Anti-Gender Mobilisations, 'Gender Ideology', and the Assault on Democracy: The Battle over Gender and Sexuality Equality Education in Southern Europe

Movilizaciones antigénero, «ideología de género» y asalto a la democracia: la batalla por la educación para la igualdad sexual y de género en la Europa del Sur

Mar Venegas[1]

Abstract

How does anti-gender mobilisations undermine democracy through attacks on education? A growing body of scholarship examines the impact of anti-gender movements on democracy; however, less attention has been devoted to this phenomenon in a Southern European context, where the Catholic Church plays a significant role. Anti-gender movements have become transnational, coinciding with the rise of far-right groups in Europe since the 1990s. While conservative actors have historically mobilised against feminist causes, they now target what they refer to as 'gender ideology'. What do they mean by this term? Why is the educational sphere one of their primary battlegrounds? Is there a connection between these mobilisations across Southern European countries? What are their broader cultural and political implications for society? This article examines anti-gender mobilisations against 'gender ideology' in gender and sexuality equality education, analysing their cultural and political consequences in four Southern European nations: Spain, Italy, France, and Portugal. Drawing on comparative data from these countries, it argues that the moral crusade against 'gender ideology' in education is a key element of the contemporary 'cultural war', fostering a climate of 'moral panic' that poses a significant threat to democracy in SouthernEurope.

Keywords

Anti-gender, far right, moral panic, gender ideology, democracy, cultural war.

Abstract

¿Cómo socavan la democracia las movilizaciones anti-género a través de los ataques a la educación? Cada vez son más los estudios que examinan el impacto de los movimientos anti-género sobre la democracia; sin embargo, se ha prestado menos atención a este fenómeno en el contexto del sur de Europa, donde la iglesia católica desempeña un papel importante. Los movimientos anti-género se han convertido en transnacionales, coincidiendo con el auge de los grupos de extrema derecha en Europa desde la década de 1990. Si bien los actores conservadores se han movilizado históricamente contra las causas feministas, ahora atacan lo que denominan «ideología de género». ¿Qué quieren decir con este término? ¿Por qué el ámbito educativo es uno de sus principales campos de batalla? ¿Existe alguna relación entre estas movilizaciones en los países del sur de Europa? ¿Cuáles son sus implicaciones culturales y políticas más amplias para la sociedad? Este artículo examina las movilizaciones contra la «ideología de género» en la educación para la igualdad sexual y de género, analizando sus consecuencias culturales y políticas en cuatro países del sur de Europa: España, Italia, Francia y Portugal. Basándose en datos comparativos de estos países, se sostiene que la cruzada moral contra la «ideología de género» en educación es un elemento clave de la «guerra cultural» contemporánea, que fomenta un clima de «pánico moral» que supone una importante amenaza para la democracia en la Europa del Sur.

Keywords

Anti-género, extrema derecha, pánico moral, ideología de género, democracia, guerra cultural.

1   Mar Venegas, Universidad de Granada, mariter@ugr.es.

1. Anti-Genderism and Democracy

The far right is gaining 'support across democratic societies' (Lianos, 2019: 445). Linked to it, anti-gender movements have reached a global scale (Korolczuk, 2014; Froio and Ganesh, 2019; Sosa, 2021; Zaremberg, Tabbush and Friedman, 2021), with a strong presence in Europe (Dahl and Kennedy-Macfoy,, 2020; Korolczuk, 2014; Köttig, Bitzan and Petö, 2017; Kováts, 2018; Kováts and Põim, 2015; Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Kuhar and Zobec, 2017; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018; Verloo and Paternotte, 2018; O'Sullivan and Krulišová, 2020; Spallaccia, 2020; Berthet, 2022; Venegas, 2024; Villar-Aguilés and Venegas, 2024), where right-wing populist parties have gained strength since the end of the 1990s' (Fryklund, 2018). This phenomenon poses a major threat to European democracy (Sosa, 2021; Venegas 2021, 2022a, 2024), where gender equality policies have been key for building democracy (Alonso and Lombardo, 2018; Korolczuk, 2014; Köttig, Bitzan and Petö, 2017; Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Verloo and Paternotte, 2018; Berthet, 2022). The 'Global Right Wing' is carrying out an international 'moral crusade' against the so-called 'gender ideology' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018). The result is affective polarisation, which is seen as responsible for many contemporary ills of democratic functioning (Torcal and Comellas, 2022).

However, gender could be seen as just the tip of the iceberg of a larger systemic crisis (Kováts 2018; Datta, 2021). Two main arguments can be found in line with this:

1. The rise of the far right is the result of *the economic and social crisis* (Cipek and Lacković, 2019). This argument remarks the weakness of democracy and neoliberal economics (Korolczuk and Graff, 2018).

2. This conservative rise is a reaction against liberal *democracy and human rights* (Sosa, 2021), since they challenge traditional values (Jarkovská, 2020).

Previous research has shown that 'the real tip of the iceberg is the much wider overlapping political and economic projects accompanying the religious extremist normative project which undermines human rights while eroding the foundations of regulated market economies and liberal, pluralist democracy' (Datta, 2021: 82). In this article, these two arguments are explored to defend the thesis that, although global anti-gender movements attack sexuality and gender issues linked to feminist and LGBTQI+ movements primarily, the ultimate target of their attacks is democracy itself, as democracy represents the replacement of traditional (patriarchal) values by democratic values of equality. The article attempts to understand this complex phenomenon by focusing on a particular issue: anti-gender mobilisations in education.

While a growing number of contributions focus on the erosion of democracy by anti-gender movements (Köttig, Bitzan and Petö, 2017; Kováts, 2017; Alonso and Lombardo, 2018; Bellè and Poggio, 2018; Grzebalska and Pető, 2018; Korolczuk and Graff, 2018; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018; Engeli, 2020; Santos, 2020; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2021; Sosa, 2021; Venegas, 2021, 2022a), there is no comparative research on Southern Europe. Some authors point out the interest of studying different European societies of Catholic heritage (Lavizzari and Prearo, 2018), as religion is a common axis of these mobilisations. Moreover, a recent report proves that 'religious extremists' are funding anti-gender actors operating in Europe 'to roll back human rights in sexuality and reproduction' (Datta, 2021: 3). A divide is identified between moral traditionalism and progressivism on sexuality, life and procreation, and family and gen-

der roles, with Western Europe becoming more secular and progressive between 1981 and 2008 (Pless, Tromp, and Houtman 2021, 8). Anti-gender campaigns could be a reaction against this secularisation (Gusmeroli and Trappolin 2021; Lavizzari and Prearo 2018). This article focuses on education in Southern Europe to deepen this debate.

To this end, the article analyses mobilisations against 'gender ideology' in education in four Southern European countries, Spain, Italy, France and Portugal, with a three-part objective of research:

1. To identify the main anti-gender mobilisations in education in these countries;

2. In order to detect possible connections between the mobilizations investigated in these four countries;

3. So, to analyse the cultural and political effects of these mobilisations in these Southern European democracies.

The final aim is to contribute to the ongoing discussion on how anti-gender, far right activism is affecting European democracy.

