Therapy Ban: Faith-based Settings	24.11.2021	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-11-24/debates/A9A90EE4-B702-481F-B36E-4A664F88D918/ConversionTherapyBanFaith-BasedSetting	LGBTIQ, Religion
Gay Conversion Therapy	07.06.2018	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-06-07/debates/8048DC51-204F-43B3-BFA6-ECF6BA4667D0/GayConversionTherapy	LGBTIQ
Lesbian Bisexual and Trans Women's Health Inequalities	10.03.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-03-10/debates/CD9E6213-BA77-469D-AABC-8308711DFF6B/LesbianBisexualAndTransWomen%E2%80%99SHealthInequalities	LGBTIQ

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) (Northern Ireland)	28.03.2018	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-03-28/debates/FA40436A-86BF-4FE9-BCC6-14FBE897C26D/Marriage(SameSexCouples)(NorthernIreland)	Marriage Equality
Provision of LGBT inclusive education in schools	20.02.2018	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-02-20/debates/C8B21E1D-7D18-4B0B-925E-E7F835E16111/ProvisionOfLGBTInclusiveEducationInSchools	Sexual Education

Table AA9: UK3 – Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics

Note: These 6 debates fall under this cluster, 19.3% of the corpus

Debate Title	Sitting Date	Hyperlink	Initial Search Terms
Black Women: Domestic Abuse	30.06.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-06-30/debates/6C504C76-F6C9-4681-B750-87028A050BD4/BlackWomenDomesticAbuse	Gender Based Violence, Racism
Gender Specific Religious Persecution	17.03.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-03-17/debates/195CB781-62C5-4306-8564-D2B80933CA84/GenderSpecificReligiousPersecution	Religion, Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, Gender Based Violence
Gender-based Violence	26.11.2020	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-11-26/debates/1DB22AA9-A667-4B49-97BD-07D87243B2A4/Gender-BasedViolence	Gender Based Violence
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	01.12.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-12-01/debates/6EC5E91A-BC76-46C0-9C46-E801C4FB1FB6/InternationalDayForTheEliminationOfViolenceAgainstWomen	Istanbul convention, Gender Based Violence

Leaving the EU: Effect on Women	17.05.2018	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-05-17/debates/B85D01B4-55CA-44E5-9426-B3C780732412/LeavingTheEUEffectOnWomen	Gender Equality and Mainstreaming
Online Abuse and Hate towards Women	07.07.2021	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-07-07/debates/2845D17E-D624-4BC4-A5FB-B0263D06643C/OnlineAbuseAndHateTowardsWomen	Hate speech, Gender Based Violence
Protection from Sex-based Harassment in Public Bill	09.12.2022	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-12-09/debates/1B5B443C-E121-492D-8400-09CF91707A66/ProtectionFromSex-BasedHarassmentInPublicBill	Gender Based Violence
Safer Streets for Women	24.03.2021	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-03-24/debates/39EEDECF-F988-4863-A9E3-93C28B36B13C/SaferStreetsForWomen	Gender Based Violence
Ethnicity Pay Gap	20.09.2021	https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-09-20/debates/3A332BAE-A7AE-49BD-95F3-2E7875E04F66/EthnicityPayGap?highlight=gender%20pay%20gap#contribution-E2B0514A-6D51-4F20-8B7E-F044661D8EBF	Racism

Table AA10: UK4 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminism and Gender Equalities

Note: These 9 debates fall under this cluster, 29% of the corpus

Cluster Number	Debate Clusters	Percentage Distribution
1	Targeting <i>gender</i>	0%
2	‘Debating’ Trans lives	32.3%

3	Undermining sexual and reproductive rights and education	19.4%
4	Delegitimizing LGBTIQ lives, experiences and politics	19.4%
5	Attacking feminism and gender equalities	29%

Table AA11: UK5 – Percentage Distribution of our Debates across the Clusters

Note: Further sub corpora were created using the following search terms: Feminism; Free speech; Freedom of speech; Gender ideology; Hijab; Woke; and Critical Race Theory.

Corpus Name	Filtered Constraints	Hits (N=2134)
Subcorpus: GenderMentionsUK02.23	Filtered for “sex”	743
Subcorpus: TransgenderPilotWL	Filtered for “transgender”	616
Subcorpus: UK_woman_lower	Filtered for “woman” and “lower house” then searched in that for “biological sex”	7
Subcorpus: UK_keywords_feminist_lower	Filtered for “feminist” and “lower”	59
Subcorpus: UK_keywords_feminism_lower	Filtered for “feminism” and “lower”	59
Subcorpus: whole corpus-gender ideology	Filtered for “gender ideology” 2/3 =lower	3

Subcorpus: free speech lower	Filtered for “free speech”	257
Subcorpus: free speech lower	Filtered for “freedom of speech”	320
Subcorpus: critical race	Filtered for “critical race theory”	7
Subcorpus: woke	Filtered for “woke”	10
Subcorpus hijab	Filtered for 'hijab' and 'lower house’	53

Table AA12: UK6 – “Hits” for each search per subcorpora (N=11) searched

Switzerland Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Terms
11.03.2021	Respect for the rules of the French language is more important than ideology	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20213143	Gender equal language
29.09.2022	No gendering at federal universities and research institutes.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20220475	Gender equal language
01.12.2021	Does the federal government want to abolish the mother?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20218089	Gender, gender equal language

Table AA13: CH1 – Cluster 1: Targeting Gender

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
15.06.2018	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20183696	Civil registry of gender
11.06.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=49207	Civil registry of gender
24.09.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=50311	Civil registry of gender
01.12.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=50856	Civil registry of gender
07.12.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=51072	Civil registry of gender
10.12.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=51152	Civil registry of gender
16.12.2020	Change of gender in the civil status register	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=51403	Civil registry of gender

16.12.2021	Exponential rise in medical treatment of young trans people. Will Switzerland regulate the controversial practices?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20214506	Transgender
17.09.2018	Introduction of a Third Gender Identity. Consequences for the legal system and for the Infostar. Postulate Rebecca Ana.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44046	Third gender
17.09.2018	Third gender in civil status register Postulate Arslan Sibel.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44049	Third gender
14.12.2022	Legitimacy of puberty blockers, hormone treatments, and surgical procedures on minors.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20224422	Transgender

Table AA14: CH2 – Cluster 2: Debating Trans Lives

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
15.06.2018	"Hey You". The unfit and not level appropriate sex education booklet for children 12 years and older	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20223734	Sexual education
13.09.2022	Motion WBK-N. Fulfil desire to have children, legalise egg donation for married couples	https://www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=57928	Sexual and Reproductive rights
05.05.2020	Optimization of information and counselling activities for women with problem pregnancies.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20203301	Sexual and reproductive rights
16.06.2017	Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=40640	Same sex marriage
03.06.2020	Parliamentary initiative Green-Liberal Group. Marriage for all	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=49004	Same sex marriage

11.06.2020	Parliamentary initiative	Marriage for all	Green-Liberal Group.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=49200	Same sex marriage
01.12.2020	Parliamentary initiative	Marriage for all	Green-Liberal Group.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=50854	Same sex marriage
09.12.2020	Parliamentary initiative	Marriage for all	Green-Liberal Group.	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=51126	Same sex marriage
17.12.2020	State money for masturbation campaign?			https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20204651	Sexual education
30.09.2021	Children produced by sperm donation should have the opportunity to meet their biological father from the age of 4 years			https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20214206	Sexual and Reproductive rights

Table AA15: CH3 – Cluster 3: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
18.06.2020	Accepting Contra Position on Marriage for All as Career Risk?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20203740	Same sex marriage
12.12.2022	Prohibit and criminalise conversion measures on LGBTQ people	https://www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=59204	LGBTIQ
11.06.2019	Does the referendum bill also protect podophile tendencies?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20195318	LGBTIQ
21.09.2022	Is Swiss Post violating political neutrality by issuing a "marriage for all" event stamp?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20227763	LGBTIQ

Table AA16: CH4 – Cluster 4: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Terms
28.02.2018	Family reunification of second wives?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20185112	Racism, religion
11.09.2019	Violence against women. An end to false tolerance!	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20193995	Racism
17.03.2017	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=39837	LGBTIQ
25.09.2018	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44372	LGBTIQ
25.09.2018	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44369	LGBTIQ
28.11.2018	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44732	LGBTIQ
03.12.2018	Fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44787	LGBTIQ

16.12.2022	No children's headscarves in schools and kindergarten. A question of equality, child protection and not religion	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20224559	Racism, religion
17.06.2021	Swiss Center for Islam and Society in Fribourg. Examine stop of funding by public money	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20213767	Racism, Religion

Table AA17: CH5 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminism and Gender Equality

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink To Online Debate
15.06.2018	Alle Menschen sind vor dem Gesetz gleich. Rechtliche Anknüpfungen an das Geschlecht abschaffen	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20183690
30.06.2022	Analyse der Standards im Bereich der schulischen Sexualaufklärung in der Schweiz	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20223877
24.09.2020	Änderung des Geschlechts im Personenstandsregister	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=50311
17.03.2020	Die Massnahmen der Istanbul-Konvention sollen auch für Menschen mit Behinderungen gelten	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20223233
25.09.2019	Die medizinisch unterstützte Fortpflanzung darf nicht länger ein Luxus für die Reichen sein	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20194164
28.02.2017	"Die Rechte von Transmenschen garantieren	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20173032
07.03.2023	Eine Abtreibung sollte in erster Linie als eine Frage der Gesundheit betrachtet werden und nicht als Strafsache	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=59916

28.09.2018	Eine Geschlechtsumwandlung für einen abgewiesenen Asylbewerber	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20184014
29.09.2017	Einfluss der Kinder auf das Bleiberecht in der Schweiz	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20173930
17.03.2021	Eizellenspende endlich auch in der Schweiz legalisieren!	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20173032
14.12.2022	Geistige Beeinträchtigung. Keine Sterilisation ohne Zustimmung der betroffenen Person	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20224385
01.03.2023	Gleichstellung und zusätzliche Stellen	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20237100
30.09.2022	Keine Wiedereinführung einer Diskriminierung aufgrund der sexuellen Orientierung bei der medizinisch unterstützten Fortpflanzung	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20224247
06.03.2019	Kopftuchverbot für Minderjährige?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20193049
28.09.2018	"Medizinisch unterstützte Fortpflanzung. Ein Luxus, den sich nur Reiche leisten können?"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20184021
14.12.2022	Motion Roduit Benjamin. Die Beachtung der Regeln der französischen Sprache ist wichtiger als Ideologie	https://www.parlament.ch/fr/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=59295
08.12.2021	"Neues Framework des IOC verwischt Grenzen zwischen den Geschlechtern. Was unternimmt der Bundesrat, damit Frauen nicht benachteiligt werden?"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20218242

