Co-Creating Inclusive Intersectional Democratic Spaces Across Europe (CCINDLE)

D1.1 – Exploring the legacies that underpin current European democracies from a feminist and queer perspective

Report on theoretical state-of-the-art

WP1 – Theoretical frame for understanding challenges to democracy in Europe

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1 Background

The CCINDLE project main research question is:

How do feminisms in movements and institutions contribute to counteract challenges to democracy and gender equality in Europe? And how (through what solutions and tools) can these contributions be translated into practice in different political and social settings?

The project aims to contribute to the strengthening and re-invigorating of European democracies through theoretical and practical in-depth embeddedness of feminist theories and strategies. It assumes that feminist theories and activism are vital and essential sources of both: resistance to anti-gender discourses and politics, and to re-kindling citizens' engagement with democratic institutions and values. We also recognize that the increasing challenges posed to Western democracies and escalating dynamics of anti-gender, homophobic and xenophobic mobilizations require a combination of excellent academic research and well-informed practical solutions which: a) are clearly feminist, anti-homo/transphobic and anti-racist, b) could efficiently support high quality democratic governance, c) may create a push-back against authoritarian and anti-gender efforts. The proposal's overall objective is to promote gender equality and to re-kindle citizen's trust in and engagement with democracy in the European Union.

The contribution of WP1 to the project is about providing a theory frame to all other empirical WPs, i.e.: a) setting the vocabulary for the whole project team, b) presenting our informed understanding of the main problem (challenges to democracy) and (possible) solutions, c) giving theoretical insights that can be transferred to other WPs on anti-feminist forces, feminist responses, and feminist institutional responses.

Our theoretical starting points are about inclusionary, participatory, and egalitarian visions of democracy (and the obstacle to that) and feminism as an open, transformative, and intersectional project aiming at social justice.

While we aim to search for a theoretical model for the project, we recognize that this state-of-the-art report is open to change. It is a dynamic text that can be challenged, interrogated, and re-focused where necessary. We take our inspiration from and build on feminist and queer theories and knowledge production, to build on the work of generations of feminist and queer activism and scholarly work, but also intend to problematize the theories, the academia, and the production of knowledge itself as power laden. The project takes co-creating as its starting point and method, meaning that we want to constantly bring in/invite external voices to help us de-colonize our ideas, our readings, and our state-of-the-art. We want to put marginalized and often ignored voices and perspectives in the middle of the project as these help us better understand what makes European (liberal) democracies problematic and exclusionary and far removed from ideals of equality and justice central to ideal type democracy.

We understand current problems and shortcomings of democracy to be rooted in the past. Present day democracies in Europe are built on the ruins (Brown, 2019) of previous regimes and legacies, with ideologies that are often detrimental to equality and inclusion. This is why we start with an exploration of different legacies shaping present day democracies across Europe like (neo)liberalism and capitalism, colonialism, fascism, organized religion, (post-)socialism, queer legacies and margins, and principles of (liberal) representative democracy. They were constitutive in the construction and evolution of current states in Europe, giving shape to power positions and relations, both between and within these states, and which are still present in institutions, rules, discourses, and actor constellations. By starting here, we

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hope to get a more sophisticated and situated understanding of the failures of and challenges to present day democracies and understand how anti-feminist actors build on/tap into these legacies to undermine democracies.

Current concerns over the state of democracy and democratic backsliding in different parts of the world have spurred an important academic debate on democratic crisis and how democratic institutions are undermined and dismantled. Analysts of democracy point to a trend of democratic decay that not only affects the more recent or "third wave" democracies but also threatens more established ones. However, they often completely lack gendered, intersectional lenses: meaning no attention to specific exclusionary (gendered, raced, classed, sexualized) dynamics and implications, unevenly affecting marginalized and underrepresented groups in society. The focus of these debates is often on preventing backsliding, repairing, or saving liberal democracy ignoring the fact that "democracy has been a distant, unrealized ideal for too many communities, for too long" (Rahman, 2018, p. 1555) as feminist, queer and critical race scholars, as well as critical democracy scholars, have pointed out. Along these lines, even if some progress towards gender justice has taken place, gender equality remains an unrealized ideal in most countries so far. The current struggle for (gender equal) democracy needs to step beyond the idea of a return to an idealised former status quo, and foreground aspects of justice. It can also be taken as an invitation to more fundamentally rethink democracy in ways that, on the one hand, pre-empt current problems of legitimacy, inclusion, participation, and citizen involvement, and, on the other hand, also challenge existing social and economic inequalities that lead to political inequality. Some current feminist interventions often move beyond a focus on gender equality towards care, solidarity, and intersectional justice.

