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The enemy’s enemy: feminism at the crossroads of neoliberal co-optation and anti-gender conservatism

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\textbf{ABSTRACT}

Contemporary left-wing feminist and queer politics finds itself in a double-bind between on the one hand neoliberal and corporate embrace of gender equality and sexual diversity, and (neo)conservative anti-gender mobilization on the other. In anti-gender discourse, feminist and queer politics is commonly seen to be backed up and disseminated by global corporations. Thus, in a time when nationalist ultra-conservative movements are increasingly challenging neoliberal hegemony and political and economic elites, there is a need for progressive movements on the left to understand specifically how anti-gender rhetoric is underpinned by a critique of corporate power. Through empirical analysis of the Canadian-based web-portal LifeSite, this article examines the ideological ‘grip’ of anti-establishment anti-gender discourse as well as the weakest points in its critique of market capitalism and corporate power in order to identify entry points for their politically effective contestation.

For some time, global corporations have presented themselves as devoted proponents of women’s empowerment and LGBTQ rights. Examples abound of corporate campaigns promoting gender equality and LGBTQ inclusiveness within their core business structures and across their supply chains. Likewise, advertisements increasingly depict women and girls who challenge and conquer narrow gender norms as well as queer love stories and diverse family constellations that are portrayed as equally commonplace as heterosexual ones. While this trend certainly marks a shift from corporate indifference to gender inequality and discrimination as well as from the propensity in advertisement to otherwise reify and romanticize gender stereotypes, feminist and queer scholarship on marketing strategies that aim at forging consumer associations with a brand on the one hand, and with emancipatory politics on the other, have been discussed in terms of pinkwashing and window dressing.\textsuperscript{1} Thus, corporate gender equality and antidiscrimination policies are seen to instrumentalize equality as beneficial for the bottom line and have been criticized for capitalizing on emancipatory struggles. At the same time, corporations remain highly dependent on a cheap female labour force across their supply chains in order to ensure profitability.\textsuperscript{2}

Recently, however, an increasing number of critical voices are essentially making the opposite claim about corporate enhancements of gender equality and LGBTQ rights.

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Instead of accusing these types of equality and advertising campaigns as merely serving the economic interests of corporations, paying lip-service to emancipatory and egalitarian ideals, these criticisms target businesses for forming, among other things, powerful political and economic alliances, undermining children’s health and sound family values, as well as, more widely still, destabilizing the central tenets of western civilization and repudiating human dignity as such. An expanding list of allied secular and religious movements, as well as illiberal and right-wing populist parties and leaders, have appeared on the international political scene, denouncing equality ideals as a global conspiracy driven by powerful coalitions of global corporations, NGOs and political regimes on the ‘liberal left’, guided by what they call ‘gender ideology’. Through this re-articulation, opposition to the idea of ‘gender’ as a social construct – as opposed to biologically determined sex characteristics – has become a unifying element, serving the consolidation of a conservative nationalist power bloc in their struggle for a new hegemonic order.

Some global corporations have explicitly confronted this growing political force, turning their commitments to combat racism, sexism and homophobia into defining features of their brands. For instance, in 2018 the Unilever owned ice cream giant Ben & Jerry’s released the ice cream flavour Pecan Resist as a way to ‘peacefully resist the Trump administration’s regressive and discriminatory politics and build a future that values inclusivity, equality, and justice for people of colour, women, the LGBTQ community, refugees and immigrants’.

In the wake of these developments, global corporations, which for a long time have been heavily criticized and boycotted for their exploitative working conditions in the Global South, are now subjected to right-wing social media mobilization and boycotts, because they are perceived as promoting ‘politically correct’ ideas of feminism, anti-racism and LGBTQ rights.

With this in mind, contemporary left-wing feminist and queer politics are challenged by two seemingly contrary but, as we argue, interconnected tendencies. On the one hand, in neoliberal discourse and policy, gender equality and sexual diversity tend to be deprived of their radical political potential in favour of being framed as commonsensical values compatible with, and even beneficial for, business interests. On the other hand, the de-legitimization of feminist politics is a core strategy in contemporary (neo)conservative mobilization whereby the very idea of ‘gender’ is articulated as a corrupt ideological construct, supported by cultural and economic elites.

In a post-Cold War context where capitalism is largely perceived as lacking any viable alternatives, Elżbieta Korolczuk and Agnieszka Graff have argued that anti-gender movements have emerged as unexpected critics of the global economic order. The authors contend that this broadened ideological construct, specifically including an opposition towards both capitalism and liberal values of individuality and equality, represents a shift from conservative anti-feminist politics that is often defined in and through its narrower opposition against reproductive and sexual rights. According to Korolczuk and Graff, it is owing to its wider scope that today anti-gender politics has managed to achieve a greater public appeal, forging alliances across a spectrum of political actors and movements with an authoritarian and illiberal leaning. But, if as Korolczuk and Graff suggest, anti-gender politics in part responds to the vulnerabilities and exclusions caused by global capitalism, what more precisely is the content and implications of the anti-gender critique against capitalism? In a time when neoliberal hegemony is challenged by a new nationalist/(ultra)conservative political power bloc, there is a need to understand specifically how anti-gender and anti-establishment
rhetoric is underpinned by a critique of neoliberalism and corporate power. Since these movements are currently experiencing a transnational momentum, it is imperative to examine the ideological ‘grip’ of anti-gender discourse as well as its ‘cracks’, or ‘weakest points’ that might offer entry points for politically effective contestation.

Against the backdrop of the neoliberal de-politicization of equality claims on the one hand and the re-politicization of these demands on the other, this article aims to identify and understand empirically how anti-gender actors in their hegemonic struggle seek to re-define the meaning of issues related to gender, sexuality, equality and discrimination. We argue that it is essential to understand the more overarching political, economic and cultural implications for contemporary contestations of key values such as democracy, equality and freedom. In doing so, we engage with the following questions: What are the specific elements and arguments in this critique that account for its apparent ideological effectiveness and its capacity to mobilize people? What connections does the anti-gender critique make with respect to corporate power, neoliberal policy and ‘gender ideology’? How do anti-gender articulations re-draw political frontiers, thereby making possible the formation of alliances and the construction of political enemies? Returning to the dual challenge introduced at the beginning, how might both leftist feminist and queer politics simultaneously respond to regressive anti-gender politics, on the one hand, and corporate (pseudo)feminism on the other?