2. 'Gender ideology'

The use of the term 'gender ideology' has spread throughout Europe. 'It can be defined as a rhetorical device employed to contest the concept of gender itself, as well as any gender-positive intervention aimed at denaturalising the traditional sexual order' (Spallaccia 2020, 131). This wide range of issues is well synthesised by Paternotte and Kuhar (2018, 9): 'LGBT rights, reproductive rights, *sex and gender education in schools*, gender itself (as meant in gender violence, gender studies and gender mainstreaming), as well as mobilised in defence of religious freedom and a certain understanding of *democracy*'[2]. It is 'sex and gender education in schools', as pointed out by these authors, what this article discusses. It refers to gender and sexuality equality education.

The term 'gender theory' first came into use in the documents produced after the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (Kuhar and Zobec, 2017). Gender replaced sex. For the Holy See, gender, as a social construction of masculinity and femininity, undermined the natural family and the naturalness of male and female (Trachman, 2011; Kuhar and Zobec, 2017; Bellè and Poggio, 2018; Vaticano, 2019; Spallaccia, 2020). This was the 'first wave' of anti-genderism. These two Conferences took a step further towards sexual and reproductive rights, which are fundamental human rights that include the need for sexuality education (Lavizzari and Prearo, 2018). They are part of sexual and intimate citizenship, relating to

> *Human sexual self-expression, as well as the choices relating to our bodies, feelings, identities, relationships,*
> *genders, eroticism, representations, and so forth. (…) The discourse on sexual citizenship came into being due*
> *to the processes of the democratisation of intimate partnerships.* (Kuhar, 2015: 85)

Gender is inextricably linked to democracy. They need each other. Citizenship is a fundamental aspect. Gender politics 'has to do with citizenship, therefore sexual and intimate citizenship' (Rawłuszko, 2019:

---

2   The emphasis has been made by the author to underline the focus of this article.

2). However, for the Catholic Church, gender represents 'a new «ideological dictatorship», whose political program would be the extension of the domain of democracy to the sexual realm' (Lavizzari and Prearo, 2018: 10). Yet, the term 'gender ideology' is nothing more than an 'empty signifier' (Mayer and Sauer, 2017, as quoted in Kuhar and Zobec, 2017) in which gender acts as the 'symbolic glue' (Grzebalska and Pető, 2018) that allows far right actors to articulate their counter-hegemonic project, based on the nation, the family and religion.

The term 'gender ideology' has spread across Europe to demonise the achievements of second- and third-wave feminism and LGBTQ+ activists (Spallaccia, 2020). Anti-gender actors distort public opinion by identifying inherently democratic values such as equality, diversity, human rights and social justice (Venegas, 2013) as leftist, even Marxist values (Bellè and Poggio, 2018; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018). This identification of gender with ideology undermines democracy both culturally and politically, since anti-gender and ultra-conservative groups promote a war that takes place in the realm of culture to mobilise 'moral panic' in society (Venegas, 2024). Sexuality is at the centre of this cultural war (Morán, 2019), so sexuality education is a good example to illustrate the phenomenon discussed in this article (Venegas, 2022a).

The article starts from the thesis that anti-gender campaigns against 'gender ideology' in education have a double sociological implication: one cultural, so that these actions are part of the cultural war that ultra-conservative groups are waging to mobilise moral panic in society; another political, as this cultural war is a moral crusade against gender politics in the field of sexual and intimate citizenship. Both implications, cultural and political, ultimately aim to destabilise liberal democracy in Europe to restore traditional Western values and the 'natural family', which are challenged by gender and sexuality equality education, according to anti-gender actors.

3. Methodology

To cover the objective of the research mentioned above, a methodological strategy has been defined as follows:

1. To cover part 1 (*to identify the main anti-gender mobilisations in education in these countries*), data (anti-gender mobilisations in education) have been searched on the Web of Science database. The keywords used for the search have been 'anti-gender movements', 'gender ideology', 'gender equality in education', 'sexuality education', and the names of the four countries of the study. All the sources found in this database until the end of 2021 have been analysed.

2. To cover part 2 (*in order to detect possible connections between the mobilisations investigated in these four countries*) and part 3 (*to analyse the cultural and political effects of these mobilisations in Southern European democracies*), the corresponding categories of analysis have been created using the software for qualitative analysis NVivo Release.

An appropriate set of analytical categories was developed using the qualitative analysis *software* NVivo Release. These categories were established through an inductive approach, grounded in the data extracted from the analysed sources. In particular, the investigation of potential connections between these mobilisations (part 2) involved tracing ideological alignments and shared strategic frameworks across the selected case studies. This process entailed systematically coding key themes related to actors, narratives,

and mobilisations to identify convergences and divergences across national contexts. By applying this analytical framework, it was possible to discern whether these movements operate in isolation or as part of a broader, interconnected phenomenon across Southern Europe.

Similarly, the analysis of their cultural and political effects (part 3) required an examination of how these mobilisations influence democratic education. This involved categorising the data to capture shifts towards gender and sexuality equality education. The findings provide insight into how these movements contribute to the broader 'cultural war' and the extent to which they foster 'moral panic', reinforce conservative agendas, or challenge democratic values. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 below provide a detailed account of the process of inductive categorisation and analysis, offering a structured examination of the data and its implications.

Qualitative content analysis has been chosen as the most appropriate technique to cover these research objectives since it can follow either inductive or deductive approaches. 'In the inductive approach, codes, categories, or themes are directly drawn from the data, whereas the deductive approach starts with preconceived codes or categories derived from prior relevant theory, research, or literature' (Cho and Lee, 2014: 4). In this study, the research objectives shape categorisation and coding. On the other hand, coding with this technique allowed us to identify both the manifest and the latent content. This is both 'the visible and surface content of text' and 'the underlying meaning of the text' (Ibíd.), both of which are needed to cover this objective.

The data analysed in this study are derived exclusively from documentary sources, primarily scientific articles. As previously mentioned, the initial search focused on documents pertaining to major anti-gender mobilisations in education in Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal up to the end of 2021, using the Web of Science (WoS). WoS was selected as the primary database due to its prominence in Spain for indexing scientific articles, while also encompassing many documents indexed in Scopus and other databases. All retrieved documents were recorded using the Mendeley bibliographic management programme. Subsequently, qualitative data analysis was conducted with NVivo Release, where the data were first categorised and then examined in alignment with the three key components of the research objective. The earliest documents identified date back to 2008, while the period 2017–2020 emerges as the most prolific in terms of scholarship on anti-gender mobilisations in education within the timeframe analysed. The results are structured in accordance with these three parts, as outlined below.