This is why we start our diagnosis of current threats to democracy by going back to the body of literature pre-dating the alarmist debates about democratic backsliding to map out previously existing problems of democracy from feminist, queer, decolonial, and critical race perspectives. Because even if democracy is often viewed as a precondition of equality (although some authors argue that autocratic regimes may promote equality), it is surely not a sufficient condition.

The idea to map out the failures of and challenges to democracy from feminist, queer, critical race perspectives emerges because these perspectives suggest that it is important to explicitly address the relation between feminism and democracy. Feminist theory discusses issues related to democracy (e.g., political representation and participation, citizenship rights, public sphere) but the link between feminism and democracy is not so explicitly addressed (e.g., neither the Sage (2014) nor the Oxford (2015) Handbook of Feminist Theory include a chapter on democracy). We argue that feminism and democracy are interconnected, and that feminism is a positive force towards democratization, but it also needs a quality democracy to be able to act as a democratizing force for society. CCINDLE supports the idea that the relation between feminism and democracy needs to be explicitly made and researched. In our effort to map theory on democracy, we notice the scarcity of contemporary feminist perspectives on democracy. It is useful to consider why this is the case: maybe feminists are - just like anti-democratic forces - also disappointed, frustrated, and angry with democratic realities and ongoing (and new) exclusions? Or have anti-feminist forces mainly put them in exhaustion, and a reactive, defensive, rather than proactive modus?

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In this state-of-the-art report, we address what we deem core legacies on which current European democracies are built. These are capitalism/neoliberalism, colonialism/racism, organised religion, fascism, post-socialism, and heteronormativity to analyse how from an intersectional perspective these have shaped and continue to shape current liberal democracies across Europe. Obviously, the list is not exhaustive, but due to the limitations of time and space in this particular research project, we needed to make these decisions. Still, we argue that current problems with democracies in Europe are rooted in these legacies, and therefore we start each part by discussing the shortcomings of democracy in regard to these legacies.

In each section that is devoted to particular traditions / ideological blocks / historical developments, we discuss how current European democracies still bear the traces of these legacies. In the separate sub-sections we also discuss power struggles, conflicts and negotiations, as well as feminist failures. The first subsection aims at reflecting the fact that these legacies were always contested and questioned by social movements, everyday people's resistances and epistemic struggles. Therefore, we mention some of these forms of resistance. The second subsection -titled feminist failures- serves to underline that although we see the potential of feminism to oppose exclusions, violence and inequalities, we also acknowledge feminism has always been entangled with described legacies and complicit to the perpetuated injustices. Feminist movements are internally diverse and divided, and we deem it important to recognize how and for whom feminism has failed.

The order in which we discuss these legacies resonates with chronology, although we admit this order is debatable and acknowledge that all legacies are ongoing. More importantly, while we discuss them separately, in reality these different legacies overlap and are intertwined, and the struggles to resist their exclusionary effects are often addressing multiple legacies (and their interconnections). Many of the authors/texts we discuss below, write from multiple, intersectional positions and so our categorisations and the order in which we discuss them are often arbitrary and certainly imperfect. We discuss these cross-links to underline structural interconnections, but to avoid too much repetition we also refer to earlier parts of the report towards the end. After discussing the legacies, we turn to feminist and queer perspectives on the legacy of liberal representative democracy and finish our exploration with diving into democratic backsliding.

Finally, the theoretical state of the art mostly focuses on the diagnosis of the current problems with European democracies and their structural roots. Despite the fact that some parts of this paper also include references to feminist responses and potential solutions, we decided not to elaborate on these at this stage. In the next phase of this research project we will focus on feminist responses to these problematic legacies and take inspiration from feminist visions for more just, equal and democratic futures.