08.12.2021	"Neues Framework des IOC verwischt Grenzen zwischen den Geschlechtern. Was unternimmt der Bundesrat, damit Frauen nicht benachteiligt werden?"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20218242
13.06.2019	"Postulat Flach Beat. Alle Menschen sind vor dem Gesetz gleich. Rechtliche Anknüpfungen an das Geschlecht abschaffen/ Supprimer en droit toute référence au sexe, pour assurer l'égalité de tous devant la loi"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=46357
18.03.2022	Sexuelle Gesundheit Schweiz. Lust-Comics für Kinder	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20223320
16.06.2017	Situation von LGBTI-Asylsuchenden	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20173588
02.12.2020	Sterilisation von Frauen mit einer geistigen Beeinträchtigung. Stand der Dinge	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20204386
22.03.2019	"Steuerliche Anreize für eine familienfreundliche Politik, die diesen Namen verdient"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20193310
16.12.2021	Überprüfung der Verbreitung sogenannter Konversionstherapien in der Schweiz und der Notwendigkeit einer gesetzlichen Regelung	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20214474
26.09.2019	Umgang mit anonymen Samenspenden und unbekannter Vaterschaft	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20194251
05.03.2020	Wie viele Minderjährige werden wegen Problemen mit ihrer Geschlechtsidentität behandelt?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20203051

01.03.2023	Willkommene und naive Instrumentalisierung von Schweizer Diplomatinen zugunsten des iranischen Regimes	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20237127
01.10.2021	"Zweiwöchiger ""Vaterschaftsurlaub"" für alle Paare"	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20214331
31.05.2022	Zwingende Nur-Ja-heisst-Ja Einführung aufgrund der Istanbul-Konvention?	https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20227359

Table AA18: CH6 – List of Additional Debates found via an Expanded Keyword Search

Poland Case Study - Parliamentary Debate Data

Method Name	Methodology for Segment: Parliamentary Debates
Sampling & Selection	In order to accommodate national differences, the overall research methodology was adjusted in each national study case, drawing from the non-probability and multi-stage techniques, corresponding well to the case study design, which does not seek making representative or generalisable (beyond thus constructed corpus) observations and findings (Yin 2018).
Multi-stage Data Sampling Cycle	<p>Purposive sampling (timeframe; sittings; keywords, available transcript). Random choice of 30 plenaries from the above constructed purposive sample. Quota selection. To ensure the dataset included Debates from Sejm VIII/IX, all key words & phrases were present and occurred at least once, the number of included/excluded transcripts was further manually adjusted. Finalisation and narrowing the selection. To ensure consistency principle across all national case studies, only 30 Debates instead of (multi-debate) Plenaries were chosen as data sources.</p>

Multi-Stage Key Words and Phrases Cycle	<p>Each thematic cluster was populated with a selection of Polish words and phrases that capture issues, problems, and aspects of the given cluster theme.</p> <p>Longlist (N=50) was composed by eliminating redundancies (e.g. semantic or grammatical variants), and balanced numbers were kept across clusters.</p> <p>Shortlisting proceeded (N=34), ensuring balanced spread of key words and phrases across clusters.</p>
Search Engines: Constraints and Optimisation	<p>Polish grammar is complex: multiple types of words change forms depending on the gender, singular/plural, animate/non-animate or human/non-human statuses. These can further vary depending on the 7 cases (a function that a given word plays in the sentence). Conjugation of verbs will also produce multiple variants for person, tense, and noun case forms. In consequence, one word (e.g. abortion - 'aborcja') can have multiple morphological forms: 'aborcji', 'aborcjami', 'aborcjom', 'aborcjo', 'aborcje', 'aborcję', 'aborcją', 'aborcjach'.</p> <p>In consequence, search engine setup and algorithms to deal with linguistic forms have a key impact on gathering and quantification of results e.g. searching 'aborcja' may return 100s results of only this particular morphological word form, or 1000s results consisting of diverse grammatical forms of the word.</p> <p>Therefore, an important caveat must be made that reported search totals are not directly comparable, as some search parameters were outside of the researchers' control. While purpose-built databases usually provide some advanced search options, more general search tools are less controllable. Where possible, Boolean, truncation, and wildcard search operators were used to capture a range of morphological word forms, diminishing the scale of divergences**.</p> <p>[**: These operators are: AND, NOT, OR, AND NOT, asterisk (*, i.e. wildcard), parenthesis (), quotation marks ""].</p> <p>Further info: https://libguides.valdosta.edu/boolean-truncation-wildcards [accessed: 25.08.2023]]</p>
Clustering	<p>Thematic clustering as described in the Report's methodology section was a starting point for devising search terms to shortlist Debates. Returned data (Plenaries from which Debates were extracted) showed a high degree of permeability and cross-reference between searched terms and defining characteristics of the returned debates e.g 'LGBT' returned data that pointed to issues of: trans people's lives, sexual and reproductive rights, education, or delegitimization of LGBTIQ+ politics. This high degree of an overlap showed clustering to be analytically unhelpful in the Polish case ('most data belong to most categories'). Consequently, it was decided that Polish data points (Debates) would not be clustered. The reflection on high permeability is included in the findings.</p>

Table AA19: PL1 – Methodological Steps for the Polish Case Study in Parliamentary Debates

Sitting Date	Debate Title (EnglishG)	Debate Title (Polish)	Subtitle	Link	Term of Office	Plenary Session	Plenary Session Day
17.03.2016	14. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on March 17, 2016.	14. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 17 marca 2016 r.	Punkt 14. porządku dziennego: Sprawozdanie Komisji Sprawiedliwości i Praw Człowieka o rządowym projekcie ustawy o przeciwdziałaniu zagrożeniom przestępczością na tle seksualnym (druki nr 189 i 330)	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/F096068642E4EF81C1257FF790059CE10/%24File/14_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	14	2
21.07.2016	23. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on July 21, 2016.	23. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 21 lipca 2016 r.	Punkt 25. porządku dziennego: Informacja prezesa Rady Ministrów na temat wyniku zakończonego w Wielkiej Brytanii referendum w sprawie dalszego członkostwa Wielkiej Brytanii w Unii Europejskiej.	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/5A54E9E0EC7A9E1AC1257FF80005B53D/%24File/23_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	23	3
09.05.2016	24. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on September 05, 2016.	24. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 5 września 2016 r.	Punkt 10. porządku dziennego: Informacja o działalności Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich za rok 2015 oraz o stanie przestrzegania wolności i praw człowieka i obywatela wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji Sprawiedliwości i Praw Człowieka	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/083307F775E5D4B4C12580260001D764/%24File/24_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	24	1
23.09.2016	26. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on September 23, 2016.	26. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 23 września 2016 r.	Kontynuacja debaty dot. Punkt 16. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży oraz ustawy z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. Kodeks karny	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/ADCC34D03BACBB6DC1258037006A3D78/%24File/26_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	26	3

23.09.2016	26. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on September 23, 2016.	26. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 23 września 2016 r.	Pkt. 17. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o prawach kobiet i świadomym rodzicielstwie.	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/ADCC34D03BACBB6DC1258037006A3D78/%24File/26_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	26	3
23.09.2016	26. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on September 23, 2016.	26. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 23 września 2016 r.	Pkt. 18. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie poselskiego projektu ustawy w obronie Życia i zdrowia nienarodzonych dzieci poczętych in vitro, o zmianie ustawy z dnia 25 czerwca 2015 r. o leczeniu niepłodności, ustawy z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. Kodeks karny oraz ustawy z dnia 25 lutego 1964 r. Kodeks rodzinny i opiekuńczy.	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/ADCC34D03BACBB6DC1258037006A3D78/%24File/26_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	26	3
20.10.2016	28. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on October 20, 2016.	28. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 20 października 2016 r.	Punkt 35. Projekt uchwały Deklaracja Pamięci i Solidarności Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz Verkhovnej Rady Ukrainy	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/64CA6DCF20CE8CD7C1258053004C202C/%24File/28_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	28	2
01.10.2018	55. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on January 10, 2018.	55. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 10 stycznia 2018 r.	Punkt 14. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o prawach kobiet i świadomym rodzicielstwie	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter8.nsf/0/A7C70FF23D12E38BC12582120013123F/%24File/55_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm VIII	55	2
19.11.2019	1. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on November 19, 2019.	1. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 19 listopada 2019 r.	Punkt 9. Przedstawienie przez prezesa Rady Ministrów programu działania Rady Ministrów z wnioskiem o udzielenie jej wotum zaufania	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/65E0AEB97E76894EC12584B800149932/%24File/01_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	1	3
15.04.2020	10. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on April 15, 2020.	10. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 15 kwietnia 2020r.	Punkt 6. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. – Kodeks karny	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/73F7E694C568C63EC1258552002C96E4/%24File/10_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	10	1

15.04.2020	10. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on April 15, 2020.	10. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 15 kwietnia 2020r.	Punkt 7. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie obywatelskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenolnter9.nsf/0/E0701FA60F4B4147C1258550003D6A14/%24File/10_a_k_siazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	10	1
22.07.2020	15 meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on July 22, 2020.	15. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 22 lipca 2020 r.	Punkt 10. porządku dziennego: Pierwsze czytanie poselskiego projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks pracy	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenolnter9.nsf/0/9C6DA3CAAC0335FCC12585BC0038DC94/%24File/15_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	15	1
27.10.2020	20. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on October 27, 2020.	20. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 27 października 2020 r.	Punkt 1. Informacja Ministra Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej na temat funkcjonowania programu kompleksowego wsparcia dla rodzin „Za Życiem”, programów finansowanych ze środków Solidarnościowego Funduszu Wsparcia Osób Niepełnosprawnych oraz ewentualnych skutków, jakie wywołuje w ich realizacji wyrok Trybunału Konstytucyjnego	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenolnter9.nsf/0/59C073768EDDA951C1258625002892EF/%24File/20_a_k_siazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	20	1
28.10.2020	20. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on October 28, 2020.	20. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 28 października 2020 r.	Punkt 1. Informacja bieżąca	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenolnter9.nsf/0/51DEA0FB9C416D10C125860F007B0996/%24File/20_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	20	2