4. Results
4.1. Mobilizations against 'gender ideology' in Education

In a democratic Europe, schools have been incorporating equality policies hand in hand with feminism (Subirats, 2017, 2021). In doing so, sexual citizenship and democracy have been strengthened (Rawłuszko, 2019). This is how education has become 'one of the targets of the anti-gender movement in Europe' (Kuhar and Zobec, 2017: 36), in reaction against a supposed indoctrination under 'gender ideology', according to anti-gender movements. The problem is served: 'sex education at school is under fire all-over Europe' (Engeli, 2020: 231). Hence the importance of researching this phenomenon to understand its implications (Venegas, 2022a, 2024). This section describes the main results found in relation to the first part of the objective of research in this article, namely: *to identify the main anti-gender mobilisations in education in these countries.*

4.1.1. Italy

The campaign against 'gender ideology' in Italy emerged in the 1990s, when the Vatican criticised Gender Studies for questioning the 'naturalness of the sexual order and the traditional family' (Bellè and Poggio, 2018: 120). Later, in 2007, the 'Family Day' mobilised against the Italian government's intention to introduce legislation for same-sex couples. 'It now assumes the features of an outright moral crusade' (Bellè and Poggio, 2018: 120) against secularisation (Gusmeroli and Trappolin, 2021; Lavizzari and Prearo, 2018).

Anti-gender actors received the withdrawal of books addressing family diversity in some public primary schools. Public authorities introduced 'anti-gender phone lines' to encourage parents to report cases of 'gender ideology' in education programs. The Italian Association of Catholic School Parents used social networks in 2014 to ask parents to remove their children from public schools once a month (Garbagnoli, 2017, as quoted in Kuhar and Zobec, 2017). Some cities removed 'from libraries and nursery schools publications for children which proposed non-traditional family models, or to prohibit initiatives in schools concerned with gender differences' (Bellè and Poggio, 2018: 120).

Some other actions against 'gender ideology' in education involve the university (Donà, 2020). In May 2018, a workshop on asylum and sexual diversity was cancelled at the University of Verona. In November 2018, the Lega Minister of the University stopped an academic study on homophobic attitudes in education at the University of Perugia. In December 2018, gender equality programs for secondary schools supervised by the University of Trento were cancelled. In March 2019, the XIII World Congress of Families occurred in Verona.

Anti-gender mobilisations sought to stop the 2015 reform of the education system, known as La Buona Scuola (The Good School), which draws on the Istanbul Convention to prevent gender-based violence through a gender-inclusive education at school. Several online platforms were created to denounce children's books that promoted gender. The 'osservatoriogender.it', created in 2015 by Famiglia Domani (Spallaccia, 2020), was one of the most popular platforms. Finally, the educational law approved in 2017 excluded any module or mention of sexuality and gender in education (Juhász *et al.*, 2018).

4.1.2. Spain

Spain has not had any law to regulate sexuality education in schools until recently (Venegas, 2022a). The topic gained political attention when the far right Spanish party Vox received political representation for the first time in democracy after the Andalusian elections in 2018[3]. They entered the state parliament for the first time in democracy in Spain in 2019 (Pichel-Vázquez and Enguix-Grau, 2022). Since then, several actions have been carried out. First (April 2018), the Councillor of Education of Murcia (Partido Popular, right-wing) posed for the local press with an LGTBI association that delivered workshops on gender and sexuality equality education in schools. The Family Forum requested parents to ask for permission to allow their children to attend these workshops.

---

3   The far right burst into the Spanish political scene in late 2018 for the first time after Franco's dictatorship (Beatley, 2019).

Second (November 2019), a Secondary teacher in Andalusia screened a video on the International Day of the Elimination of Gender Violence. It shows a 1997 Andalusian public television program in which Ana Orantes explains the violence she suffered at the hands of her ex-husband for 40 years. Then, 13 days later, he took revenge for her declarations and murdered her (Beatley 2019). Despite the Andalusian government encouraging this sort of activities, some parents denounced the teacher, who had to declare in Court (Kohan, 2019).

In 2019/2020, Hazte Oír (HO) sent 23,000 letters to Spanish schools for families to request information and express their consent for their children to attend sexuality education courses (Kohan, 2019). HO then promoted a campaign to disseminate a leaflet entitled 'Leave my children alone', to inform parents about what they call 'gender indoctrination' and to denounce on their website the 300 schools that had activities on LGTBI equality and diversity in Spain (Kohan, 2019). This is Vox's 'parental pin' for families to authorise contents in school hours on gender violence, LGTBI rights, bullying or xenophobia, just to name a few.

Since then, schools in Murcia have stopped using the Association of Matrons' sexuality education course to address risky adolescent behaviours, particularly among vulnerable students. In La Rioja, sexologists are no longer included due to teachers' fear of reprisals, fuelled by Vox's hate campaigns on Twitter (now X). A key case is Skolae, a gender and sexuality equality education plan approved by the Navarrese Parliament in 2017, denounced by anti-gender groups in 2018 despite receiving a UNESCO award for gender equality best practices in 2019 (Álvarez, Mahtani and Vadillo, 2020). In the Valencian Community, Madrid and Andalusia, these groups asked for the names and surnames of the people who delivered sexuality education in schools (Borraz, 2020).

4.1.3. France
In the 2010s, Catholic lobbies implemented actions such as the following:

> *Anan online-petition in 2010 against Baiser de la lune, an animated film for primary schools about love between two male fish commissioned by the Ministry of Education. In 2011, they denounced gender studies courses at the Institut d'études poltiques de Paris [Institute of Political Studies – SciencesPo]. That same year —organized by the Fondation de Service politique and the Confédération Nationale des Associations Familiales Catholiques [National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations]—they wrote letters to conservative legislators (Courty and Gervais 2015) to protest against "gender" in high school curricula.* (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2017: 5)

The battle of some religious groups against gender politics spread to France in 2011 (Blázquez, Cornejo and Pichardo, 2018), when a conservative MP alarmed against the Ministry of Education's plan to teach the difference between sex and gender in high school (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2017). 'La Manif Pour Tous [LMPT] marked a new era in the political organisation of Catholic conservatism in France since 2012' (Geva, 2019: 399), a campaign promoted by Catholic Families Associations called 'Parents, are you well informed about «Gender» at school?', which focused on childhood and children's rights, to mobilise moral panic among families. The aim was to involve parents in the restoration of authority and traditional values at school.

Anti-gender lectures were posted on Youtube, mainly between 2011 and 2013, to reject gender in textbooks or during debates on 'marriage for all'. This action was repeated in 2015 with the school reform. Catholics were invited to mobilise and assert their identity to defend the 'natural order' (Duru-Bellat, 2017). These actions did not stop the law on same-sex marriage but interfered with measures to promote gender and sexuality education like

> *experimental curriculum on gender equality entitled 'ABCD de l'égalité' through two specific efforts. Farida Belghoul organized one of these, the Journée de Retrait de l'École [Keep Your Child Home from School Day] (…). The other, called the Vigi-Gender plan, was designed to monitor 'gender', which was 'sneaking into schools' (Husson 2014).* (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2017: 6)

The integration of gender identity and sexual orientation into Secondary School outraged Catholic associations. The 'region of Ile-de-France has dismantled its crucial financial support to gender studies' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018, 10). The right-wing student organisation Union Nationale Inter-universitaire established a Gender Theory Observatory in January 2013 (Brustier, 2015). After 2013-2014, the Union for a Popular Movement party (centre-right) took advantage of these discourses and led a campaign against some youth books, especially 'All naked [Tous à poil]', in February 2014 (Brustier, 2015).