2 Capitalist and neoliberal legacies

Since the end of the Soviet Union and state-socialism, capitalism has become the dominant economic system and mode of production in Europe with important social and political implications. A core feature of these capitalist societies is the separation of economic production (remunerated, formalized) and social reproduction (unsalaried, informal) (Federici, 2004).

The embeddedness of European democracies in capitalism has produced continuous challenges to democratic institutions and norms, posed by class inequalities and unequal

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income distribution across societies. Capitalism is based on exploitation as a primary way of creating and reproducing inequalities. The way wealth is allocated determines citizens' actual access to important resources, such as decent living standards, health, or education. The very severe exploitation in the industrialisation era was met by growing theoretical and social critique of capitalism, resulting in strong socialist workers' movements across Europe. Their struggles were at the foundations of European welfare states, that mitigated the worst effects of capitalist exploitation (child care, short life expectancy and extreme poverty) through the creation of social security measures and institutions. These movements however often left intersectional inequalities unattended. Women active in labour movements and class struggles problematized the lack of attention to social reproduction and attempted to make welfare states more gender friendly.

Capitalism thrives thanks to the constant unpaid reproduction of the labour force and the process of dispossession of (mainly) women from the value of their housework. It puts on them the double burden of care and emotional work and pushes them out of economic production, limiting their autonomy and independence. This mechanism is still crucial under conditions of neoliberalism because repeating economic crises diminish welfare states' provisions. Under austerity measures or market-oriented policies, women, including migrant women and domestic workers, compensate the cuts in health care, education, or social work. Moreover, these measures fuel gender intersecting inequalities and anti-democratic projects (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017); resulting in gender equality policy/institutions backsliding, constraining civil society & feminist mobilization; and further de-democratizing societies by interacting with domestic ideologies of conservatism and racism.

Capitalism generates conditions that deprive significant numbers of people from the practical realization of their citizen's rights and hamper the political representation of their interests. The EU economic policies, aiming at increased competitiveness, low inflation, and debt reduction, contradict the aims of EU gender equality strategies (Young, 2000), which actually serve the optimalization of gendered workforce and increased women's productivity (Repo, 2014). Finally, after the financial crisis in 2008, the resources for EU anti-discrimination measures were significantly cut down, and their importance has gradually diminished (Jacquot, 2017; Kantola & Lombardo, 2017;).

In this current context, it is important to note the distinction between capitalism and neoliberalism, as some scholars have coined the term "neoliberal capitalism". Capitalism refers to an economic system that is based on a free-market economy and private ownership of means of production with the objective of accumulation of capital in highly competitive and oftentimes unregulated (although in varying degrees) markets. For its functioning, Nancy Fraser (2023) explains, capitalism feeds off exploitation, expropriation, and mass production, subjugating social reproduction to market logic, thus making it a pillar for the maintaining of a capitalist status quo. Although closely related to this, neoliberalism expands the market logic also to the polity, governance, and regulation of selves. Considering this, neoliberalism has been defined as a "political and economic rationality" that has expanded to different domains of life, constituting a specific form of governance (Gill & Scharff, 2011, p. 5) that appropriates the "increasing powers of the state to discipline, punish, and coerce individuals into 'productive' social and economic activity" (Gill & Kanai, 2018, p. 319. The issue of deservedness is of key importance here – citizenship status becomes conditional upon productiveness. Feminist analysis argues that neoliberalism is not only a "phase of capitalism", but also a "form of governmentality" based on an individualizing market logic and a technocratic political project, driven primarily by a logic that re-formulates human success

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in economic terms. This has consequently entailed a redefinition of citizenship (from citizens to consumers or entrepreneurs) and governance (from political to technical and market exercise) (Brown, 2015; Ong, 2006).

Neoliberalism's crucial element at the individual level, that has significant implications for society, is the production of a biopolitical rationality, where the self emerges as a self-governing, autonomous, and enterprising entity, heavily individualized, and emotionally attached to the constant (and imperative) personal transformation as means for increased capital accumulation (Illouz, 2007; Rose, 1990; Scharff, 2016). The self, under neoliberalism, is understood and produced through a capitalist market logic of internalized competition (Ehrstein, Gill & Littler, 2020). The neoliberal self is thus in need of continuous (re)working to achieve success. Taking this into account, the concept of neoliberal capitalism describes the assimilation relationship between capitalist economic market logic into the production of the self through entrepreneurial subjectivities. Following this, Francoise Vergès (2022, p. 94) argues "neoliberalism has never been just an economic program; it aims for a cultural transformation of the self […]."

