

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## WORKSHOP & SPECIAL ISSUE

### The Rise of Anti-gender and Anti-feminism Discourses in International Politics and Feminist Responses

#### **Scope:**

In recent years, there has been a noticeable surge in anti-gender and anti-feminist discourses in international politics. Politicians, policymakers, and diverse societal actors in various countries challenge or reject feminist ideas and gender-related concepts, as well as support policy changes that erode the structures and institutions that have been instrumental in upholding women's rights, promoting gender equality, and protecting the rights of LGBTQ people. The special issue seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of these discourses, examining their origins, implications, and potential impacts on domestic, regional, and international levels. Additionally, it aims to identify strategies and opportunities for feminist resistance and advocacy in the face of the backlash.

#### **Background:**

With the multiplying global divisions around feminism and gender equality in recent years, pro- and anti-gender equality discourses play an increasingly meaningful role in national and international “politics of belonging” (Yuval-Davis 2006). A growing number of states incorporate pro-gender equality principles not only into their domestic agendas but also into their foreign policies. Many international organizations—from the United Nations to the World Bank—institutionalize and mainstream gender equality discourses, weaving them into the fabric of international development strategies. At the same time, nationally and internationally a diverse array of political actors contests these normative changes.

Authoritarian states, such as Russia, act as “normative antipreneurs,” actively resisting the assimilation of pro-gender equality norms and feminist concepts, not only within their borders but also on the international stage (Edenborg 2023, Voss 2019). In many democracies, norms tied to anti-feminism and patriarchy – homophobia, transphobia, and anti-abortion stances – are experiencing a resurgence, closely intertwined with the rise of far-right ideologies (Kuhar & Paternotte 2017). Various transnational movements actively challenge same-sex marriage, sex education, and other phenomena they perceive as dangerous manifestations of “gender ideologies” (Harsin 2018, Rothermel 2020). Populist politicians further exploit these sentiments during election campaigns, capitalizing on criticism of feminist and gender equality movements (Avelar et al. 2022, Junn 2017, Vučković Juroš et al. 2020). Moreover, by allowing the convergence of agendas between conservative actors in the religious and political fields, the anti-gender discourses function as a “symbolic glue,” giving ideological binding to reactionary initiatives and facilitating systems of alliances (Kováts & Pöim, 2015). For instance, right-wing political parties like Poland's Law and Justice Party and Hungary's Fidesz-KDNP coalition are actively changing legal frameworks and social policies, effectively dismantling the structures and institutions that have been instrumental in upholding women's rights (Dietze & Roth 2020).

This special issue aims to explore the sources and implications of the rise of anti-feminist and anti-gender discourses in international politics, as well as to delve into national and transnational strategies for feminist resistance and advocacy. We want to tackle three interrelated questions. Firstly, how do the anti-gender and anti-feminist discourses emerge and evolve? Secondly, how do these discourses travel across different socio-political landscapes and influence international cooperation on issues related to gender equality? Finally, how do pro-feminist and pro-gender activists navigate the complexities of countering far-right ideologies while simultaneously advocating for gender equality and social progress? Through critical reflection and interdisciplinary dialogue, this special issue will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between gender politics, international dynamics, and the ongoing struggle for gender equality.

Avelar, L., Cabrera, P. M., Goulart, M., & Melo, J. (2022) 'Womanhood in dispute: The impact of feminist and counter-feminist movements on the actions of congresswomen in Brazil', in Lima, V., Pannain, R. N., & Martins, G. P. (eds.) *The Consequences of Brazilian Social Movements in Historical Perspective* (London, Routledge).

Edenborg, E. (2023). Anti-gender politics as discourse coalitions: Russia's domestic and international promotion of "traditional values". *Problems of Post-communism*, 70(2), 175-184.

Harsin, J. (2018). Post-truth populism: The French anti-gender theory movement and cross-cultural similarities. *Communication Culture & Critique*, 11(1), 35-52.

Kováts, Eszter & Põim, Maari (2015). *Gender as symbolic glue. The position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilizations in Europe*; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, FEPS.

Kuhar, R., & Paternotte, D. (Eds.). (2017). *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against equality*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Junn, J. (2017). The Trump majority: White womanhood and the making of female voters in the US. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 5(2), 343-352.

Rothermel, A. K. (2020). Global-local dynamics in anti-feminist discourses: An analysis of Indian, Russian and US online communities. *International affairs*, 96(5), 1367-1385.

Voss, M. J. (2019) 'Contesting "Family" at the United Nations Human Rights Council', *Religion and Human Rights*, 14.