Empirically, we explore these questions through a close reading of the web portal LifeSite, an ultra-conservative forum and one of the main actors in formulating and disseminating anti-gender discourse in English, as well as the LifeSite-sponsored English translation of a seminal book authored by German anti-gender intellectual Gabriele Kuby\(^5\) (also a frequent LifeSite contributor). LifeSite was founded in 1997 by the Campaign Life Coalition, a Canadian anti-abortion campaign. Today the web portal is host to Canadian, US and World iterations, as well as offering a standard and a Catholic version. With a substantial part of its readership from the US, LifeSite describes itself as the ‘number one pro-life website on the Internet’ and a news site dedicated to issues of culture, life and family. It understands itself as a bulwark against the secularist ‘new world order’, which it regards as endangering the central tenets of Christian morality and natural law. Moreover, it is expressly connected to a wide range of pro-life and religious family organizations, lobby groups and grassroots movements, both in North America and internationally, for which its site serves as a platform for the setting up and dissemination of petitions.\(^6\) Considering its wide reach, its self-described connection to other anti-gender actors and its combination of news, blogs, podcasts and petitions, LifeSite offers a rich source for analysing and understanding anti-gender discourse ‘in action’.

**Contextualizing the rise of anti-gender movements**

Our reading of LifeSite rhetoric is situated in the transnational expansion of anti-gender discourse. While some of its ideas may certainly be traced to earlier conflicts and debates with specific, contextual components, the emerging field of critical anti-gender scholarship describes the anti-gender mobilization as a new form of global movement, which has proved capable of reaching new audiences.\(^7\) The concept ‘gender ideology’ was initially adopted as part of a Catholic counter strategy against the UN’s increasing emphasis on gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights since the mid-1990s. Already then, the very word ‘gender’ was seen to relativize biological differences between women and men and once incorporated
into national and supra-national policy and regulation, it was imagined to function as a ‘Trojan horse’, paving the way for a global normalization of abortion and homosexuality.\(^8\) In the field of development politics, well-connected and funded Christian organizations and networks have attempted to stall such tendencies by opposing abortion and LGBTQ rights, promoting instead ‘family values’.\(^9\) In addition to Catholic and Evangelical influences, the strengthened position of the Orthodox Church in combination with the Kremlin’s embrace of ‘traditional family values’ account for the increasing currency of ‘gender ideology’ critique in Russian public discourse.\(^10\) Moreover, Russian intellectuals and religious leaders have contributed to the establishment of transnational anti-gender networks with organizations such as the World Congress of Families. Thus, as a state actively promoting conservative values, Russia has often been praised in these contexts for being a forerunner to the forms of anti-gender rhetoric that circulate today.\(^11\)

Since the early to mid-2010s, anti-gender ideas have won a broader appeal also outside religious circles; they have been incorporated into the political programmes of nationalist populist, illiberal and extreme rightwing parties and movements, and in some countries they have even made their way into legislation and public policy (i.e. Brazil, Poland, Hungary and Russia). It is precisely the interconnections between different sites of power that set contemporary anti-gender mobilization apart from a narrower religious conservatism. In some regions, anti-gender movements have used anti-colonial rhetoric to argue that ‘gender ideology’ is being imposed onto non-western countries by imperialist forces through the UN, EU and foreign aid.\(^12\) Thus, the idea of ‘gender ideology’ has been portrayed as the common enemy for a wide range of religious and secular conservative movements, a symbolic glue, as Weronika Grzebalska, Eszter Kováts and Andrea Pető put it.\(^13\)

Importantly, anti-gender discourse should not be understood as merely oppositional. Rather, it is winning ground by promoting a coherent worldview with its own areas of alternative expertise and knowledge production.\(^14\) A common strategy of theirs is to question the scientific basis of gender equality politics, and to argue that gender equality harms women and children by forcing them to act against their innate nature.\(^15\) Anti-gender actors are increasingly using rights-based arguments (including the right to freedom of religion, free speech and human rights) to legitimate discrimination of non-heterosexual or transgender people.\(^16\) The focus on rights and policy also implies that anti-gender actors have come to direct much of their attention towards supranational institutions of which they often disapprove, but which they nonetheless regard as having strategic importance.

While within the critical scholarship on ‘gender ideology’, it has been widely argued that neoliberal policy, market solutions and socioeconomic inequalities have paved the way for the authoritarian turn on which anti-gender politics itself thrives,\(^17\) little attention has been paid to the role of corporations as key market actors, with extensive influence on political agendas and social relations. Yet, we argue, by focusing on the anti-gender critique of corporations, we can see precisely how and why ‘gender’ has become such a useful target for conservative and illiberal repudiations of late modern Western civilization, and better equip ourselves to address the double-bind that contemporary feminism faces.

**Which ideology, which ‘gender’?**

The concept of ‘gender ideology’ is arguably a confusing one. Borrowing an anthropological term, we can look upon it as an ‘emic’ concept, such that the principal concern
is with how the term is used by the anti-gender actors themselves. In such anti-gender rhetoric, it is deployed to describe how Western societies, as well as other societies within their sphere of influence, are permeated by the idea that differences between women and men can be explained and transformed by socially constructed meanings of gender. Consequently, revealing ‘gender’ as a morally and socially harmful construct and an unscientific, ideological misrepresentation of nature lies at the centre of anti-gender activities. In order to analyse how the figure of ‘gender ideology’ has become such a useful ‘tool’ for conservative and right-wing populist mobilizations, and to further flesh out what is meant by ‘gender’ and ‘ideology’ in anti-gender discourse, we draw on political discourse theory, primarily as formulated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.\(^{18}\)

In this sense, the ‘culture war’ in which anti-gender actors (and some of their opponents) see themselves as actively engaged can best be described as a hegemonic struggle, here defined as a ‘political practice that captures the making and breaking of political projects and discourse coalitions’. Such hegemonic processes are always supported by politically utilizable affects (including fear, rage or disgust) that are effective in mobilizing public support by ‘gripping’ subjects emotionally.\(^{19}\) Any successful hegemonic operation must furthermore manage to create chains of equivalence, by articulating a number of political demands as belonging to the same political struggle, united under an empty signifier that represents an ‘us’ against another (equally empty) signifier representing a ‘them’.\(^{20}\)