Feminist scholarship has highlighted the way neoliberalism has co-opted feminism though this biopolitical rationality of the self, reconfiguring popular feminism through a depoliticising rhetoric. Work that explores the rise of neoliberal feminism defines it as a form of a gendered moral project that helps sustain socio-economic inequalities while resorting to a language of empowerment and can-do attitude (Dabrowski, 2020; Rottenberg, 2018). In this sense, post-feminism as a theoretical concept describes the entanglement of a gendered neoliberal sense-making that instrumentalizes feminist ideas of freedom, sexuality, and diversity in order to discredit the need for feminism. Consumer culture uses feminist language by celebrating female power through the participation in consumerism (McRobbie, 2009, p. 27). Angela McRobbie explains this as a "double entanglement" where feminism is taken as common sense, but at the same time vilified. The disarticulation of post-feminism evidences the gendered nature of neoliberalism, placing women as fundamental operators of international and national market economies. As a result, post-feminist subjectivity emerges articulating a specific sensibility that reconfigures contemporary acceptable (and encouraged) womanhood through the redefinition of femininity as bodily property, the shift from sexual objectification to subjectification, a focus on self-surveillance and self-discipline and emphasis on individualized empowerment (Gill, 2007; 2016). In this light, the post-feminist subjectivity is underpinned by neoliberal notions of governance, where empowerment and self-liberation ideas are produced in the service of strict feminine control and consumption, thus satisfying the needs of late capitalist societies.

Economic globalization and neoliberal conditions produce repeating downturns and crises, they perpetuate severe social inequalities, create growing areas of social exclusion, all contributing to increased social insecurity and precariousness. Yet, the very same conditions - neoliberal deregulations at service to international capital - decrease state capacities to respond to these problems (Crouch, 2004; Tilly, 2007). Neoliberalism pushes for transfers of state powers to non-elected bodies: supranational organizations, global private corporations, and financial institutions, leading to de-democratization (Bruff & Wöhl, 2016; Walby, 2015). The neoliberal logic expands the powers of the executive at detriment to the legislative bodies, deepening democratic deficits of governance, and by the very same mechanism, side-lining women, and other minorities from decision-making. This shift in powers is crucial to recognize, as these groups of women, migrants, and working-class members are often crucial to handle

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major social consequences of recurrent economic crises, including the current one related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capitalism is detrimental to democracy due to the intrusion of the domain of the economy in the domain of the polity, visible in the failure of democracies to constrain financial capitalism (Brown, 2015; Fraser, 2013) decision-making that privileges the private/particularistic interests of a few rather than the common interests of the population (Brown, 2019; Honig, 2017), the tendency to allow businesses to financially opt out of democratic decisions, and the contagious spread of business reasoning in governance (Fraser, 2013; Walby, 2015). The neoliberalisation of social movements (mainly through NGOisation and infiltration of business management models), makes these movements (including feminist and LGBTQ) potentially co-opted by the neoliberal logic (Eschle & Maiguashca, 2014; Fraser, 2019; Kantola & Squires, 2012). While neoliberalism is a highly resilient, adaptable process capable of appropriating a range of challenges and counter-narratives, it is also uneven, unpredictable and marked by contingency (Eschle & Maiguashca, 2014). As such, it can yield a range of productive contradictions, including both opportunities for progressive change and new threats. Neoliberal logic impacted democratic processes differently across Europe, whereby post-socialist countries are often seen as a European laboratory of market-oriented democracy, while Nordic countries have changed under the influence of privatization and New Public Management.