Vučković Juroš, T., Dobrotić, I. & Flego, S. (2020) 'The Rise of the Anti-Gender Movement in Croatia and the 2013 Marriage Referendum', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72, 9.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of prejudice*, 40(3), 197-214.

## **We Welcome:**

We encourage scholars from diverse academic disciplines and methodological approaches to contribute their research to this special issue. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Comparative analyses of anti-gender discourses in different countries;

- Examination of transnational anti-gender strategies
- Analysis of anti-gender activism in international governance arenas (such as WCF, Ordo Iuris, Citizengo and others)
- The intersections of anti-gender discourses with other socio-political movements;
- The role of far right political parties in disseminating anti-gender strategies;
- Case studies of political campaigns or policy initiatives centred around anti-gender sentiments;
- The role of churches and religion in international anti-gender politics
- Transnational strategies for countering anti-feminist narratives and promoting gender equality;
- Analysis of international organizations' responses to anti-gender discourses;
- Historical perspectives on the evolution of anti-feminist ideologies.

## Submission Guidelines:

Interested scholars are invited to submit a 300-500-word proposal outlining their proposed research topic, methodology, and its relevance to the special issue theme. Please include a brief author bio highlighting your expertise in the field.

Proposals should be submitted to [politikonjournal@iapss.org](mailto:politikonjournal@iapss.org) by 15 November 2023.

## Workshop:

*IAPSS Politikon*, with the support of IAPSS, will organize an online workshop, where the contributors present their work-in-progress papers. The workshop will give contributors an opportunity to receive feedback and comments from other contributors and discussants to revise them before submitting for review in *IAPSS Politikon*.

*IAPSS Politikon* follows rigorous peer review policies to ensure the quality, validity, and integrity of the research it publishes and promotes the openness and accessibility of research methods, data, and findings. For more information about the review process and submission guidelines please visit *IAPSS Politikon*'s website: <https://politikon.iapss.org/>.

## Important Dates:

Proposal Submission Deadline: 15 November 2023

Notification of Acceptance: 1 December 2023

Draft Manuscript Submission Deadline: 1 March 2024

Workshop: 15 March 2024 – *to be confirmed in January*

Full Manuscript Submission Deadline: 10 April 2024

Expected Publication Date: September 2024

We look forward to receiving your innovative proposals and contributions that will advance our understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding anti-gender and anti-feminist discourses in international politics and pave the way for informed discussions on feminist resistance strategies. For inquiries and further information, please contact [politikonjournal@iapss.org](mailto:politikonjournal@iapss.org).

## EDITORIAL TEAM:

**MAJA GERGORIĆ** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at University of Zagreb. Her research focuses on the emergence of anti-gender movements in post-communist Europe. Currently, she is conducting an extensive analysis of the anti-abortion movement. Maja is actively engaged as a researcher, lecturer, and activist in various human rights, feminist, and LGBTQ organizations based in Zagreb.

**KUSUMIKA GHOSH** is an Ireland India Institute PhD candidate at the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University, Ireland. She leads the Social Policy and Equity vertical at Niti Vichaar, India's Student Policy Think Tank. Kusumika has been involved in research projects related to conflict resolution, oral history, and migration studies. She also is an organizer of the Annual South Asia Conferences at Dublin City University. She co-authored *Landscape of Conflicts and Peace: Role of Religion* (NESRC, 2019), edited

*Women and Peacebuilding: Perspectives from the Field* (NESRC, 2021), and published articles locating gender in refugee regimes and citizenship laws. She holds a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies with a gold medal from TISS, India. Her current PhD research centers on women in India's contemporary contentious politics.

**ANTONIO ATHAYDE SAUANDAJ** graduated from the University of São Paulo Law School in 2018 and has been a member of the Brazilian Bar Association since 2019. He completed his Master's degree in Political Science (International Relations) at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne in 2021 under a scholarship from France's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. This led to his being awarded a PhD contract. Antonio is currently a research associate at the European Center of Sociology and Political Sciences (CESSP), where he is preparing a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Delphine Dulong. His research focuses on Jair Bolsonaro's political communication strategy in Brazil.

**ANYA KUTELEVA** is an interdisciplinary scholar whose work intertwines international relations, development studies, energy security, and feminist-informed approaches to politics. Her research centers on the nexus between politics and sociocultural contexts in international relations and develops a cross-disciplinary methodological toolkit around the concept of discursive politics. She is particularly interested in politics in China, Russia, Canada, and the Central Asian region. In 2022, she joined the University of Wolverhampton (UK) as a senior lecturer in International Relations. Previously, she obtained a PhD in Political Science from the University of Alberta (Canada) and held a post-doctoral fellowship at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Russia). Anna is the Editor-in-Chief of *IAPSS Politikon* since May 2023.