In anti-gender discourse, the ‘us’ coheres around a notion of ‘traditional family values’, while the ‘them’ – their political enemy – are understood as the embodiment of ‘gender ideology’. Precisely, here, around the signifier of ‘gender ideology’ various political demands are condensed. At the same time, the equivalential chain that results from the articulation of political demands is extended, encompassing issues that may not previously have been associated with conservative Christian values. It is this extension that makes the anti-gender discourse especially effective in creating the alliances and coalitions that account for its emergence as a ‘new’ political force at the national, regional and transnational levels.\(^{21}\) Importantly, as we shall see, this operation also entails attempts to dis-articulate some political issues (such as abortion and same-sex marriage) from discourses of human rights and discrimination, as well as re-articulating other elements from the established discourses on human rights to support their own cause (e.g. arguing that policies against gender discrimination in fact end up discriminating against Christians).\(^{22}\) In concrete practices, such articulations (dis-articulations, re-articulations) can be analysed empirically by a thorough observation of the ‘many, often seemingly trivial, mechanisms that influence the way in which a certain phenomenon is interpreted’ in a specific context.\(^{23}\)

Following this strand of theorization, we see ideology neither as a description of certain systems of meaning nor simply as an ‘epistemological’ issue of ‘false consciousness’ versus undistorted reality (as in classical Marxism), but rather, as Laclau defines it, referring to that which offers ‘discursive closure’; Laclau argues that the ‘ideological effect strictu sensu’ is ‘the belief that there is a particular social arrangement which can bring about the closure and transparency of the community’.\(^{24}\) From such a perspective, we can describe something as ideological if its contingent foundations are concealed. Analytically, this means that ‘the study of ideology involves theorizing the ways in
which contingency is made invisible; while ideological critique involves ways in which contingency can be made visible’. Moreover, the ideological ‘grip’ – the attachment to (and therefore sustenance of) ideology – has a strong affective dimension upheld by fantasmatic narratives about an ‘other’ that is seen as the ‘enemy’, which prevents ‘us’ from reaching ‘a finally complete and harmonious society’. The most obvious example of this would be the anti-semitic conspiracy theory in which ‘the Jew’ is seen as this obstruction or enemy figure. As Jason Glynos has argued, what this fantasy conceals is not simply the ‘facts’, rather ‘it conceals the immensely more troublesome fact that there is no plotting agency pulling the strings behind the scene’ – that there is no conspiracy.26

As the astute reader will have noticed, this definition differs significantly from the ‘emic’ definition of ideology found in our empirical material (the empty signifier of ‘gender ideology’). Ironically, as we shall see, the use of the term ‘ideology’ in ‘gender ideology’ is more or less identical to the classical Marxist understanding of ideology, only that the epistemological misrecognition at stake relates to the very idea of ‘gender’ as ideological since it refers to (aspects of) biological sex as ‘socially constructed’. Importantly, their struggle to define ‘gender’ in this way must be understood in relation to a variety of simultaneously existing and competing articulations of ‘gender’, including a range of different and sometimes mutually exclusive feminist articulations.

To be sure, since its introduction into feminist theory and politics, the concept of ‘gender’ has served as a tool for both re-interpreting and transforming social reality, as something which is and shall not be determined by biological ‘sex’. Nonetheless, the very conceptual division between biological sex and social gender remains contested within feminist thought and activism (i.e. where to draw the line between them and whether such a distinction even makes sense). Moreover, over the years ‘gender’ has become differently articulated into a wide range of political projects, including disparate phenomena such as neoliberal ‘postfeminism’ (where issues pertaining to gender are uncritically articulated with individual responsibility and competition), human rights advocacy projects (including the United Nations and women’s rights NGOs), queer activism and culture (emphasizing the fluid nature of gender, often inspired by post-structuralist feminist and queer theory), and, more recently, ‘gender critical’ radical feminism (also known as the ‘gender abolitionists’ who see the sexual divide as fundamental). Although this wide range of sometimes incompatible definitions is most often conflated in anti-gender discourse as part of the same overarching enemy, the diversity of meanings occasionally allows for alliances and discourse coalitions between anti-gender actors and certain strands of feminism.

**Corporate ‘gender-ideology’: Constructing an enemy**

How, then, is the idea of an expansive ‘gender ideology’ spurred by representations of the economic order? By no means a comprehensive overview, in the following we depart from LifeSite texts to sketch out what we see as key convergences between anti-gender rhetoric and the critique of global capitalism, more concretely the critique of the power of global corporations. By way of this overview, we identify four interrelated dimensions of LifeSite’s portrayal of corporations as essential players in imposing an elitist cultural and economic agenda imbued by ‘gender ideology’: i) the role of corporations in networks of global governance; ii) the forging of a capitalist work ethic; iii) the role of corporate
branding for the formation of consumer identities, and iv) corporate interests in relation to women’s reproductive lives.

**Corporate power, global governance and ‘gender ideology’ as an anti-democratic front**

The continuous neoliberal dispersal of the division between the public and the private spheres has resulted in a situation where politics is progressively carried out not by democratically elected assemblies, but by networked governance entities such as states, transnational institutions, non-governmental organizations and global corporations. The same observation is made by anti-gender thinkers, though in their view global governance structures work to effectively diffuse ‘gender ideology.’ According to Kuby, one of the anti-gender movement’s chief theorists, governance networks are unified by a common agenda: to undermine sexual norms in the name of anti-discrimination. Operating in a subtle but coordinated way, these composite powers are reconstructing humanity as such and while a democratic varnish remains, society is increasingly ruled by what she has influentially described as ‘soft totalitarianism’:

Although ordinary people don’t know the term yet, the whole society is being ‘gendered.’ Like every utopian ideology, this one intends to create a new human being that it designs in accord with its own wishes. […] There is basic democratic order but there are uncontrol-lable powers that exert their will over voters and their elected representatives: the media and the financial oligarchy.

While according to her, ‘ordinary people’ are still unaware of the effects, those who stand in the way of these restructuring agendas drawn up by nebulous networks have seen their freedom dramatically curtailed, such as Christians who are criminalized and pathologized as ‘homophobic.’ Thus, according to this perspective, the imperative for citizens as well as elected political leaders to subscribe to specific values, beyond democratic contestation, represents a totalitarian turn. In response, Christians are strategically placed to reveal and resist the evolving transformation of society. Listing their guiding principles on its webpage, LifeSite describes the key role of Christian values in what they see as a profound international conflict:

*LifeSiteNews.com’s* writers and its founders have come to understand that respect for life and family are endangered by an international conflict. That conflict is between radically opposed views of the worth and dignity of every human life and of family life and community. It has been caused by secularists attempting to eliminate Christian morality and natural law principles which are seen as the primary obstacles to implementing their new world order.