18.11.2020	21. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on November 18, 2020.	21. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 18 listopada 2020 r.	Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale RP w pracach UE w okresie lipiec–grudzień 2019 r. (przewodnictwo Finlandii w Radzie UE). Punkt 6. i Punkt 7. Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale RP w pracach UE w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2020 r. (przewodnictwo Chorwacji w Radzie UE)	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoIn ter9.nsf/0/78E9243DCC09A138C1258630004B35C6/%24File/21_d_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	21	1
16.12.2020	23. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on December 16, 2020.	23. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 16 grudnia 2020 r.	Projekt ustawy o zmianie zakresu obowiązywania Konwencji Rady Europy o zapobieganiu i zwalczaniu przemocy wobec kobiet i przemocy domowej	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoIn ter9.nsf/0/B495F755D49FF1BEC1258641000A7DAC/%24File/23_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	23	2
17.03.2021	27. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on March 17, 2021.	27. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 17 marca 2021 r.	Projekt ustawy Tak dla rodziny, nie dla gender	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoIn ter9.nsf/0/D529AA18D9598E08C125869B007CFD45/%24File/27_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	27	2
30.05.2021	30. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on May 21, 2021.	30. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 21 maja 2021 r.	Informacja o działalności Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich oraz o stanie przestrzegania wolności i praw człowieka i obywatela w roku 2020	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoIn ter9.nsf/0/4ADDF560BCADB2B7C12586DC0062DDD0/%24File/30_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	30	3
30.05.2021	30. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on May 21, 2021.	30. posiedzenie Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 21 maja 2021 r.	Projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy o systemie oświaty i ustawy o finansowaniu zadań oświatowych	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoIn ter9.nsf/0/4ADDF560BCADB2B7C12586DC0062DDD0/%24File/30_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	30	3

24.06.2021	33. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland in June 2024.	33. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 24 czerwca 2021 r.	Informacja o działalności Rzecznika Praw Dziecka w 2020 roku oraz uwagi o stanie przestrzegania praw dziecka w Polsce	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/14F1D5898A529E98C12586FF00115BC4/%24File/33_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	33	2
28.10.2021	40. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on October 28, 2021.	40. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 28 października 2021 r.	Projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 24 lipca 2015 r. – Prawo o zgromadzeniach	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/A5147BDA3C09B46DC125877D000A3742/%24File/40_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	40	1
09.02.2022	48. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on February 09, 2022.	48. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 9 lutego 2022 r.	Projekt uchwały w sprawie solidarności z obywatelkami Afganistanu	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/2A1FB4F6E3A40AE0C12587E4007A1339/%24File/48_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	48	2
22.06.2022	57. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on June 22, 2022.	57. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 22 czerwca 2022 r.	Informacja o działalności Rzecznika Praw Dziecka w 2021 roku oraz uwagi o stanie przestrzegania praw dziecka w Polsce	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/C87DBB14A4831DEEC125886A000A4F85/%24File/57_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	57	1
22.06.2022	57. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on June 22, 2022.	57. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 22 czerwca 2022 r.	Projekt ustawy o bezpiecznym przerywaniu ciąży i innych prawach reprodukcyjnych	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenoln ter9.nsf/0/C87DBB14A4831DEEC125886A000A4F85/%24File/57_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	57	1

22.07.2022	59. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on July 22, 2022.	59. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 22 lipca 2022 r.	Informacja o działalności Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich oraz o stanie przestrzegania wolności i praw człowieka i obywatela w roku 2021	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenolnTer9.nsf/0/98BD4F12397263A4C1258887006C2603/%24File/59_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	59	3
03.11.2022	65. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on November 03, 2022.	65. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 3 listopada 2022 r.	Projekty ustaw o zmianie ustawy – Prawo oświatowe	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenolnTer9.nsf/0/E74CD0A856CE8ECEC12588EF0082EAAB/%24File/65_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	65	1
14.12.2022	68. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on December 14, 2022.	68. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 14 grudnia 2022 r.	Projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks karny	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenolnTer9.nsf/0/CE22C5A623F6CBD6C1258919000E2945/%24File/68_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	68	2
07.03.2023	73. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on March 07, 2023.	73. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 7 marca 2023 r.	Projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenolnTer9.nsf/0/807EE4F74A8E859CC125896B00835C23/%24File/73_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	Sejm IX	73	1
13.04.2023	74. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on April 13, 2023.	74. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 13 kwietnia 2023 r.	Wniosek o wyrażenie wotum nieufności wobec Ministra Edukacji i Nauki – Przemysław Czarńka	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenolnTer9.nsf/0/67D5771909333250C1258991000832A7/%24File/74_b_ksiazka.pdf	Sejm IX	74	2

25.05.2023	76. meeting of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on May 25, 2023.	76. posiedzenie Sejmu w dniu 25 maja 2023 r.	Informacja bieżąca	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/33D4D4057336B349C12589BB000012AB/%24File/76_b_ksiazka.pdf	Sejm IX	76	2
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Table AA20: PL2 – List of Polish Sejm’s Plenary Sessions selected for examination.

Thematic Codes (Researcher-generated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhetorical Tools & Behaviours • Christian Tradition vs Liberal Values • Harming/Protecting Children/Women • Paternalism, Benevolence and Common Sense • (Il)Legitimacy of Law & Delegitimization Strategies • West and the EU as Threats • Conservatism as 'True' pro-Equality Measure • Scientific Rationality • Natural Order • Normal Family • John Paul II and PolishL Tradition • (De)Humanising • Nazism, 'Soviet occupation', genocide analogies

Table AA21: PL3 – List of thematic codes

Hungary Case Study - Parliamentary Data

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
04.04.2017	Joint debate on the bill amending Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2014-2018_115/?query=gender%20szak&pg=1191&layout=s	Gender*
08.05.2017	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2014-2018_115/?query=femini*&pg=2411&layout=r	Feminista (Feminist)
13.11.2018	General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on family support and pension insurance until the end of the debate	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_123/?query=gender*&pg=1975&layout=s	Gender*
14.12.2020	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_131/?query=gender*&pg=2752&layout=s	Gender*
18.11.2020	General debate on the ninth amendment of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary until closure	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_131/?query=LMBT*&pg=1961&layout=s	LMBT*
04.05.2020	Joint debate on the political declaration on the importance of protecting children and women and rejecting accession to the Istanbul Convention	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_129/?query=gender*&pg=2025&layout=s	Gender/Istanbul Convention
28.09.2021	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_134/?query=gender*&pg=228&layout=s	Gender*
20.09.2021	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_134/?query=gender*&pg=23&layout=s	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
22.05.2023	Hour of instant questions	-https://www.parlament.hu/	Gender*

14.06.2023	Continuing the general debate on the draft on Hungary's 2024 central budget	-https://www.parlament.hu/	Gender*
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Table AA22: HU1 – Cluster 1: Targeting Gender

Note: * denotes wildcard search

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term *Denotes wildcard search
13.06.2019	General debate on the draft law amending certain laws on media services until closure	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_125/?pg=1978&layout=s&query=LMBT*	LMBT*
17.11.2020	General debate on the draft law amending certain laws in the field of justice until the end of the debate	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_131/?query=%C3%B6r%C3%B6kbefogad%C3%A1s%20AND%20h%C3%A1zass%C3%A1g&pg=1783&layout=s	Gyermekevédelem (Child Protection)
01.06.2021	Bence Tordai (Dialogue) - to the Minister of Interior - "What is the government willing to implement from our proposals to prevent mass frost deaths?"	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_133/?query=LMBT*&pg=3047&layout=s	LMBT*
08.11.2022	What is the government willing to implement of our proposals to prevent mass frostbite?	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2022-2026_139/?pg=941&layout=s&query=gender*	Gender*
27.02.2023	Speeches before the agenda	-https://www.parlament.hu/	LMBT*
22.05.2023	Speeches before the agenda	-https://www.parlament.hu/	LMBT*
07.03.2023	General debate on the draft on complaints, whistleblowing and malpractice until closure	-https://www.parlament.hu/	Gender*

Table AA23: HU2 – Cluster 2: Delegitimizing LGBTIQ Lives, Experiences and Politics

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
14.12.2020	Do organisations influence public life in Hungary, Prime Minister?"	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_131/?query=transznemű&pg=2793&layout=s	Transznemű (transgender)
07.04.2020	General debate on the proposal to amend certain laws on administrative matters and on the free distribution of property	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_129/?query=transznem%C5%B1&pg=1230&layout=s	Transznemű (transgender)
30.11.2021	Merged debate on the referral for a national referendum under an exceptional procedure	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_134/?pg=1167&layout=s&query=nemv%C3%A1lt%C3%A1s	Nemváltás (gender reassignment)

Table AA24: HU3 – Cluster 3: Debating Trans Lives

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term
07.03.2023	What does the government do in order to protect our children?	https://www.parlament.hu/	LMBT*

01.06.2021	General debate on the proposal for a Council decision on tougher action against paedophile offenders and amending certain laws to protect children until closure	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_133/?query=LMBT*&pg=3047&layout=s	LMBT*
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Table AA25: HU4 – Cluster 4: Undermining Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Education

Note: * denotes wildcard search

Sitting Date	Debate Title	Hyperlink	Initial Search Term *Denotes wildcard search
29.11.2021	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2018-2022_134/?query=femini*&pg=1083&layout=s	Feminista (feminist)
20.06.2022	Speeches before the agenda	https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ON1990_2022-2026_138/?query=femini*&pg=6&layout=s	Feminista (feminist)
03.04.2023	On recent issues	https://www.parlament.hu/	LMBT*

Table AA26: HU5 – Cluster 5: Attacking Feminisms and Gender Equalities

Political party	Number of MPs from a given party, whose speeches were included in the coded material	Distribution of speakers by gender ⁶¹ -
Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP)	4	Female – 1, Male – 3
(Dialogue) Párbeszéd	2	Female – 1, Male – 1
Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz)	6	Female – 3, Male – 3
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)	3	Female – 2, Male – 1
Jobbik – Conservatives	3	Female – 2, Male – 1
Politics Can Be Different (LMP)	1	Female – 1
Democratic Coalition (DK)	3	Female – 2, Male – 1
Independent	2	Female – 1, Male – 1

Table AA27: HU6 – Presentation of Actors by Party (whose Quotes were included in the Coded Material)

⁶¹ Please, note that this binary distribution of speakers by gender is based on the official understanding of gender in the Hungarian parliament, which classifies individuals (MPs) as either male or female.