4.1.4. Portugal

This phenomenon is more recent in Portugal. Since 2017, the left-wing government has introduced modules on gender and sexuality education in the compulsory subject 'Citizenship and Development' (Venegas, Villar-Aguilés and Santos, 2020). Conservative groups reacted against this education policy (Venegas, 2022b). The first action was in November 2018, when Escudo Identitário, linked to the far right party Chega, pasted posters in schools against what they considered indoctrination under 'gender ideology' (Pinto, 2018). Chega tries to capitalise on citizen discontent over the economic and social crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic by encouraging debates on whether 'Citizenship and Development' should be compulsory in Secondary Education (Santos, 2020). The second action was in Vila Nova de Famalicão, where two families appealed to conscientious objection to prevent their children from taking this subject at school.

In August 2019, the Portuguese government approved a measure that allows pupils to choose the toilets and changing rooms they prefer. Then, the Portuguese Episcopal Conference reacted against 'gender' teaching in schools. They relaunched a 2013 pastoral document, 'The Christian vision of sexuality. On gender ideology', to denounce 'this type of indoctrination', as if «gender ideology» were a shared and indisputable scientific fact'. The aim was to appeal to parents' rights over schools to decide their children's education (Magariños, 2019).

In July 2019, the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra hosted an international conference to analyse the impact of the growth of populism and far right movements on the rights and well-being of women and LGBTQ people (DeCode/M, 2019).

4.2. Southern European Connections

The data analysed in the previous section reveal numerous historical connections between the four countries analysed:

1. They share a familiaris welfare state model (Esping Andersen, 1993) that places the family and traditional values at the centre of social structuring, except for France, which is closer to the Central European model; however, France shares its Mediterraneanness with Spain and Italy.

2. All four share a strong Catholic tradition, which inspires current ultra-conservative attacks on gender (Korolczuk, 2014; Duru-Bellat, 2017; Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2017; Blázquez, Cornejo and Pichardo, 2017, 2018, Magariños, 2019, Zengarini, 2019: Datta, 2021).

This section describes the main results found in relation to the second part of the research objective of this paper, namely *to detect possible connections between the mobilizations investigated in these four countries.*

4.2.1. The Actors

Three types of actors led the anti-gender moral crusade in the four countries studied:

1. Religious: the Catholic Church, headed by the national Episcopal Conferences. The Vatican in Italy, where the process of secularisation is of relevance to understand the political involvement of the Catholic Church in this moral crusade (Gusmeroli and Trappolin, 2021; Lavizzari and Prearo, 2018). This actor is key since it inspires the rest.

2. Political: far right parties. In Spain, we find Vox; Lega in Italy, and more recently Fratelli d'Italia (Puleo and Piccolino, 2022); the National Front in France; and Chega in Portugal.

3. Social: ultra-conservative civil society groups. In Spain, the main of these groups are Hazte Oír (HO) ['Make Yourself Heard'] (Cornejo and Pichardo, 2017; Pichel-Vázquez and Enguix-Grau, 2022), Foro de la Familia [the Family Forum], anti-abortion groups, Citizen Go in Europe (Venegas, 2021), and Christian Lawyers (Kohan, 2019). In Italy, two groups emerged in 2012, the Pro Vita association, the only with a nationally based constituency (Avanza, 2018), to uphold the values of life and the family to protect children; LMPT, seconding the French group (Bellè and Poggio, 2018); and also Sentinelle in piedi (Spallaccia, 2020). In France, 'The Manif pour tous (LMPT) association was founded (…) in late 2012 with the purpose of opposing the institution of marriage for same-sex couples and the introduction of gender education courses in schools' (Bellè and Poggio, 2018: 125). It is a coalition of different catholic movements, NGOs and associations, conservative think tanks, blogs, and intellectuals (Brustier, 2015). An even more reactionary, ultra-Catholic and monarchist group, called the French Spring, mobilised against the 'ideological struggle against the denaturalised society' that the 'marriage for all' that President Holande tried to approve in France in 2012 meant for them (Robcis, 2015). In Portugal, there is the organisation Escudo Identitário (Pinto, 2018).

Therefore, the actors are ultra-conservative political parties and social groups linked to the Catholic Church.

4.2.2. The Leitmotif

The trigger for what is known as the 'second wave' of anti-genderism came in Spain in 2005, when same-sex marriage was legalised (Cornejo and Pichardo, 2017). Italy followed suit in 2007. The response was to celebrate 'Family Day' to protest against the Italian government's intention to adopt civil union legislation for same-sex couples. This day became a reference for the protest structures of anti-gender movements in Europe (Kuhar and Zobec, 2017). LMPT supported these mobilisations in France in 2012 (Geva, 2019). All these mobilisations had a common link: they were inspired by the traditional values of the Catholic Church and its defence of the 'natural family'. The 'natural family' is founded on the natural order. This natural, binary order is based on the sexual, biological difference between men and women.

Thus, the leitmotiv has been the democratic defence of the right to same-sex marriage. This right has been fiercely contested by anti-gender actors with the aim of preserving traditional values and the 'natural family' defended by the Catholic Church.

4.2.3. The Educational Arena

The coding of the data has also facilitated the identification of latent content, which is 'the underlying meaning of the text' (Cho and Lee, 2014: 4). This latent content highlights the significance of anti-gender mobilisation within the sphere of education. This domain serves as a crucial lens through which to comprehend the Southern European connections concerning anti-genderism.

Anti-gender campaigns in education raise several controversies. First, these actors appeal to the supposed right of families to choose their children's education. However, national and international laws in the countries analysed put children's rights first. Children belong to no one (Assiego, 2020).

In Spain, for example, children's rights are supported by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, Vox's parental veto in Spain has impacted teachers and education (Alvarez, Mahtani and Vadillo, 2020). Threats and accusations have become a successful tactic of anti-gender movements to control the school curriculum (Kohan, 2019), although the Spanish Constitution does not allow parents to influence the curriculum and citizenship content in schools. While families are entitled to select the type of education they wish for their children in the private sphere in accordance with their beliefs and values, the school system is mandated to deliver education based on scientific knowledge, as stipulated by law (Sterm Intersindical, 2020). In this context, Teaching Unions have raised concerns regarding the risks of self-censorship among educators, who fear being left unprotected when promoting equality and diversity in the classroom. The consequence is a restriction of democratic values in education. However, ultra-conservative mobilisations have fostered an atmosphere of fear and surveillance, ultimately undermining policies on equality and diversity education by instilling apprehension among teachers regarding potential denunciations.

Many actors have mobilised against the parental veto in Spain. These actors insist on the need for gender and sexuality equality education to reach all students, for two reasons: 1) some children may come from sexist or homotransphobic households, have experienced gender-based

violence at home, suffered abuse or sexual harassment, or feel different from their peers; comprehensive, evidence-based education provides them with a safe environment in which to navigate these issues. 2) Sexual citizenship and democratic principles are reinforced.