The root cause of crisis of liberal democracies is globalizing, financialized, neoliberal capitalism which broke down the authority of established political parties (rejection of “politics as usual”) and gave rise to reactionary populism. The latter use hatred, violence, and scapegoating to build electoral support (Fraser, 2019). At the same time, however, it offered an alternative answer to real grievances created by neoliberalisation and global capitalism. Right-wing populist parties often introduce generous welfare policies for normative families (Fodor, 2021; Szikra, 2014) improving the general economic situation of (some) women, without addressing underlying, structural inequalities. Discursive and legal transformation of individual human rights into the rights of the family is done with disregard for human rights and at the expense of those others, who fall outside of the conservative/religious norms. This explains some reasons behind the emergence of “anti-gender” campaigns. Agnieszka Graff and Elzbieta Korolczuk claim that anti-gender discourses help the populist right to present their agenda as a response to neoliberalism. It is by vilifying feminism as a global neoliberal power elite that such claims can be sustained, but this narrative is especially effective in countries such as Poland when it is paired with redistributive chauvinist welfare policies, aiming to redress cuts in social provisions during the transition.

2.1 Power struggles, conflicts and negotiations:

- Feminism for 99% is a vision of “other feminism”; a feminist movement which cooperates across different identities, issues, and locations, strongly relying on cross-movement cooperation, anti-capitalist, social justice claims and worker’s rights, as well as intersectional solidarity. The vision aims at creating a new majoritarianism of all working women, climate justice and environmental activists, migrant and anti-racist activists, LGBTQ communities, trade unionist, and all other oppressed groups. This movement should reinvigorate class struggles but highlighting how neoliberal and austerity measures dramatically deteriorate working and middle-class living conditions (through attacks on public education, social services, healthcare, housing, transport etc.) and how capitalism exploits women’s indispensable labour connected to social

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reproduction. Feminist for 99% should be an international movement and employ strike as a mean of protest. Importantly, the authors of this vision stress that democracy and peace are incompatible with capitalism (Frazer, Arruzza & Bhattacharya, 2019).

- Chantal Mouffe defines the current political crisis of Western democracy as "post-democracy" characterized by the centrality of economic liberalism and neoliberal hegemony. Under such conditions, the role of state democratic institutions diminished and citizens lost the power to impact political decisions. As the sovereignty of the people eroded, their resistance towards political institutions grew and created "the populist moment". The far-right managed to articulate these popular concerns by drawing a sharp line between the people and the elites, and thus gained important electoral support. As the underlying political conditions are the same for the right and the left, the response to the right, nationalist and successful populism should be left populism. The latter should aim at democracy radicalization by creating a "we" embracing those who really oppose the elites: workers, immigrants, middle class in precarious positions, LGBTQ people (Mouffe 2018). Far-right populism should be understood as fascism, as it creates "we, the people" by exclusion. By contrast the project of left populism, which could be understood as simply "populism" ("populism without apology") does not assume any predefined identity and does not have to work through identarian exclusions. Finally, as populism uses a different logics of subjectivity than neoliberalism the former may constitute an important response to "neoliberal fascism" (Biglieri & Cadahia, 2021).
- The massive entry of women in the labour market brought material and demographic changes to the organisation of society and the conditions of gender relationships. In relation to this, Myra Marx Ferree (2020) identifies two great transitions with regards to the social organisation of democracy and societies: from the early articulations of patriarchy and the absolute rule of fathers, understood as divinely granted, to brotherhood, based on the gender difference of the breadwinner model that reconfigured power as collectively masculine. The brotherhood also re-institutionalised gender emphasising a binary difference where fathers and husbands were defined by their ability to economically provide and women by their caring responsibilities to the families. The second demographic transition articulates a move from the brotherhood/breadwinner system to a more gender equal and pluralist partnership model. The decline of the breadwinner arrangement has unsettled binary identities for men and women whose role in societies is no longer entirely defined by gender through hegemonic norms. This has been met with a politization of masculinity that advocates for restoring the "masculinity-enhancing brotherhood" with the objective of securing the values and original organisation of liberal democracies with gender – as well as race – as a fundamental binary structuring. In this regard, Ferree (2020, p. 15) states "[T]he resurgence of such masculinization of politics is not a 'return' to patriarchy's rules but rather active defence against the rising institutionalization of a normative alternative to the brotherhood state".