Appendix B – Media Data

Switzerland Media Data

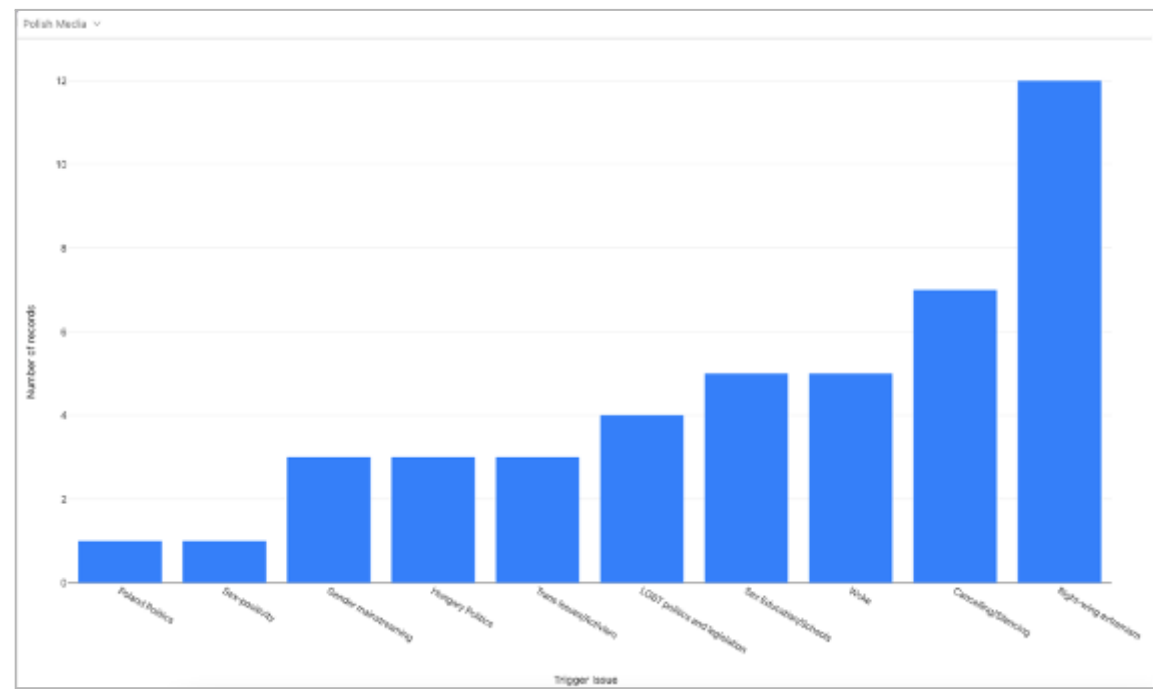


Figure AB1: CH7 – Trigger Issues in the German- language press, containing the phrase ‘gender ideology’

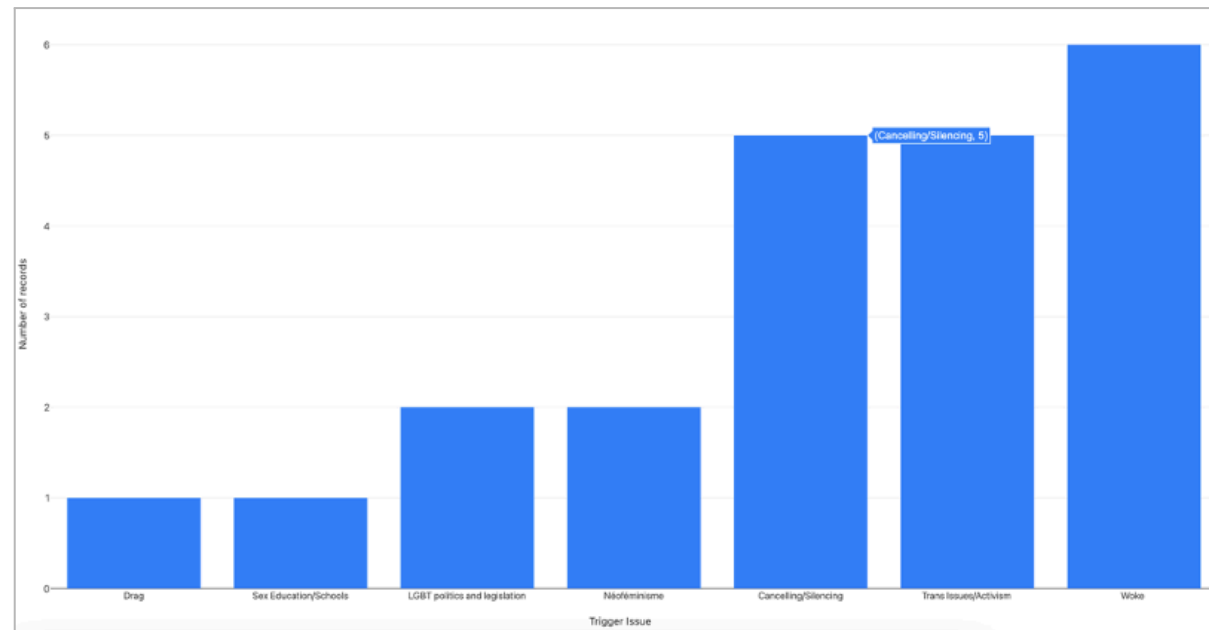


Figure AB2: CH8 – Trigger Issues in the French-language press, containing the phrase ‘gender ideology’

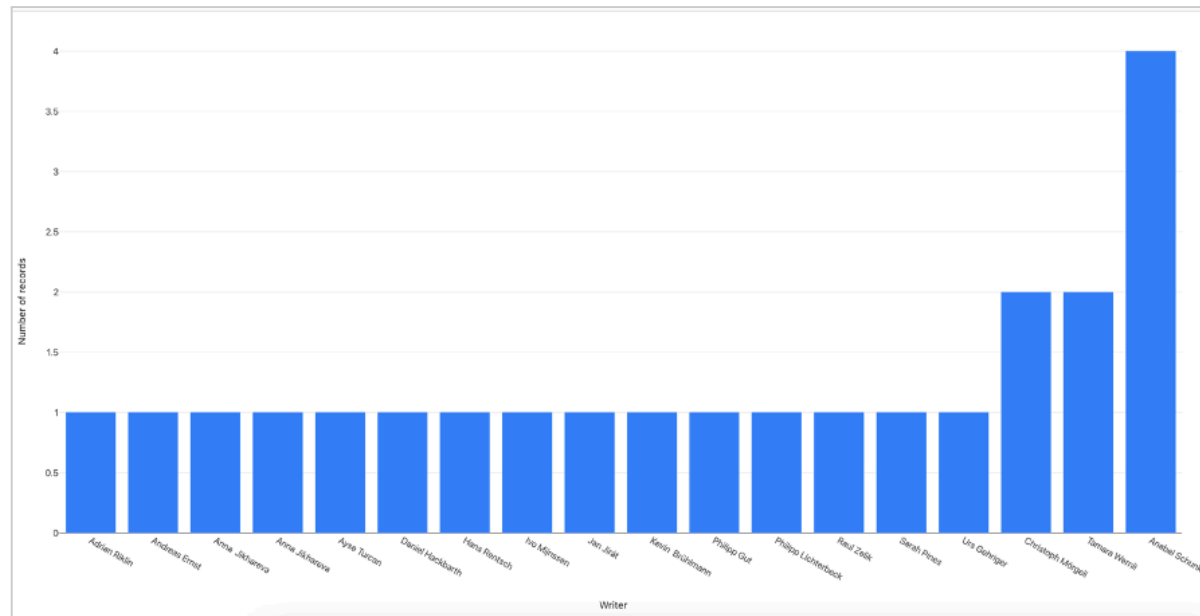


Figure AB3: CH9 – Top (by writer) Mentions of ‘gender-ideology’

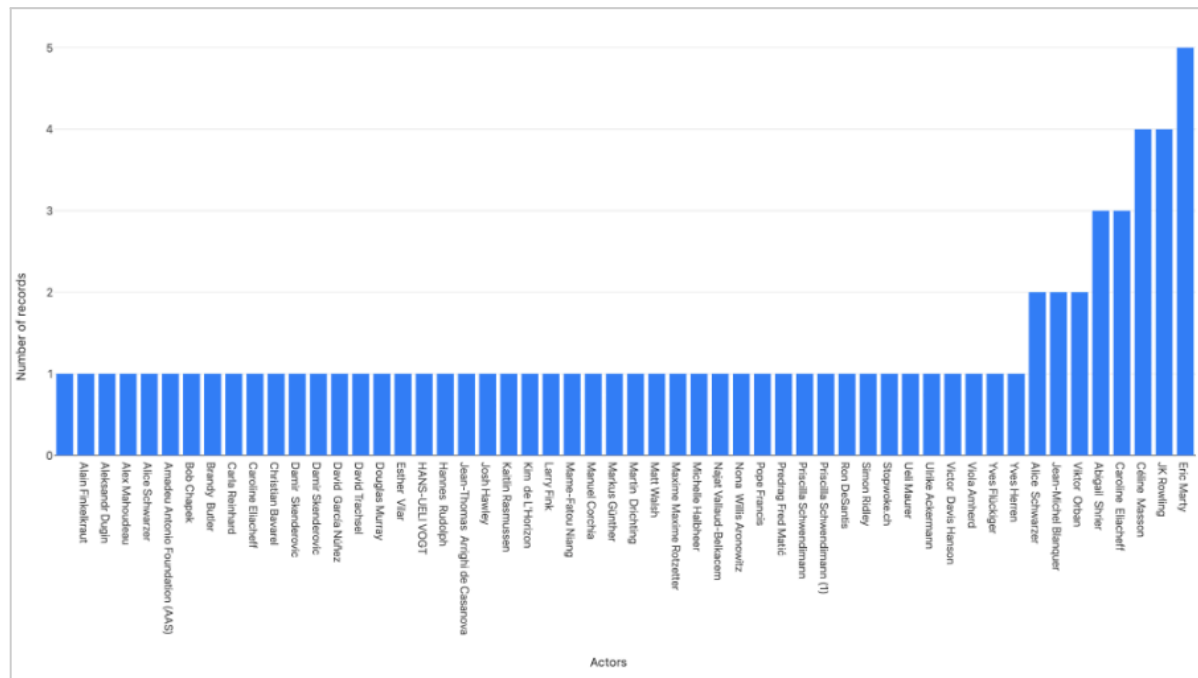


Figure AB4: CH10 – Top (by newspaper) Actors Mentions in Articles (for all Search Terms)