A comparable process has unfolded in Italy, as Donà (2020: 212) elucidates:

> *Lega, under Matteo Salvini's leadership, was transformed (…) to a populist radical right party (Passarelli and Tuorto 2018). (…) conservative with respect to family values and traditional gender roles (Köttig et al., 2017), (…) included the centrality of the natural patriarchal family (…); the exclusive role of parents in choosing the kind of education given to their children (…), gender equality represents a threat to social values, contrasted with Christian civilization.*

Although more recently in Portugal, the scheme is similar. Mobilisations against gender are in the name of the alleged indoctrination of 'gender ideology', so they appeal to the conscientious objection of 'concerned parents' to prevent their children from taking this subject at school. Parents are supposed to have the right, over and above schools, to decide the education of their children, while Gender Studies are accused as 'gender ideology' by the Episcopal Conference (Magariños, 2019).

Thus, the educational arena emerges as a particularly strategic domain for anti-gender mobilisations, as it enables the targeting of 'concerned parents', the invocation of the 'parental veto', and the proliferation of 'moral panic' within families and broader society through alarmist denunciations of supposed 'gender indoctrination'.

4.3. Cultural and political effects on Southern European Democracy

The data examined agree with Lianos (2019: 445) that the far right is gaining 'support across democratic societies'. This research of Southern Europe has shown to be an example of it. Data has shown that it is the Catholic Church that inspires anti-gender mobilisations against 'gender ideology' in education. To do so, the 'natural family', based on traditional, patriarchal values, is set at the core of the four societies analysed. This moral crusade is hosted by three main, interconnected actors:

1. One religious, the Catholic Church;

2. One political, far right political parties;

3. and one from the civil society, ultra-conservative associations and groups.

Data analysed in the previous section show that anti-gender movements in the four Southern European societies investigated share an education agenda and a modus operandi that accounts for their connection in Southern Europe, as follows:

1. They all set the 'natural family' at the core, against LGBT people's rights, family diversity and school programmes of gender and sexuality education (Donà, 2020).

2. They mobilised against gender and sexuality equality education in schools because, they argued, this content could lead to an early sexualization of children (Bellè and Poggio, 2018;

Gusmeroli and Trappolin, 2021). For this purpose, 'egalitarian policies are presented as encouraging paedophilia and the sexualization of children' (Della Sudda, 2018: 3).

3. There is a claim to restore traditional values (Kováts and Põim, 2015; Bellè and Poggio, 2018; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018).

4. This constant 'reference to children is a recurrent feature of strategies to create moral panic' (Bellè and Poggio, 2018: 124). To do so, anti-gender actors defend that they are not against gender equality but against gender indoctrination under 'gender ideology' in the curriculum.

However, avoiding sexuality and gender in schools would mean that any group of 'concerned parents' (Kováts and Põim, 2015; Kuhar and Zobec, 2017) could impose their own view of history, biology or physics when they consider that the curriculum contravenes the Holy Scriptures. It would also deny children's right to a comprehensive education and to know their own sexuality (Martínez, 2020), as recommended by Save the Children (Gil, 2020) and the Sustainable Development Goals contained in Agenda 2030 (Farreras, 2020).

This section describes the main results found in relation to the third part of the research objective of this paper, namely *to analyse the cultural and political effects of these mobilisations in Southern European democracies*. As previously noted, 'gender ideology' is an 'empty signifier' (Mayer and Sauer, 2017, as quoted in Kuhar and Zobec, 2017), in which gender is the 'symbolic glue' (Grzebalska and Pető, 2018) that far right actors mobilise 'to demonize all stances against patriarchy and heteronormativity that have been brought about by (…) feminism as well as by LGBTQ+ activists' (Spallaccia, 2020: 133). The mobilisations against sex and gender equality education in the previous section illustrate this symbolic functioning and its cultural and political implications in the four societies examined.

At the cultural level, campaigns against gender in education are part of the 'cultural war' waged by ultra-conservative actors. When it comes to gender and sexuality equality education, this 'cultural war' is located in the body and sexuality (Morán, 2019) to activate 'moral panic' among 'concerned parents' and in society. To this end, they denounce the indoctrination of 'gender ideology' since, they argue, the sex and gender equality education curriculum promotes paedophilia and the sexualisation of the innocent child, so parents should have the right to decide the education of their children. The aim is to restore traditional values based on the biologically grounded natural order (see Vatican, 2019) and the resulting 'natural family'.

At the political level, these attacks, and the moral panic this 'cultural war' mobilises among parents and society, have a major impact on 'gender politics', since it relates to sexual and intimate citizenship and democracy (Rawłuszko, 2019). By vetoing sexuality education and the promotion of gender equality in the school curriculum, anti-gender actors pursue the right of children to be educated in a society that respects same-sex marriage and family diversity, condemns gender-based violence, and gives children the tools to become citizens in relation to their sexual and intimate rights. These principles strengthen democracy. This is the sociological implication of gender and sexuality education at the political level, to broaden democracy by adding sexual and intimate rights to the modern definition of citizenship, in which civil, political, and social rights are recognised (Marshall, 1997).

5. Conclusions

This article has critically examined the phenomenon of anti-gender mobilisations targeting 'gender ideology' in educational settings across four Southern European countries —Spain, Italy, France, and Portugal. Through a comprehensive, comparative analysis, the research pursued a three-part objective of research:

1. To identify the main anti-gender mobilisations in education in these countries;

2. In order to detect possible connections between the mobilisations investigated in these four countries;

3. So, to analyse the cultural and political effects of these mobilisations in these Southern European democracies.

The findings corroborate the initial thesis that these mobilisations, while ostensibly directed at opposing gender and sexuality equality education, ultimately function as a broader sociopolitical strategy aimed at destabilising liberal democratic principles. This strategy manifests in two interrelated domains:

1. Cultural implications: anti-gender movements have engaged in a 'cultural war' by disseminating 'moral panic' within society, particularly by appealing to parental anxieties about perceived indoctrination of children. The mobilisation of fear surrounding gender and sexuality equality education—often through the rhetoric of protecting the 'innocent child'—has been a recurrent tactic across the countries studied. This tactic, while ostensibly cultural, serves to challenge the values of equality, diversity, and inclusivity fundamental to democratic societies.

2. Political implications: this 'cultural war' is a 'moral crusade' against gender politics in the field of sexual and intimate citizenship since, at the political level, the study reveals a concerted effort to undermine democratic citizenship by challenging the inclusion of gender and sexuality equality education in the curriculum. The invocation of parental rights to veto gender and sexuality content—despite legal frameworks prioritising children's rights to comprehensive sexuality education—exemplifies how these movements seek to erode educational practices grounded in democratic principles. Consequently, the integrity of citizenship education, as a cornerstone of democratic participation and social cohesion, is compromised.

Both cultural and political implications ultimately restore traditional Western values and the 'natural family' that sex and gender equality education challenges. This final section concludes by discussing further implications of this starting thesis for the Southern European democracies studied that the data analysed seem to confirm.

The rise of the far right in southern Europe poses a major threat to democracy. The 'Global Right Wing' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018) moral crusade against 'gender ideology' is just the tip of the iceberg of a larger systemic crisis (Kováts, 2018) due to the challenge that liberal democracy and human rights pose to traditional values (Jarkovská, 2020). This crusade is inspired by the conservative Catholic Church (Datta, 2021). Thus, the data analysed in the article seem to confirm the values-centred argument, that is, this conservative rise is a reaction against liberal *democracy and human rights* (Sosa, 2021), since they challenge traditional values (Jarkovská, 2020) (see the first section of the article).