2.2 Feminist failures:

- Feminist authors like Nancy Fraser argue that feminism has become the "handmaiden" of neoliberal capitalism. Fraser (2017) coins the idea of progressive neoliberalism to explain how a meritocratic-infused corporate feminism came into being, preoccupied with "leaning in" as a way to climb the capitalist ladder through the articulation of a

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neoliberal and highly individualized sense-making. Fraser critiques how under the rubric of progressive neoliberalism, powerful social movements have become depoliticised and transfused with a cognitive capitalist logic that renders progress with meritocracy instead of equality, therefore understanding emancipation as the rise “of a small elite of ‘talented’ women, minorities, and gays in the winner-takes-all corporate hierarchy instead of with the latter’s abolition” (p. 2). The consequences of this are multifaceted: the marginalization of social justice agenda centring wealth distribution to change material conditions of inequality, the weakening of unions through its continuing alignment with neoliberal logic, the increasing precarity of work, with direct implications in the living conditions for women, ethnic minorities and the working classes, and the reframing of politics of emancipation with complete financialization. The overarching result, Fraser argues, is the growing disaffection of the working classes with politics and their progressive moralism that did not improve their material existence and in fact, rolled back on social provision in favour of a liberal cosmopolitanism that consistently ignored them. Concerning feminism, Fraser extends her critique by pointing that its dominant politics are underpinned by an almost totalizing worry over identity politics to the detriment of class struggles, evidenced by the move towards diversity management in feminist policymaking and overall mainstream movements. Consequently, the struggle towards gender justice has been “resignified to cohere with neoliberalism’s global governance needs" through the figure of the elite “femocrats” which have reworked feminist gains as neoliberal gains (Fraser, 2012, p. 12).

- Work within the field of ecofeminism has also developed relevant critiques to the ongoing relationship of Western feminism and neoliberalism. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) explain feminism’s allegiance to capitalist logic and the neoliberal project’s destructive effects on the environment because of the continuous commodification of the “natural world”. Mies and Shiva (1993) argue that feminism has deployed what they believe to be a “false strategy” to catch up with men, thus participating in the patriarchal structure of exploitation and expropriation of not only communities and countries at the bottom of the global social hierarchy (i.e., Non-western, previous colonies, colonized people), but also the earth. In this sense, the colonization of nature is located in a patriarchal conceptual framework of domination. In this sense, Mies and Shiva (1993) defend the need for an antifascist ecofeminism that positions itself against all domination orders. Following this, it is important to note that it is Western feminism’s failure to account for nature and fight for its decolonization, as much of indigenous South American feminism have centred nature and its relationship with building communitarianism at the heart of their feminist politics (Paredes, 2010; Svampa, 2021).

3 Colonial legacies and anticolonial and antiracism resistance

Modern democracy, treated as a European concept and political practice, has been founded on the ideas of the Enlightenment. The latter introduced the new concepts of state sovereignty and legal personhood of the citizen. As these ideas denoted exclusively men, and slave owners (or as in the case of John Locke – men investing in slave trade), these fundamental democratic notions at the moment of their introduction excluded slaves from any legal recognition, and established legal patriarchy (Perry, 2018). Importantly, while completely

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excluding women and Black people from the public space and political sphere, the Western European philosophy started to create new romantic vision, with sentimental visions of women, and good, noble "savages". These processes accompanied complete submission of white women (to husbands and fathers as their protectors and breadwinners), and brutal physical destruction of Black women and men living in colonies (Mies, 1993a; 1993b). Further, the widely acclaimed Western philosophers (ex. Locke, Rousseau, Hegel) produced the underlying fundaments for modern racism, i.e., "humanization" of European white men, and "naturalization" of Black and Brown people positioned outside the human. These high-theory concepts have served to secure economic interests of colonial empires and the "ethnoclass" of Western bourgeois (Wynter, 2003, p. 260).

Importantly, also nowadays political philosophy and science obscure the fact that the most important political system "of recent global history" is "the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and, in certain important ways, continue to rule over non-white people" (Mills, 1997, pp. 1-2). The classic idea of the social contract was not about an agreement "between everybody ('we the people'), but between the people who count; the people who really are people ("we are the white people") (Mills, 1997, p. 3). So, it was a racial contract rather than a social one (for sexual contract see also Pateman, 1988).