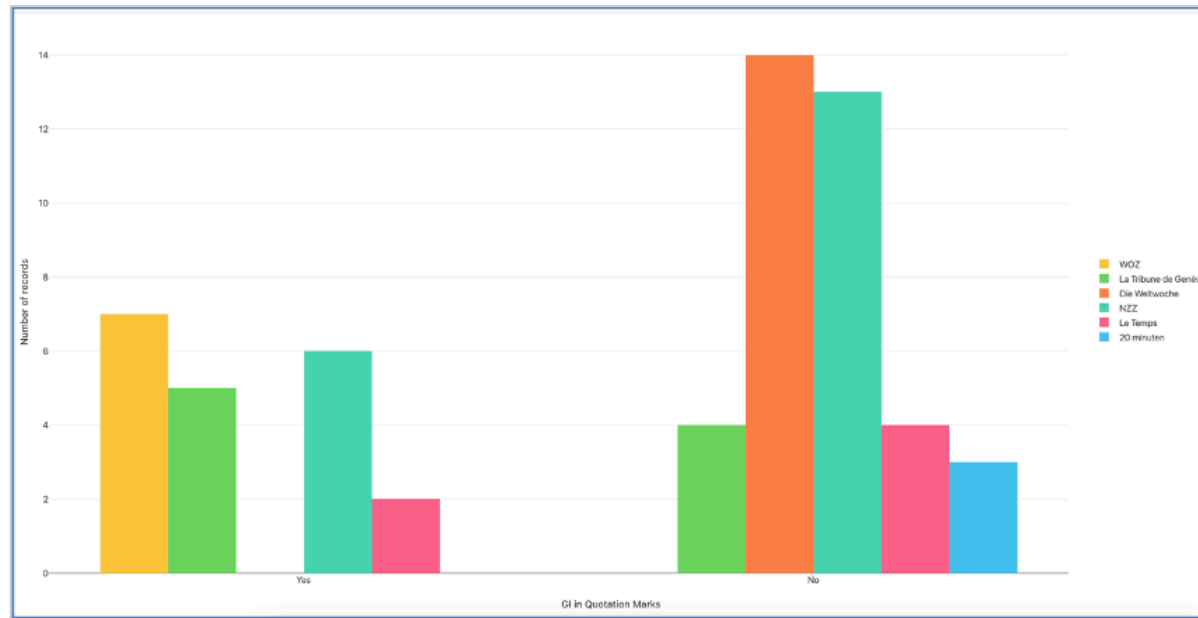


Figure AB5: CH11 – Quotation Mark usage by newspaper

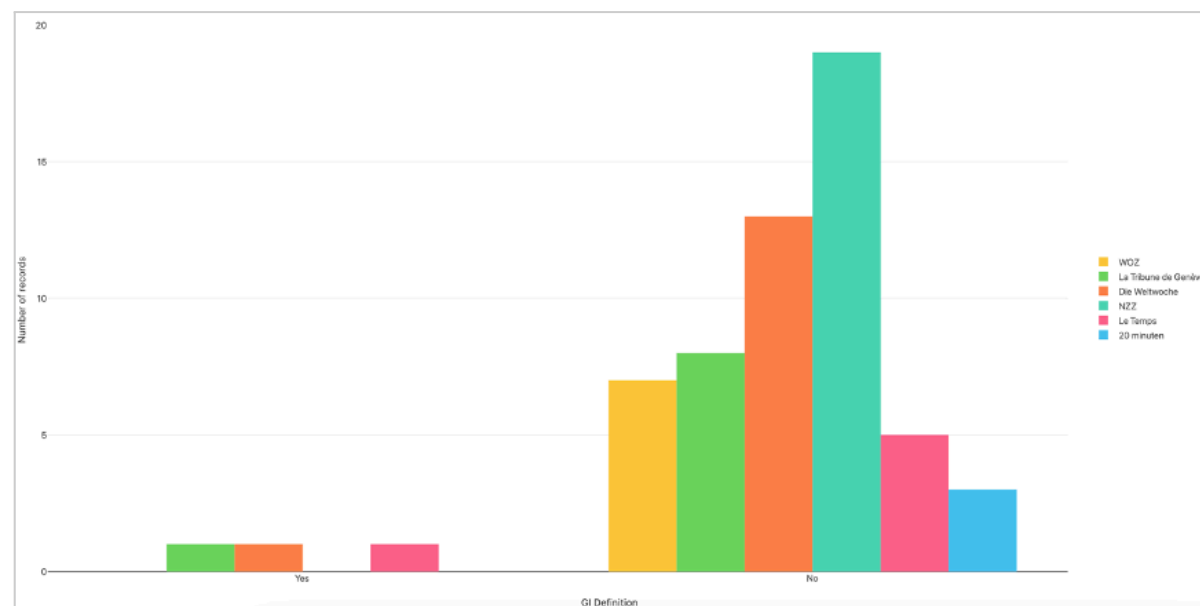


Figure AB6: CH12 – Overview of the frequency of 'gender ideology' definitions in texts

Poland Media Data

Method Name	Methodology: Media Segment
Sampling & Selection	As in the parliamentary study, in order to generate data and address the research questions, we have drawn from the non-probability and multi-stage techniques. Gazeta Wyborcza (GW) articles were accessed via the LexisNexis database, Rzeczpospolita (RZ) via its online archives, Super Express (SE) and dorzeczy.pl (DR) via online search algorithm. Since LexisNexis database offered two years' backlog of Gazeta Wyborcza articles, this has become a selection timeframe also for other outlets, with the effective dates: 06.01.2021 - 13.06.2023.

Multi-stage Sampling cycle	Data	<p>Purposive approach (timeframe, keywords, articles available via database or online, chosen sources).</p> <p>Quota selection (at least 10 articles per keyword (or less, if returned search was smaller)), close similar distribution of articles per keyword per title.</p> <p>Assorted refining and prioritised scoping (prioritising Rzeczpospolita and Gazetta Wyborcza as the largest titles that have significant influence over public opinion, coverage in other media, political discourse), and most suitable for any mutual comparisons.</p> <p>Within such presets, over 860 articles were chosen, and marked with genre tags.</p> <p>For the operational reasons to present a broadly similar dataset with other cases, a final refinement of the sample consisted of: (1) all the articles tagged with genre 'interview', 'commentary', 'letter'; (2) and 25 articles tagged as 'news' per media title.</p>
Multi-stage key words and phrases cycle		<p>Starting with the keyword longlist (N=50) constructed for the Parliamentary Debates segment, it was hypothesised that media search will bring a vast number of results.</p> <p>Therefore, a new longlist was composed (N=25) by reducing a number of keywords within a similar field of reference, and a pilot search was performed. A larger number of returned search outputs (several hundred per some keywords) lead to the next step.</p> <p>Consequently, a decision was made to further narrow down and centre the shortlist on words around 'gender' and 'ideology', resulting in a final sample of N=15 key words and phrases.</p>
Search constraints optimisation	engines: and	<p>The reader is reminded of the points highlighted in the methodology for Parliament segment, where the impact of the search engine setup was highlighted. Gazetta Wyborcza articles were searched via LexisNexis database allowing some parametrisation via advanced search options. Rzeczpospolita articles were sourced from the newspaper's online archive, accessible with paid subscription. Super Express and Do Rzeczy articles were populated with the advanced search formula on Google search engine, using 'site:' operator (e.g. 'site:se.pl ideologia gender').</p>

Table AB7: PL4 – Methodological Steps for Polish case in the Media Study

Trigger Issues	Gazeta Wyborcza	Rzeczpospolita	Super Express	Do Rzeczy	Total (per keyword)
Sex-positivity	-	1	-	-	1
World Politics: Hungary	1	1	-	-	2

Democracy	1	1	1	-	3
Woke	1	2	-	-	3
'Cancel culture' (silencing)	2	2	-	-	4
Racism	5	3	-	-	8
World Politics: Global	2	7	-	3	12
Feminism	2	6	-	5	13
Women's rights	3	4	1	5	13
Political elections	8	7	-	1	16
Right-wing extremism	6	10	-	-	16
Language	4	13	3	4	24
Church and/or religion	2	15	5	5	27
World Politics: EU	6	14	1	6	27
Sex Education/Schools	10	10	5	4	29
Children	11	11	7	2	31
Social Change	14	10	-	11	35
Rights	20	11	1	8	40
Trans (issues, problems, activism, politics, legislation)	19	19	1	7	46
Catholic anti-gender activism	13	23	10	19	65
World Politics: Poland	21	29	8	10	68
Discrimination	30	29	19	11	89
LGBT	31	26	25	29	111
Total (per title)	88	104	35	60	287

Table AB8: PL5 – Trigger Issues for Article Topics

No. Articles Authored	No. Writers	Writers
1	96	96 writers across all titles
2	30	30 writers across all titles
3	7	Magdalena Bojanowska (GW), Jolanta Sacewicz (GW) Jakub Mikulski (RZ), Piotr Zaremba (RZ), Tomasz Krzyżak (RZ), Mariusz Cieślik (RZ) Paweł Lisicki (DR)
4	6	Dorota Gajos-Kaniewska (RZ), Katarzyna Sadło (RZ) Anita Karwowska, (GW), Emilia Dłużewska (GW), Readers' Letters (GW), Wiktoria Beczek (GW)
5	2	Mateusz Adamski (RZ), Editors (GW)
7	2	Artur Bartkiewicz (RZ), Tomasz Terlikowski (RZ)
15	1	Michał Szuldrzyński (RZ)
17	1	Editorial (SE)
39	1	Editorial (DR)