Education, as observed in the data analysed, becomes 'one of the targets of the anti-gender movement in Europe' (Kuhar and Zobec, 2017: 37), because it is a key aspect of the current ultra-conservative 'cultural' war, which is played out in the realm of the symbolic (values, ideas, beliefs). Hence, anti-gender discourses denounce the sex and gender equality education curriculum for indoctrination under the 'gender ideology'. In doing so, anti-gender discourses demonstrate gender because it represents the exact opposite of the traditional values that anti-gender movements aim to restore (Kováts and Põim, 2015; Bellè and Poggio, 2018; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018).

They seek to recover the patriarchal model of family, masculinity and femininity based on nature and biology (Bellè and Poggio, 2018). The play with traditional femininity goes further. The increased visibility of women leaders of ultra-conservative groups, both parliamentarians and activists, seems to have a softening effect on their messages, with a consequent increase in the social support given to these groups (Ben-Shitrit, Elad-Strenger and Hirsch-Hoefler, 2022). This phenomenon, which was recently investigated, seems to aggravate the anti-gender effects on democracy.

Feminism and democracy have historically advanced in tandem, forging a more egalitarian and diverse society—two fundamental pillars upon which the European Union is constructed. Consequently, anti-gender mobilisations constitute not merely an ideological opposition to feminist conceptualisations of gender, but a calculated assault on democratic principles with the intent to destabilise them. This destabilisation, by challenging the core tenets of equality, inclusion, and civic participation, unequivocally positions the defence of democracy as an inherently feminist imperative. This destabilisation becomes a feminist issue.

Bibliographic references

Alonso, Alba, and Emanuela Lombardo (2018): "Gender Equality and De-Democratization Processes: The Case of Spain". *Politics and Governance,* 6 (3), 78-89. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.17645/PAG. V6I3.1419.

Álvarez, Pilar; Noor Mahtani and Virginia Vadillo (2020): "Veto parental: los talleres que persigue Vox". *El País*, January 22. https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020/01/21/actualidad/1579620550_769153.html.

Assiego, Violeta (2020). "Los hijos no pertenecen a nadie, tampoco a los padres". *elDiario.es*, January 17. https://www.eldiario.es/opinion/zona-critica/hijos-pertenecen-nadie-padres_129_1074867.html.

Avanza, Martina (2018): "Plea for an Emic Approach Towards 'Ugly Movements': Lessons from the Divisions within the Italian pro-Life Movement". *Politics and Governance,*6 (3), 112-25. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.17645/pag.v6i3.1479.

Beatley, Meaghan (2019): "Spain's Vox Thinks Fighting Feminism Is a Winning Tactic". *The Atlantic*, April. https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/04/spain-vox-feminism/587824/.

Bellè, Elisa and Barbara Poggio (2018): "New Faces of Populism: The Italian 'anti-Gender' Mobilization" en Urpo Kovala, Emilia Palonen, Maria Ruotsalainen, and Tuija Saresma (eds.): *Populism on the Loose*. Jyväskylä: Vertaisarvioitu Kollegialt Granskad.

Ben-Shitrit, Lihi; Elad-Strenger, Julia and Hirsch-Hoefler, Sivan (2022): "'Pinkwashing' the Radical-Right: Gender and the Mainstreaming of Radical-Right Policies and Actions". *European Journal of Political Research*, 61 (1), 86-110. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12442.

Berthet, Valentine (2022): "Norm under Fire: Support for and Opposition to the European Union's Ratification of the Istanbul Convention in the European Parliament". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 24 (5), 675-698. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2022.2034510.

Blázquez, Maribel; Mónica Cornejo and Pichardo, José Ignacio (2018): "The Gender Dispute in the Spanish State from the Analysis of the Catholic Activism". *Ex Aequo*, no. 37, 47-61. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.22355/exaequo.2018.37.04.

Borraz, Marta (2020): "Los profesionales de las charlas a las que ataca el veto parental: 'estos talleres pueden cambiar la vida de los alumnos'". *elDiario.es*, January 22. https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/adolescentes-salieron-victimas-violencia-vox_1_1070734.html.

Brustier, Gaël (2015). *'France'. In Gender as Symbolic Glue: The Position and Role of Conservtive and Far Right Parties in the Anti-Gender Mobilizations in Europe*. Budapest: Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Cho, Ji Young and Eun-Hee Lee (2014): "Reducing Confusion about Grounded Theory and Qualitative Content Analysis: Similarities and Differences". *The Qualitative Report*, 19 (64),1-20. http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR19/cho64.pdf.

Cipek, Tihomir and Stjepan Lacković (2019): "Civil Society and the Rise of the Radical Right in Poland". *Politicka Misao*, 56 (3-4), 153-176. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.20901/PM.56.3-4.07.

Cornejo, Mónica and Pichardo, José Ignacio (2017): "La 'ideología de género' frente a los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. El escenario español'. *Cadernos Pagu*, 50, 1-21. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/18094449201700500009.

Cornejo, Mónica and Pichardo, José Ignacio (2018): "Actors and Strategies of Spanish Anti-Gender Mobilization: Shifting from Church Politics to Lay Activism". *Revista Psicologia Política*, 18 (43), 524-542.

Dahl, Ulrika and Kennedy-Macfoy, Madeleine (2020): "(Anti) Gender Studies and Populist Movements in Europe". *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 27 (3), 282-284. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1350506820929220.

Datta, Neil (2021). *Tip of the Iceberg. Religious Extremist Funders against Human Rights for Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Europe*. Brussels: European Parlamentiary Forum. https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Tip of the Iceberg August 2021 Final.pdf.

DeCode/M (2019): "Anti-Gender Turn in Politics and Public Globally: New Forms of Organizing against the Crackdown on Women's Rights in the World". *DeCodeM*. Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra. https://decodem.ces.uc.pt/?p=1845&lang=en_GB.

Donà, Alessia (2020): "What's Gender Got to Do with Populism?". *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 27 (3), 285-292. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1350506820929222.

Duru-Bellat, Marie (2017): " Sara Garbagnoli, Massimo Prearo, La Croisade ' anti-Genre '. Du Vatican Aux Manifs Pour Tous ". *Lectures,* 1-4. http://journals.openedition.org/lectures/23788.

Engeli, Isabelle (2020): "Gender and Sexuality Research in the Age of Populism: Lessons for Political Science". *European Political Science*, 19 (2), 226-235. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41304-019-00223-3.

Esping Andersen, Gøsta (1993). *Los tres mundos del estado del bienestar*. Valencia: Alfons el Magnànim.

Farreras, Carina (2020): "veto parental: ¿de quién son los hijos?". *La Vanguardia*, January 23. https://www.lavanguardia.com/vivo/mamas-y-papas/20200123/473066946837/pin-parental-veto-hijos-escuela-vox-murcia.html.

Froio, Caterina and Ganesh, Bharath (2019): "The Transnationalisation of Far Right Discourse on Twitter Issues and Actors That Cross Borders in Western European Democracies". *European Societies*, 21 (4), 513-539. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2018.1494295.