The two sides of this conflict are understood to be asymmetrical, with the principle of dignity, as *LifeSite* defines it, of human and family life severely threatened. Here, the ‘new world order’ pursued by secular forces is said to be diametrically opposed to the version of Christian morality which *LifeSite* defends, and to their understanding of principles of ‘natural law’. Their quest to realize this new ungodly and unnatural world order is allegedly backed by a tightly knit network, whose members have access to unlimited financial resources:
After all, international institutions like the UN and the EU – with their sub-agencies like the Fundamental Rights Agency and European Institute for Gender Equality – and national governments, with the superpower U.S. leading the way, as well as global corporations like Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook, and global NGOs like IPPF and ILGA, to name but a few, all with billions of dollars at their disposal, are on the side of the gender identity activists in this cultural war.\(^{30}\)

In this conspiracy (or ‘culture war’), global corporations are depicted as problematic both in their role as funders of organizations that propagate ‘gender ideology’ as well as in their role as direct producers of this ‘ideology’. As funders, they largely act through their foundations, having the financial power to assure that ‘gender ideology’ is widely disseminated. Among the foundations frequently represented as strongholds for ‘gender ideology’ are the Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundation and the Rockefeller foundation. The founder of Open Society, the Hungarian born philanthropist George Soros – an ‘umbrella enemy figure’ for far-right political actors who see themselves as engaging in a ‘cultural counter revolution’ in Hungary and elsewhere\(^{31}\) – has been specifically targeted for promoting ‘gender ideology’. For example, LifeSite reported in the run-up to the Women’s March on Washington after Donald Trump’s electoral victory in 2016 that ‘more than a quarter of the groups listed as “partners” on the Women’s March on Washington website are funded by Soros’\(^{32}\)

On a more general note, the chief-editor of LifeSite, John-Henry Westen, argues that while in the past the influence and pressure of foundations has mainly concerned developing countries with a strong need for financial support, thus forcing them to comply with the conditions dictated by the funders – ‘gender ideology’ disguised as human rights – he now detects a ‘new front’ emerging within developed countries:

> Of late however we have seen use of these same economic pressure tactics on a national level. In the United States, large corporations have effectively usurped democracy by strong-arming elected officials into betraying the people they represent with the threat of financial ruin.\(^{33}\)

In the name of anti-discrimination, corporations are now said to be in a position to exert their economic power to upend decisions made by democratically elected representatives, imposing their values on citizens and voters. Another LifeSite commenter draws an analogy between anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people (that end up discriminating against Christians) with the Jim Crow laws of racial segregation in the Southern states of the U.S.

As well as tilting the playing field to the advantage of ‘gender ideology’ – for example, by sponsoring LGBTQ and planned parenthood organizations, so as to make them better financially equipped both to spread their message and to carry out their daily activities – corporations are condemned for their direct policy interventions on behalf of ‘the gay lobby’. An oft-mentioned and heavily criticized case is when, in 2015, 379 corporations and employer organizations urged the US Supreme Court to support same-sex marriage on the grounds that legal marriage equality would ease administrative burdens and improve the morale and productivity of all their employees.\(^{34}\)

Thus, according to LifeSite and other such organizations, discourses of antidiscrimination and gender equality serve to induce global governance structures with a moral justification. It is the task of anti-gender exponents to expose how these values result in suppressing dissenting voices, whether these are Christians, political leaders, or members of the general public who have no interest in being transformed and ‘gendered’.
Crucially, by depicting global corporations and foundations as acting in tandem with, and offering endless financial support to, feminists and LGBTQ activists, the latter are re-described as part of an elitist and undemocratic project. On the other side of this political frontier are ‘ordinary’ people and their democratic representatives who, against the dictates of political and economic powers, attempt to defend their autonomy as ‘natural’, heterosexual masculine or feminine beings.

**Corporate work ethic and the masculinist organization of labour as a threat to ‘family values’**

*LifeSite* articles also describe how labour market relations are threatening so-called ‘natural’ heterosexual femininity and masculinity. As well as emphasizing how corporations and networks of global governance actively advance the ‘gender ideology’ agenda, anti-gender rhetoric describes the corporate economy as being fundamentally predicated on the wrong axiological foundations. Here, focus is placed on how corporations further a ‘masculinist’ and ‘politically correct’ work ethic imposed on male and female workers alike through, on the one hand, gender equality policies and, on the other, disciplinary measures that force employees to subscribe to specific liberal values. As far as the former is concerned, a productionist norm (which operates under the principles of gender equality and equal opportunities) is said to prevail, having harmful consequences for women and by extension children, as well as for the institution of the heterosexual nuclear family, more generally. According to this logic, the strong work ethic indicative of the present neoliberal formation elevates paid labour to a pre-eminent moral position, while unpaid care work becomes marginalized and under-valued. For anti-gender exponents this implies that women are compelled to repress their true femininity, to opt out of motherhood and to become reliant on contraceptives and abortion. In Kuby’s view, feminism has been central in establishing this order, resulting not only in women being forced to choose a full-time career over motherhood but moreover in a general hostility shown by women towards men as they begin to compete within the ‘male arena’:

The radical feminist agenda had been established: Rejection of sexual morality, rejection of marriage, motherhood, and family, abortion as a woman’s ‘human right’, the career woman as the only role model, and a power struggle against men.35

Feminists may be portrayed as key actors in this process. Nonetheless, they are seen as intervening in the already established relation between the state and the market, both of which have a vested interest in promoting productivity. The upshot of this alliance is the devaluation and systemic disregard for reproductive care work. In the posts at *LifeSite*, such political interference with women’s choice to be full-time mothers – or their choice to work part-time in order to be more available for their children – is harshly criticized. On several occasions the European Union is rebuked for regarding unequal employment rates between men and women as ‘a challenge’ in countries such as the UK and Germany.36 In the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election, Donald Trump was praised for his family-friendly policies that would make it easier for mothers to stay at home. The fact that married same-sex couples would also benefit from Trump’s tax credit schedule, however, was deemed ‘controversial’. Meanwhile Hillary Clinton’s promise to make preschool universally accessible for 4-year-olds was
rejected for offering ‘no incentives for stay-at-home parents’, and therefore was adjudged to be harmful to children: ‘Multiple studies have found that, while educational gains fade out, characteristic traits such as increased aggression linger’. Quoting Dr. Allan C. Carson from the Howard Centre for Family, Religion and Society, they add that ‘the Democrats, under the influence of the feminist bloc, don’t want to give any recognition to stay at home parenting, because they fear – rightly so – that women may actually like it’.³⁷