Table AB9: PL6 – Overview of the Article Authors in the Dataset

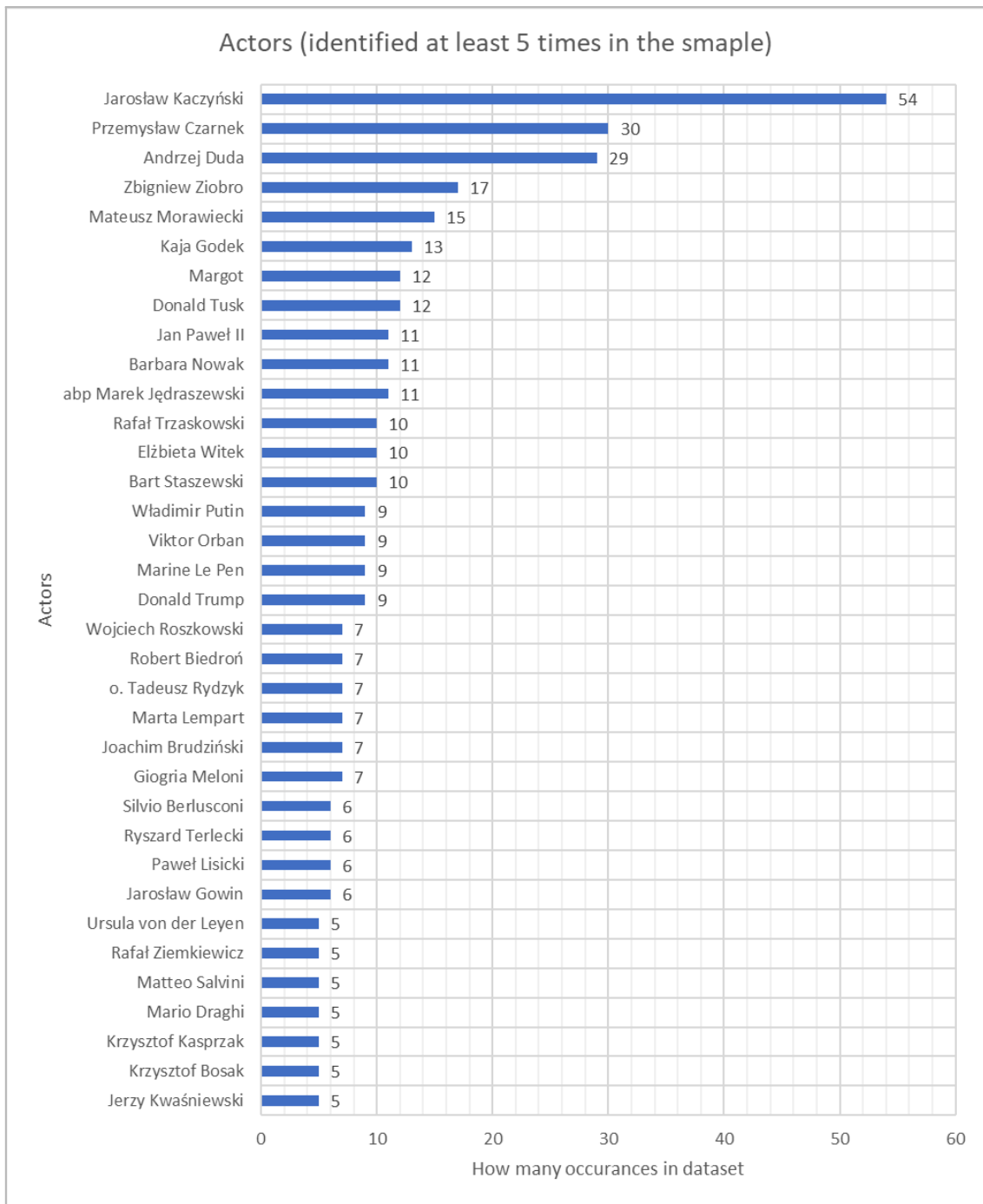


Table AB10: PL7 – List of identified Actors

No. Mentions	No. Orgs	List Of Pro-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations
1	35	Fundacja Basta, Homokomando, Fundacja Wiara i Tęcza, Stowarzyszenie Lambda Warszawa, Lubuskie Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Kobiet BABA, ILGA Europe, Polskie Towarzystwo Prawa Antydyskryminacyjnego, Stowarzyszenie Tolerado, Stowarzyszenie My Rodzice, Fundacja Równik Praw, Transpłciowość w Rodzinie, Stowarzyszenie Queerowy Maj, Tęczowe Opole, Planned Parenthood Federation, Magazyn Replika, Stowarzyszenie Homo Faber, Fundacja Her Story, Fundacja na Rzecz Różnorodności Społecznej, Norwegian Funds, Extinction Rebellion, Transgender Institute, Puls club, Le Garage club, Fundacja Trans-Fuzja, „Kosmos dla Dziewczynek”, Partia Razem, Młodzi Razem, Razem, Planned Parenthood, zaimki.pl, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Aborcyjny Dream Team, Federacja na Rzecz Kobiet i Planowania Rodziny, Feminoteka, Human Rights Campaign
2	5	Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę, Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka, Amnesty International, Dziewuchy Dziewuchom, Black Lives Matter
3	2	Grupa Stonewall, Stop Bzdurom
6	1	Parada Równości
7	2	OKO.press, Kampania Przeciw Homofobii
8	1	Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza
13	1	Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet
14	1	Lewica
	48	Total

Table AB11: PL8 – Overview of pro-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations

No. Mentions	No. Orgs	List Of Anti-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations
1	10	Europa Christi, KUL, IBRIS, "Nasz Dziennik", Polonia Christiana, "Gazeta Polska", Pro Vita e Famiglia, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Towarzystwo Chrystusowe dla Polonii Zagranicznej, "Tak dla rodziny - nie dla gender".
2	16	wpolityce.pl, Gazeta Polska, "To Tylko Teoria", Tygodnik Solidarność, Republika TV, Uniwersytet Papieski w Krakowie, Magazyn „Christianitas”, Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej im. Księdza Piotra Skargi, "Młot na marksizm", Stowarzyszenie Rodzice Chronią Dzieci, Vox, Ruch Narodowy, Klub Jagielloński, Fox News, PCh24.pl, Wyższa Szkoła Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości.
3	3	Fundacja Strażnik Pamięci, Kukiz'15, Centrum Życia i Rodziny.
4	3	Porozumienie Gowina, Vatican, Tygodnik "Sieci".
5	4	Metropolia Krakowska, Kremlin, Republican Party, Suwerenna Polska.
6	4	Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Fidesz, Forza Italia.
7	4	Radio Maryja, StopLGBT, Małopolskie Kuratorium Oświaty, DoRzeczy.pl
8	1	Fratelli d'Italia.
9	2	Solidarna Polska, TV Trwam.
10	1	Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia
12	1	Konfederacja
16	1	Fundacja Życie i Rodzina
18	1	Zjednoczona Prawica
20	2	TVP, Fundacja Instytut na Rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris
21	1	Catholic Church
	54	Total

Table AB12: PL9 – Overview of anti-LGBTIQ/Feminist Organisations

How many times organisation was mentioned in dataset	No. Orgs	List Of Organisations (All Others)
1	111	Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej, Naczelną Izbę Kontroli, Social Change, Sąd Rejonowy dla Warszawy Śródmieście, gmina Tuchów, Ministerstwo Rodziny, Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego, Fundacja "Przestrzeń dla edukacji", European Economic and Social Committee, Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej w Warszawie, Państwowa Komisja ds. Pedofilii, Orlen, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Sąd Rejonowy dla Warszawy-Śródmieście, Senat Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Sejmik Województwa Małopolskiego, Wydawnictwo Biały Kruk, American Press, Council of Europe, Sąd Rejonowy Szczecin-Centrum, Rada Wolności Słowa, Sąd Najwyższy, Sąd Apelacyjny w Warszawie, XLIV Liceum Ogólnokształcące w Krakowie, Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, Galeria Zachęta, Sąd Okręgowy w Płocku, kościół św. Dominika w Płocku, Rada Miasta Bytom, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Rzeczpospolita (newspaper), Onet.pl, Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, Fundacja PAP, Italian Chamber of Deputies, Council of Rome, Jury nagrody literackiej "Nike", Arianie, Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Teatr Mały, Narodowy Bank Polski, Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, World Economic Forum, Oxford University, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, Służba Bezpieczeństwa, Milicja Obywatelska, Twitter, Ministerstwo Zdrowia, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Pudelek.pl, The Economist, Die Welt, Ministerstwo Kultury, FilMOTEKA Narodowa, Galeria Zachęta, Meduza, European Recovery Fund, Wydawnictwo Biały Kruk, Jagiellonian University, Swedish National Insurance Institute, Mittuniversitet, Trybunał Konsytucyjny, NSSZ Solidarność, Fundusz Sprawiedliwości, World Bank, Guidepost Solutions, „Houston Chronicle”, „San Antonio Express-News”, Trybunał Sprawiedliwości, Venetian Commission, European Tribunal of Justice, Fundacja Rodzice Mają Głos, Redakcja gazety szkolnej Udław Się, Gmina Kraśnik, "Plus Minus", Congress of USA, Democratic Party (USA), Bundestag, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sąd Rejonowy dla Warszawy-Mokotowa, Sąd Okręgowy w Warszawie, Deutscher Buchpreis, Fundacja Wolność od Religii, Teatr Dramatyczny w Warszawie, SLD, Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, Szwedzka Rada Językowa, Teatr Polonia, Galeria Labirynt, Teatr im. Juliusza Słowackiego, Uniwersytet Śląski, Radio Nowy Świat, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Teatr Nowy w Łodzi, TVP, European Democrats, IBRIS, TED Talks, II LO w Lublinie im. Hetmana Jana Zamoyskiego, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Akademia Sztuk Teatralnych im. Stanisława Wyspiańskiego, Polskie Towarzystwo Psychiatryczne, World Association for Sexual Health, UK Supreme Court, Republican Party (USA), III Reich (Nazi), Żołnierze Wyklęci
2	12	TVN24, Rzecznik Praw Dziecka, Polskie Towarzystwo Seksuologiczne, Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, Komitet Obrony Demokracji, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Black Eyed Peas, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Izba Dyscyplinarna Sądu Najwyższego, Wysokie Obcasy, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza

3	3	Gazeta Wyborcza, European Court of Human Rights, Netflix
4	2	Trybunał Konstytucyjny, Carnegie Europe
5	6	WHO, KO, TVN, PRL, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, NATO
6	1	PSL
7	1	European Parliament
9	1	European Commission
11	1	Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki)
12	1	PO
36	1	European Union
	141	Total

Table AB13: PL10 – Overview of all other identified Organisations

Hungary Media Data

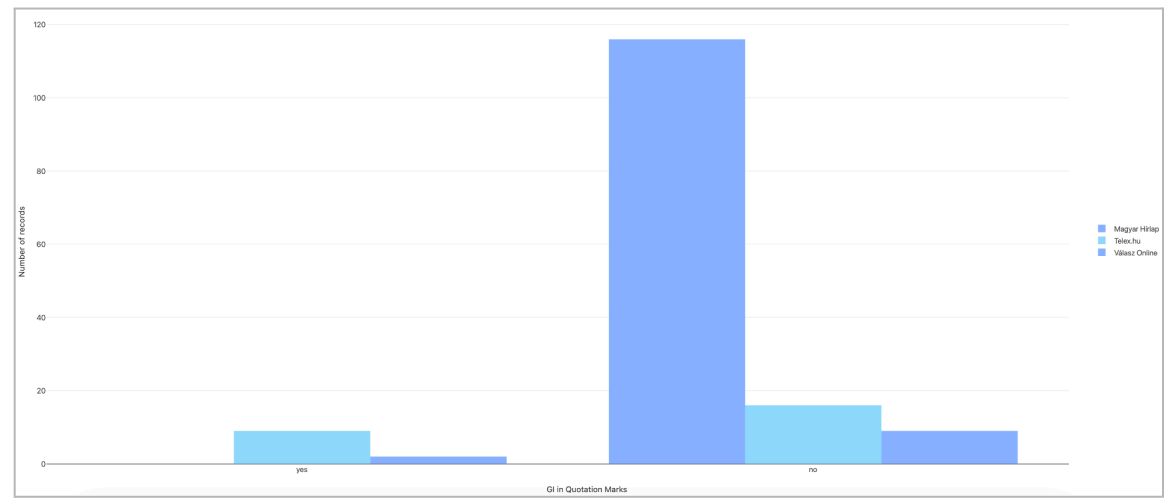


Figure AB14: HU7 – Presentation (by newspaper) of Quotation Mark Usage for ‘gender ideology’