Fryklund, Björn (2018): "Populism in the Nordic Countries 1965-2015: The Swedish Case as an Ideal Type or Comparative Yardstick for the Development of Populism" en Urpo Kovala, Emilia Palonen, Maria Ruotsalainen, and Tuija Saresma (eds.): *Populism on the Loose*. Jyväskylä: Vertaisarvioitu Kollegialt Granskad.

Geva, Dorit (2019): "Non Au Gender: Moral Epistemics and French Conservative Strategies of Distinction". *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, 6 (4), 393-420. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2019.1660196.

Gil, Rocío (2020): "¿Qué es el 'pin parental' que quiere VOX en los colegios y qué implica para los menores lgtb?". *RTVE Noticias España*. https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20200214/pin-parental-quiere-vox-colegios-implica-para-ninos-lgtb/1995665.shtml.

Grzebalska, Weronika and Pető, Andrea (2018): "The Gendered Modus Operandi of the Illiberal Transformation in Hungary and Poland". *Women's Studies International Forum*, 68 (May), 164-172. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.12.001.

Gusmeroli, Paolo and Trappolin, Luca (2021): "Narratives of Catholic Women against 'Gender Ideology' in Italian Schools: Defending Childhood, Struggling with Pluralism'. *European Societies*, 23 (4)1-21. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2021.1943484.

Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2021): "Attack on Democracy? Anti-Gender-Movements in Europe". *Gunda Werner Institute*. Feminism and Gender Democracy. Accessed December 24. https://www.gwi-boell.de/en/attack-democracy-anti-gender-movements-europe.

Jarkovská, Lucie (2020): "The European Union as a Child Molester: Sex Education on pro-Russian Websites". *Sex Education. Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 20 (2), 138-153. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1634041.

Juhász, Borbála; Pap, Eniko; Ugbor, Christiane; Hansal, Sophie; Casaccia, Siusi; Maďarová, Zuzana; Albu, Laura and Tarasiewicz, Małgorzata (2018). *Backlash in Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights in the EU*. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses%0ADISCLAIMER.

Kohan, Marisa (2019): "Enseñanza pública: denuncian una campaña de intimidación al profesorado de la pública en las comunidades donde PP y CS gobiernan con VOX". *Público*, December 22. https://

www.publico.es/sociedad/ensenanza-publica-denuncian-campana-intimidacion-profesorado-publica-comunidades-pp-cs-gobiernan-vox.html.

Korolczuk, Elżbieta (2014): "The War on Gender» from a Transnational Perspective-Lessons for Feminist Strategising". *Anti-Gender Movements on the Rise? Anti-Gender Movements on the Rise? Strategising for Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe*, 43-53. https://www.gwi-boell.de/sites/default/files/2015-04-anti-gender-movements-on-the-rise.pdf#page=45%0Ahttp://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/35493615/War_on__Gender_Korolczuk_text___Academia.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=145993252.

Korolczuk, Elżbieta and Graff, Agnieszka (2018): "Gender as 'Ebola from Brussels': The Anticolonial Frame and the Rise of Illiberal Populism". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 43 (4), 797–821. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1086/696691.

Köttig, Michaela; Bitzan, Renate and Petö, Andrea (eds.) Petö. (2017). *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe. Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kováts, Eszter (2017): "The Emergence of Powerful Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy" en Michaela Köttig, Renate Bitzan y Andrea Petö (eds.): *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kováts, Eszter (2018): "Questioning Consensuses: Right-Wing Populism, Anti-Populism, and the Threat of 'Gender Ideology'". *Sociological Research Online*, 23 (2), 528-538. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1360780418764735.

Kováts, Eszter and Põim, Maari (2015). *Gender as Symbolic Glue: The Position and Role of Conservative and Far Right Parties in the Anti-Gender Mobilizations in Europe*. Budapest: Ernst Stetter, FEPS Secretary General.

Kuhar, Roman (2015). 'Playing with Science: Sexual Citizenship and the Roman Catholic Church Counter-Narratives in Slovenia and Croatia'. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 49 (March), 84-92. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/J.WSIF.2014.07.005.

Kuhar, Roman and Paternotte, David (2017). *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

Kuhar, Roman and Zobec, Aleš (2017): "The Anti-Gender Movement in Europe and the Educational Process in Public Schools". *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal,* 7 (2), 29-46. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1145822.

Lavizzari, Anna and Prearo, Massimo (2018): "The Anti-Gender Movement in Italy: Catholic Participation between Electoral and Protest Politics". *European Societies*, May, 1-22. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2018.1536801.

Lianos, Michalis (2019): "Right on the Political Target". *European Societies*, 21 (4), 445-446. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2019.1647922.

Magariños, Elena (2019): "Los obispos de portugal se plantan contra la enseñanza 'de género' en las escuelas". *Vidanuevadigital*. https://www.vidanuevadigital.com/2019/08/28/los-obispos-de-portugal-se-plantan-contra-la-ensenanza-de-genero-en-las-escuelas/.

Marshall, Thomas Humphrey (1997). "Ciudadanía y clase social". *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 79, 297-344.

Martínez, Josefina (2020). 'El pin parental, nueva trinchera de la extrema derecha'. *Observatorio del laicismo - Europa Laica*. https://laicismo.org/el-pin-parental-nueva-trinchera-de-la-extrema-derecha/212468.

Morán, José Manuel (2019): WThe Geopolitics of Moral Panic: The Influence of Argentinian Neo-Conservatism in the Genesis of the Discourse of 'Gender Ideology'". *International Sociology*, 34 (4), 402-417. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0268580919856488.

O'Sullivan, Míla and Krulišová, Kateřina (2020): "'This Agenda Will Never Be Politically Popular': Central Europe's Anti-Gender Mobilization and the Czech Women, Peace and Security Agenda". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22 (4), 526-549. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2020.1796519.

Paternotte, David and Kuhar, Roman (2018): "Disentangling and Locating the 'Global Right': Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe". *Politics and Governance*, 6 (3), 6-19. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.17645/PAG.V6I3.1557.

Pichel-Vázquez, Alexandre and Enguix-Grau, Begonya (2022): "Framing Gender through Affects: Antifeminism and Love in the Spanish Far Right (Vox)". *South European Society and Politics*, 26 (4), 465-487. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2022.2115185.

Pinto, Mariana Correia (2018): "Grupo extremista cola cartazes contra 'ideologia de género' em mais de 300 escolas". *Publico*. https://www.publico.pt/2018/11/09/p3/noticia/grupo-extremista-cola-cartazes-ideologia-genero-300-escolas-1850535.

Pless, Anna; Paul Tromp and Houtman, Dick (2021): "Religious and Secular Value Divides in Western Europe: A Cross-National Comparison (1981–2008)". *International Political Science Review*, 44 (2), 1-7. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0192512121995126.

Puleo, Leonardo, and Piccolino, Gianluca (2022): "Back to the Post-Fascist Past or Landing in the Populist Radical Right? The Brothers of Italy Between Continuity and Change". *South European Society and Politics*, 27 (3), 359-383. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2022.2126247.

Rawłuszko, Marta (2019). 'And If the Opponents of Gender Ideology Are Right? Gender Politics, Europeanization, and the Democratic Deficit'. Politics & Gender, 1–23. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s1743923x19000576.