The imposition of a specific work ethic is not limited to a critique of a masculinist norm prioritizing productive labour over care work; corporations are also depicted as gatekeepers to the labour market. They have the power to exclude those who do not display the right set of attitudes and convictions. A LifeSite blog post lists examples from all kinds of sectors in which people have been ‘fined’ while ‘some lose their jobs and livelihoods for criticising homosexuality or homosexual “marriage”’.³⁸ In their roles as employers, corporations are described as surveilling and evaluating their present and potential employees through the lens of ‘gender ideology’, implying that distinctions and rewards are based on strict political adherence to this ideology, rather than on actual performance and productivity. Thus, opposing ‘gender ideology’ is said to come at a high price of risking one’s own position in the labour market and thereby jeopardizing one’s own livelihood. Taken together, the masculinist work ethic and the imposition of ‘political correctness’ in work culture is seen as a threat to the autonomy of the family, which is denied its right to organize its productive and reproductive labour in accordance with its own wishes and needs, as well as being an infringement on the freedom of employees not to take part in the further normalization of homosexuality. Just as we had shown in the previous section, economic interests are not necessarily seen as primary in the organization of labour relations. Rather, these are adapted in accordance with political and cultural precepts, implying that corporate business practices are being shaped by feminist and queer interests, which are then reinforced as a result of being further integrated into profit making strategies.

**Branding, subjectivity and the normalization of homosexuality**

Because of their unique ability for mass-communication, corporations are also seen as key actors in the formation of cultural ideals. Commercials and other marketing strategies are targeted for disseminating anti-discrimination messages to ‘common people’, thereby encouraging – especially the young – to move away from ‘traditional values’. According to anti-gender actors, messages that normalize or even romanticize alternative lifestyles, non-normative gender expressions and family constellations, clearly reflect that these companies are promoting a homosexual agenda, thus firmly choosing sides in the ‘cultural war’.

In the run-up to the 2012 referendum on the legal definition of marriage in the constitution of the state of Minnesota (US), LifeSite reported that the Minnesota-based food company General Mills had publicly announced their opposition against restricting the definition of marriage to heterosexual couples. The company’s stance was the object of comment by Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, who argued that the definition of marriage ‘as the union between one man and one woman is profoundly in the common good, and it is especially important for children’. By expressing their support for same-sex marriage, then, General Mills had ‘effectively declared war on its customers’, that is, the very same
families who are buying their products: ‘It’s particularly dumb for a big corporation that makes billions selling cereal to the very people they just opposed’. General Mills was also criticized by John Helmberger, Chairman of the Minnesota for Marriage Campaign, who argued that not only was he disappointed that General Mills had ‘decided to play PC-politics by pandering to a small but powerful interest group that is bent on redefinition of marriage, the core institution of society’, but also for risking the ‘care and well-being of the next generation’. According to such views, corporations are willing to sacrifice the trust and well-being of families and children, as well as their market position and sales, in order to satisfy a minority of the population.

Another corporation to have been subject to scrutiny by LifeSite and other conservative actors for promoting ‘gender ideology’ is Coca-Cola. Under the title ‘Multilingual Coke ad featuring a gay couple part of corporate campaign to normalize homosexuality’, LifeSite reported on criticisms targeting an advert shown during the Super Bowl. Quoting Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality – an organization that describes itself as ‘a non-partisan, non-profit group dedicated to exposing the homosexual-bisexual-transgender activist agenda’ – LifeSite writes that ‘Coke’s Super Bowl ad is only the latest step in the escalating government-corporate campaign to normalize homosexuality in the culture’. They go on to argue that ‘Americans are being conditioned to accept sexual perversion as normal and good, and there is some big corporate money behind it’. This advert, the same representative says, means that families cannot ‘watch the Super Bowl anymore without having their faith undermined’.

In these examples corporations, in alliance with the government, are seen to be running the errands of an LGBTQ movement determined to have their identities, relations and family arrangements confirmed by society at large. As a result, the allegedly negative impact on children growing up in these families is concealed, and children are encouraged to think that homosexuality is normal (and may end up adopting such identities themselves). Instead of depicting homosexuality as the real problem, homophobia is wrongfully represented as backwards and intolerant. Thus, anti-gender interventions attempt to reveal how the imperative of tolerance is in fact an act of discrimination that works to alienate families and Christians from the arenas where the normalization is taking place. The motives for corporations to side with ‘the gay lobby’ in the ‘culture war’ are not further elaborated upon, beyond the alleged strong influence of these groups. Through such interventions, the rhetoric of LifeSite reinstalls the nuclear heterosexual family as the prerequisite for the wellbeing of the majority and specifically for children.

**Corporate ‘gender ideology’ as damaging women’s reproductive lives**

Apart from the generally adverse effects of the present organization of the labour market, the work ethic and branding strategies, anti-gender advocates consider the business activities of some corporations as dependent on the success of ‘gender ideology’. Among those singled out as particularly damaging are pharmaceutical companies involved with contraceptives and abortion, the bio-tech industry, gender affirmation therapies, and assisted reproduction. For instance, Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, founder of the Ruth Institute is quoted:
For a variety of reasons, ‘big business is completely at peace with the entire Sexual Revolution. Corporations support Planned Parenthood and sponsor gay pride events’. For example, the ‘relative instability of marriage also benefits employers. Women can’t count on their husbands to provide for them financially for a lifetime’ and therefore emphasizes careers.41

Under the influence of the ‘sexual revolution’ the moral fabric of society is said to be in a state of decline and disintegration.