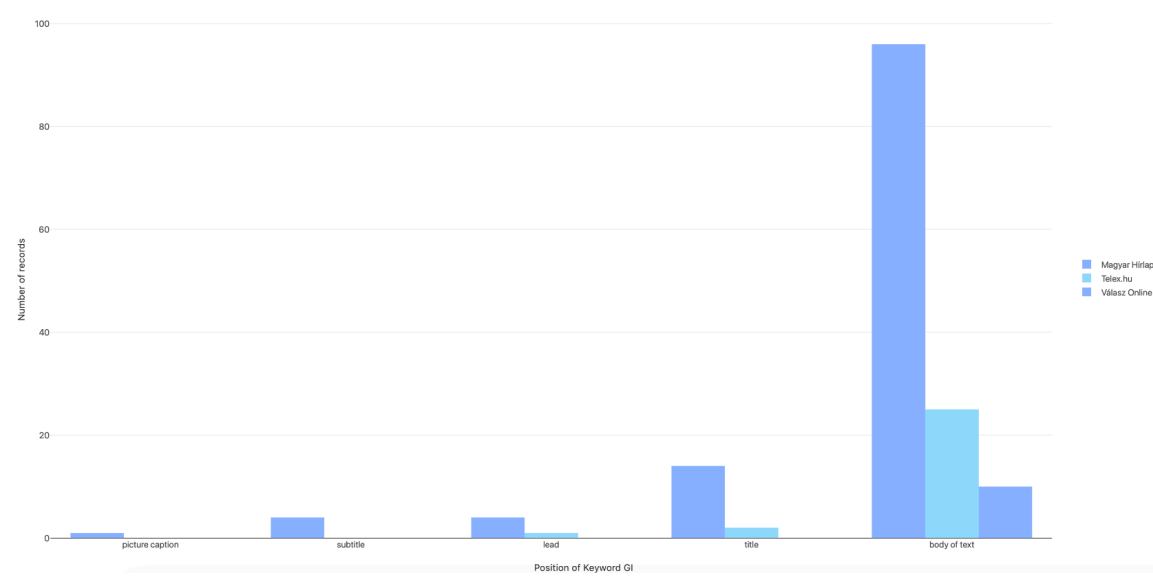


Figure AB15: HU8 – Position of Keyword by newspaper

Appendix C – Controversy Mapping Data

UK Controversy Mapping Data

UK Telegraph ‘gender ideology’ Seed URLs
https://www.sandyford.scot/ https://www.filia.org.uk/ https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/care-and-treatment/our-clinical-services/gender-identity-development-service-gids/ https://www.stonewall.org.uk/ https://womansplaceuk.org/ https://lgballiance.org.uk/about/ https://sex-matters.org/ https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/ https://www.wpath.org/ https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/ https://freetospeak.co.uk/ https://fairplayforwomen.com/ https://wildwomynworkshop.com/

Table AC1: UK7 – Telegraph ‘gender ideology’ Seed URLs

UK Guardian 'gender ideology' Seed URLs
https://christianconcern.com/ https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/care-and-treatment/our-clinical-services/gender-identity-development-service-gids/ https://www.stonewall.org.uk/ https://www.transfuzia.org/ https://www.speakupforwomen.nz/ https://www.binary.org.au/ https://www.ylnp.org/universities http://agendaeurope.org/ https://lgballiance.org.uk/about/ https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/

Table AC2: UK8 – Guardian 'gender ideology' Seed URLs

UK 'Gender Critical' Organisations
https://fairplayforwomen.com/ https://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/ https://lgballiance.org.uk/ https://www.letawomanspeak.org/ https://forwomen.scot/ https://www.standingforwomen.com/ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kellie-Jay_Keen-Minshull https://scottishfamily.org/ https://christianconcern.com/about/ https://safeschoolsallianceuk.net/ https://www.transgendertrend.com/ https://sex-matters.org/ https://www.cieo.org.uk/ https://www.newsocialcovenant.co.uk/ https://www.miriamcates.org.uk/ https://thoughtfultherapists.org/ https://usforthem.co.uk/ https://www.thelesbianproject.co.uk/ https://unherd.com/ https://beirasplace.org.uk/ https://freespeechunion.org/ https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/edinburghafaf/ https://policyexchange.org.uk/

Table AC3: UK9 – 'Gender critical' Organisations

Gephi Visualisation Process

The following outlines the steps taken to obtain a Gephi visualisation.

1. The “Gender Critical” organisations found in our Telegraph data searching “transgender” from the GEXF file produced by Issue Crawler (name CM GC 05.04.23_357004) were uploaded to the Gephi programme.
2. In order to obtain a “shape” from the network, Force Atlas was run at 10,000 repulsion strength and then Yifan Hu’s algorithm (an algorithm that brings together the good parts of force-directed algorithms and a multilevel algorithm to reduce algorithm complexity).⁶² This algorithm works particularly well with large networks.

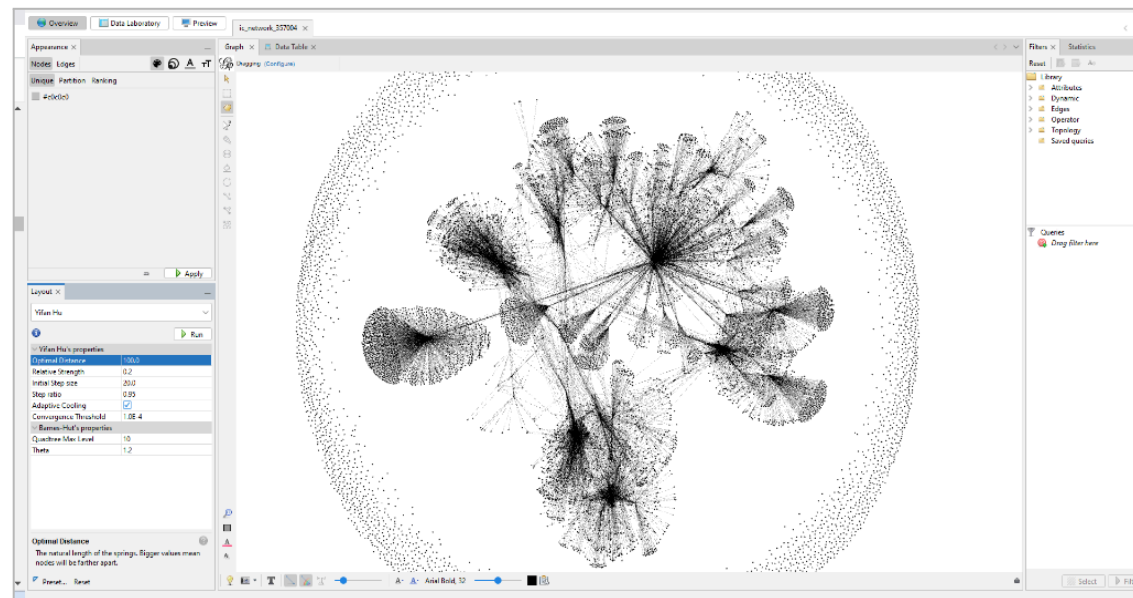


Figure AC4: UK10 – Gephi Visualisation subsequent to Force Atlas

3. For the Ranking degree, in the statistics panel, an Average Degree algorithm was run; new columns appeared in the resulting data table for In-Degree, Out-Degree and Degree. The average path length was run in the statistics panel which computes the path length for all possible pairs of nodes and gives information about how nodes are close to each other.
4. Ranking then included a Betweenness Centrality report which is needed to filter communities. In appearance, the nodes tab was selected, then ranking, and chose Betweenness Centrality. Subsequently, the minimum size was set at 10 and maximum at 50; one can test these parameters but ensure to record what granularity is lost as Gephi prunes the excess nodes.

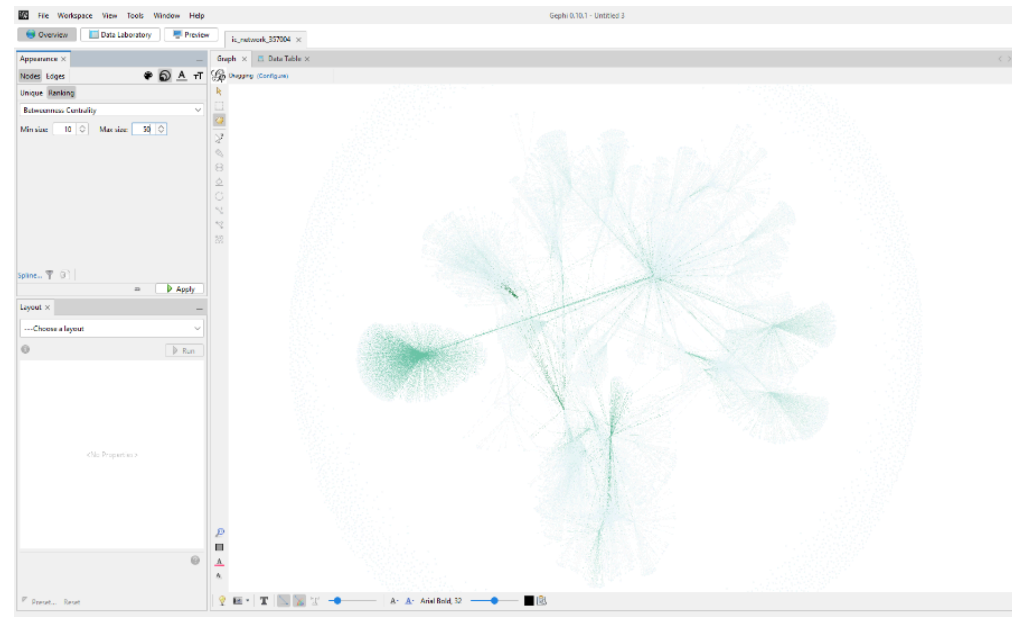


Figure AC5: UK11 – Gephi Visualisation subsequent to running *Betweenness Centrality* and applying colour

5. Subsequent to obtaining the “Betweenness Centrality report”, the software deduced and visualised the key communities in the network. Community Detection – the detecting and studying of communities – is central to network analysis; the Louvain method was used and is available from the Statistics panel.⁶³ “Modularity” was selected, then randomise, and “ok” which launched the detection.
6. In the Partition panel, “modularity class” was selected from the drop down menu.
7. Six communities first appeared that differed in proportion share, depending on whether they’d been filtered or not. See below for details on this important step.

Pre-filtering in Gephi

The Gephi software calculates a % breakdown of the intensity of these communities/networks and the weight certain “communities” have .

The result is the below Gephi Community Vector map.