Robcis, Camille (2015): "Contemporary Issues in Historical Perspective Catholics, the 'Theory of Gender,' and the Turn to the Human in France: A New Dreyfus Affair?". *Journal of Modern History*, 87 (4): 892-923. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1086/683599.

Ruiz Olabuena, José Ignacio (2004). Técnicas de triangulación y control de calidad en la investigación socioeducativa. Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2020): "Educação, grande alvo da extrema-direita". *Outras Palavras*. https://outraspalavras.net/direita-assanhada/educacao-grande-alvo-da-extrema-direita/.

Spallaccia, Beatrice (2020): "Ideologia del Gender: Towards a Transcultural Understanding of the Phenomenon". *Modern Italy*, 25 (2), 131-145. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/mit.2019.63.

Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, Michael and Tricou, Josselin (2017): "Resisting 'Gender Theory' in France: A Fulcrum for Religious Action in a Secular Society" en Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte (eds.): *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*. New York: Lanham.

Sterm Intersindical (2020). *Argumentario para docentes contra el veto parental.* https://intersindicalrm.org/ensenanza/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PIN-PARENTAL-NORMATIVA-WEB.pdf.

Subirats, Marina (2017): "¿Coeducación o escuela segregada? Un viejo y persistente debate". *RASE. Revista de Sociología de la Educación*, 3 (1), 143-158.

Subirats, Marina (2021). *Educar a las mujeres. La construcción de la mirada coeductiva.* Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid.

Sudda, Magali Della (2018). *An Anti-Gender Europe.* París: Books & Ideas.

Torcal, Mariano and Comellas, Josep M. (2022): "Affective Polarisation in Times of Political Instability and Conflict. Spain from a Comparative Perspective". *South European Society and Politics*, 27 (1), 1-26. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2022.2044236.

Trachman, Mathieu (2011). *Les Sciences Sociales Ont-Elles Un Sexe ?* París: Books & Ideas.

Venegas, Mar (2013): "La educación afectivosexual en el marco de la educación para la ciudadanía democrática y los derechos humanos". *RASE. Revista de la Asociación de Sociología de la Educación*, 6 (3): 408-425. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.7203/RASE.6.3.8669.

Venegas, Mar (2021): "La democracia en la era de los movimientos anti-género, o por qué los movimientos anti-género aglutinan los principales retos sociales y políticos para la infancia y juventud en la democracia actual" en Ainhoa Rodríguez and Mar Venegas (eds.): *Infancia, juventud y retos sociales y para la democracia: una mirada interdisciplinar.* Valencia: Tirant Humanidades.

Venegas, Mar (2022a): "Relationships and Sex Education in the Age of Anti-Gender Movements: What Challenges for Democracy?". *Sex Education. Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 22 (4), 481-495. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2021.1955669.

Venegas, Mar (2022b): "Os movimentos anti-género: a globalização de uma ameaça contra a igualdade e a democracia" en Pedro Abrantes y Elsa Lechner (eds.): *Nós Globais. Investigações em curso sobre Questões da Globalização.* Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra.

Venegas, Mar (2024): "Anti-gender Movements, RSE, and Democracy in Europe". *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Sexuality Education*, 1-10. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95352-2_112-1.

Venegas, Mar; Villar-Aguilés, Alícia and Santos, Sofia A. (2020): "Sex and Gender Equality Policies in Education in Three Southern European Societies: The Cases of Andalusia and Valencian Community (Spain) and Portugal". *Revista Española de Sociologia*, 29 (1), 137-151. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2020.09.

Verloo, Mieke and Paternotte, David (2018): "The Feminist Project under Threat in Europe". *Politics and Governance*, 6 (3), 1-5. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.17645/PAG.V6I3.1736.

Versaldi, Giuseppe (Cardenal) (2019). *Varón y mujer los creó. Para una vía de diálogo sobre la cuestión del gender en educación*. Ciudad del Vaticano: Congregación para la Educación Católica.

Villar-Aguilés, Alícia and Venegas, Mar (2024): "El discurso anti-género en educación en España: Un análisis del #pinparental". *Revista Prisma Social*, 46, 359-384.

Wilkinson, Annie (2021): "Gender as Death Threat to the Family: How the 'Security Frame' Shapes Anti-Gender Activism in Mexico". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 23 (4), 535-557. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1957974.

Zaremberg, Gisela; Tabbush, Constanza and Friedman, Elisabeth Jay (2021): "Feminism(s) and Anti-Gender Backlash: Lessons from Latin America". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 23 (4), 527–534. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1956093.

Zengarini, Lisa (2019): "Portugal: no de los obispos a la enseñanza escolar de 'gender'". *Vatican News*, August 29. https://www.vaticannews.va/es/iglesia/news/2019-08/portugal-no-de-los-obispos-ensenanza-escolar-gender.html.

Nota biográfica

Mar Venegas es Doctora en Sociología (Mención Europea), y Experta en Género e Igualdad de Oportunidades, ambas por la Universidad de Granada, donde es Profesora Titular del Departamento de Sociología e investigadora del Instituto Universitario de Investigación de Estudios de las Mujeres y de Género. Actualmente, es Vicerrectora de Igualdad, Inclusión y Compromiso Social de la Universidad de Granada. Sus áreas de investigación son la Sociología de la Educación, los Estudios de Género y Sexualidad y los Estudios de Juventud. Sus líneas docentes y de investigación están estrechamente conectadas, destacando su continua colaboración con la comunidad educativa a través de la investigación acción en el ámbito de la educación afectivosexual, lo que ha aparecido también en prensa, radio y televisión. Ha sido investigadora visitante en Reino Unido, Francia y Canadá y docente visitante en Francia, Holanda y Portugal. Es autora de un amplio número de publicaciones, la mayoría de las cuales pueden consultarse en ResearchGate y Google Scholar. Colabora como docente en el Experta Universitaria en Intervención Social en Situaciones de Trata de Personas y Prostitución, de la Universidad de las Islas Baleares. En la Universidad Internacional de Andalucía entre 2014-2023 ha diseñado, dirigido y sido docente del título de posgrado «Certificado Oficial de Formación Pedagógica y Didáctica Equivalente (COFPYDE)»; en el curso 2021-2022, ha diseñado el Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas (MAES), del que ha sido directora en su I Edición (curso 2022-2023) y docente. Ha desempeñado otros cargos de gestión como Directora del Departamento de Sociología de la Universidad de Granada (2020-2023) y su Subdirectora (2014-2020). Vicedirectora de la RASE, Revista de Sociología de la Educación (2016-2022). Es socia fundadora de la Spin Off «CITERE. Estudios Sociológicos» de la Universidad de Granada. Ha participado en una veintena de proyectos de investigación, en un tercio de los cuales ha sido investigadora principal. En la actualidad, es investigadora principal del proyecto «Cultura del romance juvenil y trayectorias educativas

en Secundaria Obligatoria (ROMANCE SUCCESP)» (2023-2027) en la convocatoria de «Proyectos de Generación de Conocimiento» y actuaciones para la formación de personal investigador predoctoral asociadas a dichos proyectos (BOE n.º 2 - Martes, 3 de enero de 2023, Sec. V-B.) del Plan Nacional de Investigación.