An obvious target of anti-gender criticism is the ‘abortion industry’. In one of the frequent anti-abortion texts on LifeSite, Jonathon van Maren interviews Carol Everett, a previous-abortion-worker-gone-pro-life-activist. Everett is known in pro-life circles for her book Blood Money: Getting Rich off a Woman’s Right to Choose. In the interview, she speaks about how the US abortion industry is run by misguided ‘do-gooders’ (often women traumatized by their own abortions) at the bottom of the organization but mainly driven by profit hungry entrepreneurs at the top. The industry is condemned for selling abortions on commission through telemarketing techniques, and for deliberately handing out contraceptives such as condoms and birth-control pills with low doses of hormones together with inadequate instructions on how to use them, with the purpose of increasing profits. The organization Planned Parenthood is criticized for being complicit with these practices by offering abortion services and promoting sexual education in schools. Apparently combining abortion services with sexual education for young children, they are denounced for hypocritically promoting sexual practices, leading to unplanned pregnancies and abortion.42 Thus, under the feminist banner of women’s rights to choose, their physical and psychological health is cynically undermined by an industry that thrives on ‘feticide’.

On similar grounds, another LifeSite blogger, Wesley J. Smith, criticizes the fertility industry for being more interested in making money than helping the childless, at the expense of women and children. ‘Big Fertility’, he writes, ‘is no different than Big Oil, Big Pharma, Big Biotech and Big Defense’. He condemns the industry for its ever-expanding commercialization of reproductive technologies, and reproductive tissue (eggs, sperm, embryos) and labour (surrogacy) through advertising campaigns, and lobbying ‘like any other industry’. The victims of this industry, he continues, are the paid egg-donors who ‘have had their health and fertility destroyed selling eggs’ and the surrogate mothers who become de-humanized and have the children they carry taken away, even if they have formed a bond with them. Also, women undergoing fertility treatments, in order to become pregnant with their own children, are described as victims, due to intensive medication, psychological vulnerability and low success rates.43 Thus, the argument goes, under the pretext of expanding individual freedom, reproductive choices and autonomy, as well as the profits of industries, which are themselves portrayed as intertwined with ‘gender ideology’, are described as weakening the nuclear family and, in particular, exacerbating the suffering of women whose bodies are exploited; ‘details’ that the feminist narrative is meant to conceal.

**Corporate feminism or corporate ‘gender ideology’: de-politicizing and repoliticizing ‘gender’**

As this overview of LifeSite’s argumentation has shown, the anti-gender critique is intertwined with a critique of corporate power, neoliberalism and capitalist relations of
production, reproduction and consumption. While we agree with Graff that the current rise of the Global Right, generally construed, and the resistance against ‘gender’, more specifically, cannot be solely explained by previous decades of neoliberal hegemony, following thinkers such as Wendy Brown and Chantal Mouffe we acknowledge that it has certainly paved their way. \(^{14}\) Neoliberal politics have become hegemonized through the implementation of ‘the rule of the market – deregulation, privatization, fiscal austerity – and limiting the role of the state to the protection of property rights, free market and free trade’. \(^{45}\) By introducing an entire worldview of the individual and her role in society, it has also constituted a new political rationality, that is, a particular form of reason. \(^{46}\) As competitiveness is turned into the overarching legitimizing principle, neoliberal rationality replaces political rule by management and economic goals and thereby, democratic citizenship is effectively de-politicized \(^{47}\) – including political claims for gender equality and sexual liberation.

In relation to issues of gender equality, feminist scholars have long warned about the de-politicizing effects of neoliberal articulations of gender equality. Angela McRobbie, for instance, has insisted that the neoliberalization of society and politics has led to a new gender regime, a ‘female individualization’ that rather ‘than stressing collectivity or the concerns of women per se […] replaces [“true”, or substantial] feminism with competition, ambition, meritocracy, and the rise of the “alpha girl” – a figure embraced by corporate culture, including its advertisement campaigns and CSR initiatives.’ \(^{48}\) Within this vein, feminist theorists have also drawn attention to the ways in which notions of gender equality and women’s empowerment have come to underpin and legitimize corporate profit accumulation while gender equality is construed as a business case and ‘smart economics’. Through market-based solutions, women are to ensure their own economic development, at the same time contributing to corporate growth in line with a win-win rationale. Here, declared commitments to gender equality coincide with the increasing normalization of inequalities as the prioritized principle of competitiveness is generalized across an ever-wider spectrum of relations. \(^{49}\)

These de-politicizing measures, we argue, have created a number of tensions and contradictions between feminism as an emancipatory and empowering project and gender equality implementation as a form of neoliberal governance now being resisted and re-politicized by anti-gender actors, cast as impeding the freedoms of citizens in general and women in particular. By seeking to restore ‘traditional family values’, these movements frame their politics as an anti-establishment project, offering a solution in line both with the best interests of the nation and of its people, but also as one that give voice to those who feel alienated by ‘elite feminism’ and progressive queer and feminist politics. In this endeavour, anti-gender politics operates by disarticulating gender equality from key modern political values such as democracy, equality and freedom – values which had already been appropriated and re-signified to match those capitalist logics embedded within the neoliberal rationality. \(^{50}\)

Thus, in response to the expansion of gender mainstreaming within international institutions, national government bodies and corporations as well as across global governance networks, anti-gender actors point to a democratic deficit in terms of both content and form. As gender equality (and to a lesser extent, LGBTQ rights) is widely adopted as a consensus value and largely disseminated through neoliberal governance structures, these issues are shielded from political conflicts and debates, and thus their implementation is guarded from democratic accountability. Hence, according to the anti-gender critique, the
democratic right to be against ‘gender’ and LGBTQ rights is suppressed and the ‘soft totalitarianism’ of the global economic, political and cultural networks pursuing the politics of ‘gender ideology’ works in the interests of a secluded minority.

In this sense, anti-gender critique both resonates with and opposes the longstanding discussions in feminist theory and politics about how the distinction between production and reproduction is thoroughly implicated with the devaluation of women’s paid and unpaid labour as key to profit accumulation. In contemporary economic restructuring, the neglect of the very conditions for care work has been seen to result in a crisis of social reproduction: women find themselves obliged to compensate for increasing labour market precariousness and cuts in social spending. But whereas the feminist critique calls for an alternative ethics that prioritizes care for others as well as for the planet’s resources, anti-gender critique does not seem to have a problem with the capitalist work ethic as such, so long as it is not forced upon women. Adopting an essentialist understanding of masculinity and femininity, their main preoccupation remains to safeguard women’s ‘natural’ inclination to motherhood, thus avoiding the conflict between care work and productive work that turns abortion into an option and a need. Here, the anti-gender narrative represents a fundamental disarticulation of feminist connections between gender relations, labour rights and the conditions for social reproduction, which, in anti-gender discourse, are essentially to be met by the male breadwinner model.