⁶³ (Vincent D Blondel, Jean-Loup Guillaume, Renaud Lambiotte, Etienne Lefebvre, Fast unfolding of communities in large networks, in Journal of Statistical Mechanics: Theory and Experiment 2008 (10), P1000)

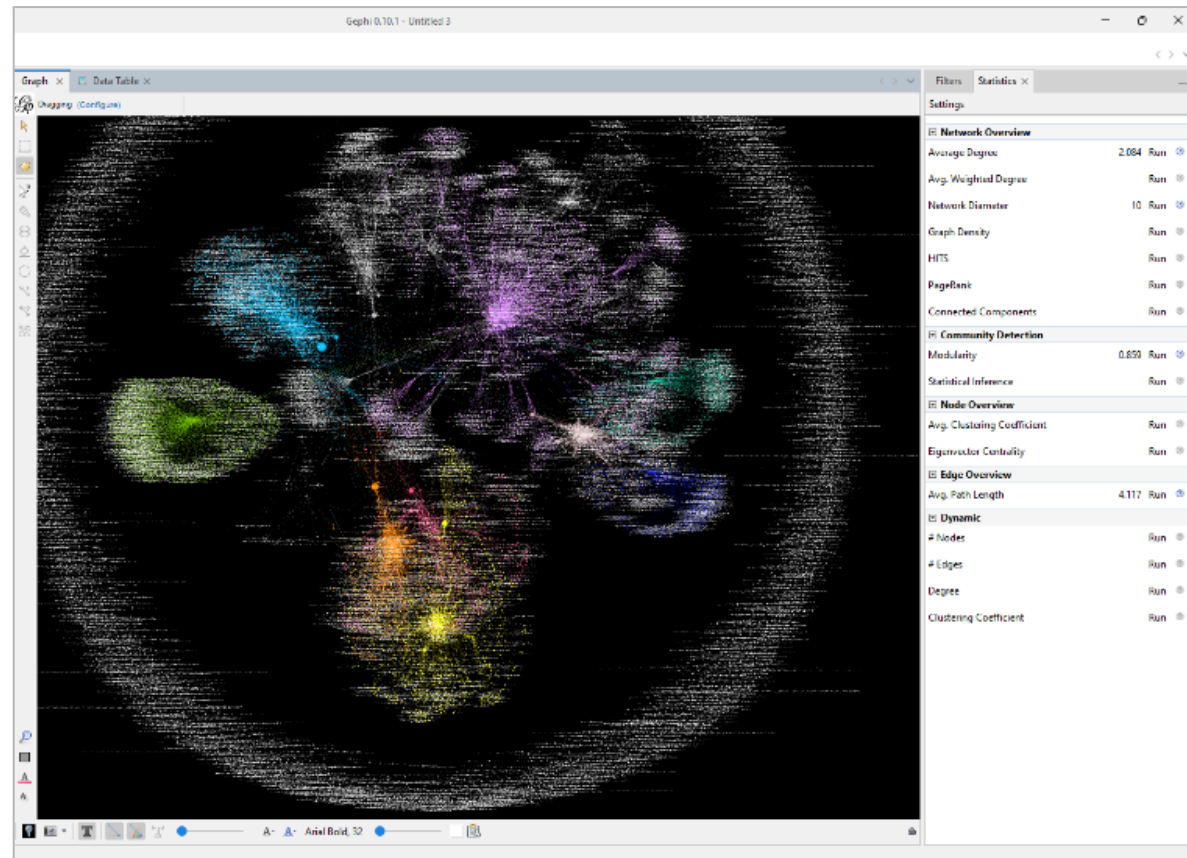


Figure AC6: UK12 – Screenshot of Communities grouped by colour and surrounded by a halo of disconnected nodes, from Gephi pre-filtering process

Subsequently, the data was pruned which created filters that can hide nodes and edges on the network in order to accentuate the key communities. Filters were created to remove leaves, i.e. nodes with a single edge, those with no reciprocal connection like an email with no reply. This gets rid of the ‘noise’ in the network and, noticeably, deletes the ‘halo’ around the graph, which has been filled with peripheral actors that are not embedded in the main controversy actor’s core network. This was achieved by opening the Filters panel, clicking topology,

and setting the degree range to 2 minimum. Nodes with a degree inferior to 2 were now hidden, concluding this filtering and visualisation process for this part of the controversy mapping.

Switzerland Controversy Mapping Data

Swiss German case study seed URLs
https://www.zukunft-ch.ch https://www.jesus.ch/ https://www.svp.ch/ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominik_Nepp https://samuelbalsiger.ch https://grosserrat.bs.ch/mitglieder/15003972-pascal-messerli https://jungetat.ch https://edu-zh.ch/portraits/jan-leitz https://www.svp-zuerich.ch/personen/camille-lothe/ https://www.fpoe.at https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norbert_Bolz https://www.evref.ch https://stopwoke.ch https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Trachsel https://www.dfg.de https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ueli_Maurer https://citizengo.org/de-ch/ https://citizengo.org

Table AC7: CH13 – Swiss German Case Study Seed URLs

<https://www.lepeuple.ch>
<https://lesobservateurs.ch>
<https://renverse.co>
<https://www.unige.ch/>
<https://www.observatoirepetitesirene.org>
<https://ypomoni.org>
<https://www.ligue-vaudoise.ch>
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peggy_Sastre
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89ric_Marty
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Eliacheff
[Champignov Strochnis \) 🍄 \(@pandovstrochnis\) / Twitter](#)
<https://www.plr-ge.ch/personnes/grand-conseil/deputes/deputes-details/members/user/pierre-conne>
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_de_Senarclens
[LPiguet \(@laure_piguet\) / Twitter](#)
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathalie_Pi%C3%A9gay
<https://twitter.com/amitjuillard>
<https://twitter.com/laurelugon>

Table AC9: CH15 – Romandie Case Study Seed URLs

As shown in this chart, "Statement on the website", "political lobbying", "disruption/activist protest" and "provision of materials and templates" appear to be the most frequent tactics/strategies.

Poland Controversy Mapping Data

Method Name	Methodology: Controversy Mapping Segment
Sampling & Selection	Purposive sampling of articles with keywords and available online for desk research. Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita were accessed as in the Media segment, via LexisNexis and paid online archives, respectively. Then a general internet search engine was used to populate articles from other outlets.
Multi-stage Sampling Cycle	<p>Purposive selection of 50 articles, balancing a range of diverse sources, incl. community ones, mainstream liberal and conservative media, right/far-right outlets.</p> <p>Identification of actors and organisations.</p> <p>Selection of 3-5 most prominent organisations engaged with the case across its timespan.</p> <p>Qualitative examination of these organisations' websites for tools and strategies of engagement with the issues raised and evidenced by 'Margot controversy'.</p> <p>Further enrichment of findings from other available sources (e.g. NGO reports, media denouncements).</p>
Cross-website Networks and Gephi Visualisations	In following the methodology framework, Issue Crawler and Gephi tools were used to examine internet cross-linking between organisations. A number of piloting tests were run, but the outcomes did not result in any meaningful data, making this step inconclusive. Consequently, it was decided not to pursue this method in the Polish case.

Table AC10: PL11 – Methodological Steps for Polish Case Study in Controversy Mapping

No. Mentions	Actors & Organisations (Pro-LGBTIQ/Feminist)
1	Adam Bodnar, Anarchistyczny Czarny Krzyż, Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka, Karolina Gierdal, Kolektyw SZPIL(A)
3	Bart Staszewski, Citizen Rights Ombudsman (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich) (RPO)

4	Campaign Against Homophobia (Kampania Przeciw Homofobii) (KPH), Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet
6	Marta Lempart
Total	10

Table AC11: PL12 – Actors and Organisations (pro-LGBTIQ/feminist)

No. Mentions	Actors & Organisations (Anti-LGBTIQ/Feminist)
1	Agnieszka Marianowicz-Szczygieł, Centrum Życia i Rodziny, Prokuratura Generalna (General Prosecutor's Office), Instytut Analiz Płci i Seksualności „Ona i On”, Kaja Godek, Patryk Jaki.
4	Instytut na Rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris, Zbigniew Ziobro.
7	Fundacja Pro - Prawo do Życia.
13	Police Poland (Policja Polska).
Total	10

Table AC12: PL13 – Actors and Organisations (anti-LGBTIQ/feminist)

No. of Mentions	Actors & Organisations Mentioned
1	Komitet Obrony Demokracji, Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus, Michał Wójcik, Marcin Romanowski, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, PO, KO, United Nations, ks. Adam Boniecki (Tygodnik Powszechny), TVN, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Robert Winnicki, Janusz Kowalski, Radio Maryja.
2-3	Solidarna Polska (2), Konfederacja (2), Oko.press (2), Beata Lubecka (2), TVN24 (2), ks. Alfred Wierzbicki (2), Sylwia Spurek (2), Klementyna Suchanow (2), Przemysław Czarnek (2), Mateusz Morawiecki (3), Catholic Church (3), Gazeta Wyborcza (3).
4-5	Lewica (4), Piotr Jedliński (4), Andrzej Duda (4), TVP (5), Jarosław Kaczyński (5).
6-8	European Union (6), Rafał Trzaskowski (6), PiS (8).
Total	34

Table AC13: PL14 – Actors and Organisations mentioned

Hungary Controversy Mapping Data

Hungary controversy Seed URLs

<https://www.xxiszazadintezet.hu/>
[https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagy_Ervin_\(filoz%C3%B3fus\)](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagy_Ervin_(filoz%C3%B3fus))
<https://alapjogokert.hu/>
<https://mccfeszt.hu/eloado/szantho-miklos>
<https://www.facebook.com/parkanyie/>
<https://citizengo.org/hu>
<https://www.csaladtudomany.hu/fooldal/>
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/96826/TAMAS_DEUTSCH/home<https://mltsg.wordpress.com/>
<https://pszichoertek.hu/>
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/hu/124586/BALAZS_HIDVEGHI/home
<https://kdnf.hu/kdnf/parlamenti-frakcio/hollik-istvan>
<https://kottertamas.hu>
https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%B6v%C3%A9r_L%C3%A1szl%C3%B3
<https://kormany.hu/politikai-igazgato/orban-balazs>
<https://kormany.hu/>
<https://mcc.hu/>
<https://nezopont.hu/>
<https://www.sandorpalota.hu/hu>
[https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orb%C3%A1n_Bal%C3%A1zs_\(politikus\)](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orb%C3%A1n_Bal%C3%A1zs_(politikus))
<https://miniszterelnok.hu/>
https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osztie_Zolt%C3%A1n
<https://pecsirta.hu/>
https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9tv%C3%A1ri_Bence

<https://szazadveg.hu/hu>
<https://www.facebook.com/szilvaygergelyiro/>
[https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varga_Judit_\(politikus\)](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varga_Judit_(politikus))
<https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/hu/igazsagugyi-miniszterium/parlamenti-allamtitkarsag/volner-pal>
<https://pszichoszamoca.hu/pszichologus/bagdy-emoke/>
<https://badog.blogstar.hu/>
https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bencsik_Andr%C3%A1s
<https://civilosszefogas.hu/>
<https://www.hvim.hu/egyetemi-ellenallas>
<https://www.hvim.hu/>
<https://www.generacio.eu/>
<https://www.kocsismate.hu/>
<https://ficsak.hu/>
<https://magyaronvedelem.hu/>
<https://migraciokutato.hu/>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEFpEvuosfPGIV1VyUF6QOA>
<https://pbk.info.hu/>
<https://www.semjenzsolt.hu/>

Table AC14: HU9 – Seed URLs of Organisations and Actors that contributed to or commented on the Controversy: located on the anti-gender side of the issue

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