The historical development of democracies in Europe is often presented as the history of Western societies fuelled by internal dynamics who played out within their narrowly limited, nearest physical borders. Contrarily to this popular picture, Achille Mbembe (2019) argues the history of modern democratic regimes cannot be separated from "the regime of plantation" and "the regime of colony". These three figures rest "in a strict relation of apparent distance and repressed proximity and intimacy" (2019, p. 20) and are crucial to understand the contemporary relationship between democracy and racialized violence. European democracies externalized their brutal terror by leading colonial wars in distant, nonnormative places, and located them outside of the law – the law applied to settlers and white citizens in metropoles. The colony became a site where law was openly suspended and where violence operated as a protection instrument of the "civilized" world (see also Fanon, 1963). This legacy is all-present now and colonies take forms of camps, sites surrounded by razor wire and prisons located within the borders of democratic states.

Nowadays, questions of security and protection against migrants and racialized Others have become essential for liberal democracies. War and brutality have never ceased to bear fundamental meaning for European democracies, but they are being masked or justified by a permanent state of exception (e.g., the war against terror). The latter claims that law and justice require "the right to cruelty, torture, and indefinite detention" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 38). What we observe is the process of exiting from democracy whereas the suspension of rights, constitutions and freedoms are promoted by the necessity to protect these same laws, freedoms, and constitutions.

Necropolitical power inverses life and death; it subjugates life to the power of death. The life of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and other racialized groups of people becomes merely a medium of the death. Such death does not require any response, nor justice; it does not provoke feelings of responsibility. Racism is the driver of necropolitics as they rely on "cheapening of the price of live" and "a habituation to loss" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 92).

White innocence, as Gloria Wekker underlines, denies the violent colonial past of European democracies and its current imprint on societies. One of the mechanisms which allows it to happen is the rejection of "whiteness" as a racial category. White Western European societies

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view whiteness as an unspoken norm (whiteness is race free) and think of themselves as "innocent" or "without bad intentions", despite the fact that colonial hierarchies and segregation are being preserved and extended. This also happens through gender equality policies, which tacitly assume that they target white women, whereas Black and Brown women are thought to be part of integration policies (Wekker, 2016).

Western political theory treats humanity as whiteness and excludes Black people from this falsely universal category. Akwugo Emejulu, inspired by Sylvia Wynter, argues that if 'the human' is defined by whiteness, and to be human is to participate in the relationship of care, the exclusion from humanity produced subjects of "unthinking, banal and routine brutalization of everyday life (…)" (Emejulu, 2022, p. 40). Western myths about European democracies, but also particular policies implemented by democratic governments (including those focused on gender equality) obscure the racialized, physical, and symbolic violence, and severe marginalization of entire social groups (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, transgender people etc.).

Exclusion and violence target Black and racialized people, as well as those with ethnic minority background, also if, and despite them holding European citizenship. Racial discrimination spills over and intensifies nowadays, as welfare chauvinism, i.e., populist, and right-wing opposition to granting social services to immigrants, is becoming more often accompanied by welfare ethnocentrism, which attacks the entitlements to welfare benefits held by Muslim or Black citizens (Careja & Harris, 2022; Nijs et al., 2023). Thus, the right-wing parties can position themselves defenders of the welfare state (Moulinari 2016).

Despite the fact that European societies treat race as the question of the past or the outside elsewhere ("raceless Europe"), race has never ceased to have profound impact on Europe. Racism is being deeply embedded in contemporary politics or popular culture and European self-articulation. Wekker (2016) argues that "the unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge and affects based on four hundred years of [Dutch] imperial rule" or what she, based on Edward Said, coins the cultural archive, remains intact in present day societies, This cultural archive is "located in many things, in the way we think, do things, and look at the world, in what we find (sexually) attractive, in how our affective and rational economies are organized and intertwined"; in short, it is "a repository of memory in the heads and hearts of people in the metropole" (p. 19). Importantly, "everyday racism" (Essed, 1984; 1991) is differently framed, and takes different forms and expressions throughout European societies, depending on regional, historical, demographical, and political contexts. It also targets different groups (of Black people, Muslims, Jews etc.). Still, despite these variabilities, it stems from the foundational presumption of Europe as exclusively white and Christian space (see racial Europeanization in Goldberg, 2006). Importantly, the popular support for racist agendas in Europe is often mobilized through "care racism" (and often not openly via hateful speech), which underlines the need of protection of own, assumedly white women, who are indispensable for the reproduction of European nations (Sager & Mulinari, 2017).