Rather than seeking to abolish capitalism as such, anti-gender critique demands the readjustment of capitalism to ‘traditional values’, in which the family – not the individual – is the bearer of freedom and democratic rights. As Brown has argued, this is perfectly compatible with the neoliberal mission to expand freedom by ‘designating more and more activity as private, hence appropriately unregulated and appropriately shielded from democratic norms’. As ‘family values’ have made a political comeback, then, anti-gender criticism of corporate power is not primarily (if at all) aimed at the economic inequalities produced by neoliberal politics or at poor working conditions, but rather at the ways in which they perceive political interventions by corporations, like those of the state, to restrict the freedom and integrity of ‘the family’. Thus, it is an intervention to safeguard families from the invasive project of political elites, to grant the right to choose how to organize their lives, free from the coercive values of gender equality, tolerance and anti-discrimination.

This argument is also extended to the very essence of the individual, which is seen as the prime target of ‘gender ideology’ and ‘the gay lobby’: backed by global corporations and their marketing branches, ideals of ‘non-traditional’ gender identities, expressions and practices as well as approving representations of homosexual relationships are being widely circulated. Whereas such marketing tactics have partly been understood as corporate co-optation and the commercialization of demands for thorough social transformations, in anti-gender critique these articulations are seen as core pillars of the ‘culture war’, which in line with this view implies that those who do not engage in the reformation of their inner selves or embrace homosexuality as normal and acceptable are castigated as ‘backwards’. Thus, in the so-called culture war, alliances of powerful actors seek to ‘gender’ everyone, that is, to make people falsely understand their own gender and sexual identities as socially constructed rather than biologically (and religiously) determined. As such, the threat they see operates at the level of the very psychic core of the self, encouraging the individual to normalize and explore different kinds of ‘unnatural’ (and ungodly) gender expressions and sexualities. In this way, the anti-gender logic constructs an enemy figure, potentially even more politically effective than other
external threats such as ‘the immigrant’, since it is literally to be found everywhere including within the family or the individuals themselves.55

Furthermore, anti-gender critique represents a powerful disarticulation of the feminist and human rights linkage between gender equality and reproductive autonomy, manifested in their alleged defence of women’s psychological and physical wellbeing against the ruthless ‘abortion industry’, which, in collusion with feminists, legitimize their profit accumulation with reference to women’s free choice. Also, in this regard, we detect certain overlaps with feminist theory and politics, which for a long time has pointed to the problems of the medicalization of women’s bodies and the problem of privatized reproductive healthcare. Indeed, the notion of ‘choice’ has not only served the purpose for feminist mobilization for safe and legal abortion – a key target of anti-gender critique – but has also been subjected to ample intra-feminist critique for having been defined (also by some feminists) in terms of self-realization and individual identity. Another issue that has been particularly problematic in states without universal healthcare is that it does not imply any obligation for the state to provide access to abortion or assisted reproduction, making people in need of reproductive care dependent on profit-making companies.56 As has been pointed out, ‘choice’ makes little sense without the economic and social means to adequately raise children; the right to reproduce, regardless of class, race, sexuality and family form, is of equal importance as the right to terminate a pregnancy.57

As these strands of feminist critique go largely unheard by governments and the mainstream media, the overlapping anti-gender critique of the fertility industry, choice discourse, and the difficulty to combine wage work and childcare risk seeming like attractive alternatives for those who feel alienated by neoliberal feminism. Additionally, it opens up for ‘unholy alliances’ between some versions of feminism and anti-gender actors. Such ‘discourse coalitions’ are not least prevalent in LifeSite’s numerous publications on transgender issues, where self-identified ‘gender critical’ feminists of different political leanings are cited and/or supported; one article, for example, reports specifically on a case where conservatives and liberals (the latter represented by lesbian and radical feminists) ‘are making a common cause of saving boys and girls from the trans ideology’.58 LifeSite has also published radical feminist criticisms of the profit-driven surrogacy industry, explicitly pointing out neoliberalism as the root of the problem.59 In other words, although the dominant status of neoliberal choice discourse to reproduction resonates with the legal right to abortion, contraception and fertility services, these have come at the expense of intersectional, anti-racist and anti-capitalist approaches. As a consequence, its deficits (e.g. racial and class inequalities, profit-driven fertility industry) have become easy political targets for anti-gender actors, whose agenda instead is ultimately to undermine reproductive autonomy altogether.

**Concluding discussion: between deficient friendships and alternative politics**

Although the recent upsurge in anti-gender mobilizations cannot be reduced to previous modes of ‘neoliberal conservatism’ (such as the politics of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and George W Bush), a crucial lesson to learn from these is that there is no intrinsic contradiction between social conservatism and a liberal market economy.60 Nor are liberal-democratic values such as gender equality and sexual rights and freedoms to
be seen as part of an inevitable progression towards an expanding global modernity. In the wake of the depoliticizing mainstreaming of gender equality and to a certain extent LGBTQ rights, how can we understand that it is the anti-gender re-politicization currently winning ground, rather than feminist ones? In discussions about the alleged co-optation of feminism, it is often argued that feminists have failed to produce an adequate critique of neoliberalism, not least with regards to how their demands may be reconciled with neoliberal flexibilization and consumerism. In this vein, Nancy Fraser argues that feminist valorizations of waged labour has ‘provided a key ingredient’ in legitimizing neoliberalism and capitalist value accumulation, while Catherine Rottenberg has suggested that the emergence of a neoliberal feminism – essentially conveying self-responsibilization in relation to both market demands and social reproduction – is ‘needed’ to strengthen the grip of neoliberal rationality.61

The problem, as we see it, is not foremost the lack of progressive feminist and queer critique, but rather that, unlike vague endorsements of equal opportunities, it cannot extensively be taken into account without a thorough transformation of existing capitalist relations. Anti-gender ideas, on the contrary, are not affected by a corresponding incompatibility-issue. To the extent that these movements have flourished in the wake of economic crises and increasing precarity – with some regimes having implemented family-oriented social benefits (e.g. Hungary and Poland) – it seems like they do not need to present any thoroughgoing alternatives to the economic world order to win broad appeal. Instead, their agenda is perfectly compatible with neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategies, which concomitantly have led to worsening conditions for the working class. What makes their anti-corporate rhetoric politically effective is its place in an elaborated anti-establishment narrative, in which feminist and queer politics is represented as complicit with, and economically supported by, transnational elites. Rather than being anti-capitalist per se, it is a critique that makes a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ capital; it does nothing to offer a recasting of market relations as the site for liberation, which is instead located to the private sphere of the heterosexual family.

Against the backdrop of the apparent anti-gender momentum, the corporate purveyors of ‘progress’, ‘pluralism’ and ‘tolerance’ as standing against homophobia and conservative gender ideals might appear as comforting or even hopeful. Yet, to see corporations as potential allies, albeit strategically, comes with the risk of losing one’s own vision. Here, we make a parallel to Brown’s assessment of the left’s tendency, rather than clearly formulating and advancing its own political project, to cling defensively to liberal values and institutions that are being dismantled by neoliberal restructuring: ‘if we can’t have socialism, at least we should preserve welfare state capitalism’.62 As the kind of tolerant/progressive neoliberalism that embraces equality is being challenged by illiberal, authoritarian movements, what may prevent a repetition of the same pattern: if we can’t have welfare state capitalism, then at least let us have pinkwashed neoliberal capitalism?

While some feminist values, like other emancipatory ideals, may be useful for neoliberal legitimacy building, it seems mistaken to think that capitalism, in its neoliberal or in any other form, specifically needs feminism63: in another political context, conservative articulations of the family and ‘human dignity’ might constitute just as useful extra-economic values. What seems important to reckon with here is that the mainstream and neoliberal depoliticization of ‘gender’ has opened up for a conservative repoliticization of the concept, such that it now serves to consolidate and unite a variety of conservative
groups. The common enemy of ‘gender ideology’ makes possible the articulation of an anti-establishment political project in opposition with ‘global elites’ – which, as we see it, 
explansthe ideological ‘grip’ of anti-gender discourse. As such, their attempts to disclose ‘gender’ as ‘ideological’ and serving a cultural, political and economic elite, responds, if 
only at the level of rhetoric, to a set of democratic deficits and structural inequalities 
cased by decades of neoliberal governance. Anti-gender mobilization thus offers a 
picular political response to the de-democratizing effects of corporate power and 
noliberal global governance, namely the restoration of stable – and ‘natural’ – categories 
of masculinity and femininity, which are seen as the bedrock of society and of human 
civilization. This, they argue, can only be done by returning power to ordinary citizens 
from global elites. On the one hand, this may explain its broader appeal and account for 
how the issue of ‘gender’ has begun to function as a ‘symbolic glue’ bringing together 
disparate political elements. On the other hand, this is also where we identify the ‘cracks’ 
and weaknesses of anti-gender discourse. What are these weaknesses? First, their 
repeated focus on cultural and moral issues implies that the issues of economic inequalities 
and realms for democratic influence are consistently reduced to and seen as auxiliary 
to the determining cultural ‘gender’ agenda. Thus, while the scope of the critique appears 
to include an array of political and economic inequalities that might find a broader 
appeal, the scope of the answer is largely limited to the ‘laws of nature’ and Christian 
morality, to which both democratic and economic issues remain secondary. Second, the 
‘underdog’ position, which anti-gender actors tend to claim vis-à-vis feminists and the 
‘gay lobby’ who allegedly direct the ‘new world order’, is contingent upon its particular 
notion of ideology where constituting the very cause for present grievances is the 
existence of a conspiracy that must be fully revealed. Although this type of coherent 
narrative accounts for the ideological grip of anti-gender discourse, it remains also its 
most vulnerable point; the challenge for anti-gender actors is to keep maintaining it as a 
(sufficiently) coherent worldview. As a consequence, withholding critical engagements 
with neoliberal articulations of women’s liberation and LGBTQ-rights in the name of 
unity against the larger anti-gender threat will likely not be an effective strategy to 
counter the anti-gender anti-establishment narrative. Instead, a more effective strategy 
for feminist and queer politics would need to acknowledge precisely the weaknesses of 
noliberal governance that anti-gender politics offer a response to, including the democ-
tratic deficit and what Fraser has referred to as the ‘crisis of care’.

The double-bind by which feminism today is confronted essentially oscillates between 
two key issues in feminist theory and politics: production and reproduction, according to 
which the first is appropriated by a (pseudo)feminist neoliberal narrative of women’s 
empowerment while the second is claimed as the designated role for women in the 
‘natural’ division of labour within the heterosexual family. The challenge for progressive 
feminism at this particular junction, we argue, is simultaneously to respond to both 
noliberal lip-service and anti-gender hostility, so that the critique of one ‘enemy’ is not 
undermined by the logic of the other. In light of our analysis, this challenge consists in 
simultaneously formulating alternatives to the responses to existing inequalities offered 
by neoliberalism and conservative anti-gender movements. For example, if neoliberal-
ism’s answer to gender inequality is women’s equal participation in productive labour 
and the anti-gender solution consists of revaluing women’s reproductive labour within 
the frame of the natural and godly order, the challenge for feminist critique is to
demonstrate how its alternatives differ from both. In this complex political landscape, it seems that a viable feminist response would be to insist on redirecting anti-establishment sentiments towards the economic system and its elites – to which well-funded, conservative anti-gender actors also belong. This would mean concurrently declining ‘friendship’ with corporate actors and recasting ‘enmity of opinion’ in relation to both of these forces, whose common trait is that they thrive off societal hierarchies, making the prospect of equality all the more distant.

Notes

1. For another recent discussion of this ‘double bind’, see Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya and Nancy Fraser, Feminism for the 99% (London and New York: Verso, 2019).
16. Mos, op. cit., Ref. 9; Sanders op. cit., Ref. 9.
29. Information about LifeSite, op. cit., Ref. 6.
35. Kuby op. cit., Ref. 5, p. 35.
45. Mouffe op. cit., Ref. 22, pp. 11–12.
55. Gunnarsson Payne, op. cit., Ref. 7.
58. Austin Ruse, ‘Lesbian Feminists Join Conservative Think-Tank to Protect Kids from Transgenderism: Conservatives and Liberals are making common Cause on Saving


64. While the empirical example that we analyse here, *LifeSite*, presumably has its devoted audience for whom anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ rights and biologically determined differences between women and men lay closest to their heart, to the extent that anti-gender discourse is attracting new audiences by linking their critique to a broader spectrum of issues, it is arguably at these linkages that opportunities for interruption seem most promising.


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