3.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Capitalism and neoliberal capitalism: The wealth and economic dominance of Western democracies come from violence: colonial genocides, dispossession and looting, extraction of cheap energy and natural resources, and massive production of waste and ecological devastation (Vergès, 2022). Racial violence (as well as sexism) is an integral part of capitalism; it has always been its fundamental element enabling exploitation of cheap labour and capitalist accumulation (Wallerstein, 1991). Cedric J.

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Robinson (1983) stresses that we need to recognize that capitalism is always racial capitalism. Capital accumulates only through severe inequalities, and therefore requires racism to create and petrify unequal values attached to white and non-white, black lives, further allowing for the extraction of the value from the latter. Moreover, the "patriarchal revival is inextricably linked to neoliberal capitalism" (Vergès, 2022, p. 3; see also Brown, 2019). Françoise Vergès underlines that "while neoliberalism accuses individuals of their own failure, neofascism looks for scapegoats, but the two ideologies join in denying the role of the State and capitalism's institutional violence" (Vergès, 2022, p. 21; see also Fraser, 2019).

- Fascism: Aimé Cesairé locates the roots of fascism within colonialism and argues that Europe tolerated and legitimized Nazism only until it was applied to non-European people. For Europeans what is unacceptable about Hitler, is that "he applied to Europe colonialist procedures" which before him had been used against people in Africa, India, or Asia (Cesairé, 1972). This point refers to both the ideological connections between fascist ideology, the Western philosophy, and science, and material practices of the colonizers (occupation, ethnic extermination, concentration camps, genocides, e.g., Herero and Namaqua genocide, Second World War concentration camps).

3.2 Power struggles, conflicts and negotiations:

- Colonial and racist legacies, on which European democracies are built require responses that would address these power dynamics. Akwugo Emejulu and Inez van der Scheer (2022) speak of the politics of refusal, which includes subversive, organizing practices used in the context of multi-faced crisis by women of colour activists. They refrain from demanding rights and recognition from the institutional actors, and instead embrace marginalization and employ alternative ways of doing politics and dissenting. Those involve community building, staying anonymous, celebrating joy and hope.
- Alternatively, Françoise Vergès (2021) pits decolonial feminism against "civilizational feminism" and "false innocence of white feminism" (after Wekker, 2016) as a revolutionary project rooted in feminist theory and activism from the Global South. It calls for anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist feminist struggle that politicizes precarity and social reproduction work.
- Finally, the BlackLivesMatter (BLM) international social movement -formed in 2013 to protest the acquittal of a man, who shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager Martin Trayvon, fights against systemic violence against Black people, racial profiling, police brutality, and over-policing of Black neighbourhoods. It affirms Black lives and aims at eradicating white supremacy. BLM demands reforms of the criminal justice system, making connections with abolition feminism (Davis & Mendieta, 2005). In the European context different BLM protests concerned police brutality against citizens from racial and ethnic minorities, acknowledging the European colonial terror, including Black history into school curricula, rejecting and expulsing asylum seekers.

3.3 Feminist failures:

- The term "intersectionality" was initially coined to describe the position of Black women, for whom the interlocking sexist and racist oppressions create a distinct position that goes beyond a simple synthesis of the two (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality was

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therefore primarily thought of as an analytical framework differentiating the experiences of non-white women and the oppression they face. However, the term has been colonized by white scholars, activists, and feminist policymakers thus losing its initial focus on race (Emejulu, 2022). White, liberal feminist movements appeal to universal sisterhood, based on a false assumption that all-women face the same kind of oppression, thus failing to address and acknowledge the different experiences of Black women (hooks, 1986). Furthermore, gender equality policies focusing on women tend to tacitly assume the whiteness of the group and understanding gender as straight, cis, non-disabled, and middle-class category (Christoffersen & Emejulu, 2022). Within the EU context, it is important to note that EU approach to intersectionality has been reduced to the category of "multiple discriminations", which in its current shape, puts Black women at the margins of European anti-discrimination policies. Further, profound developments of EU anti-discriminatory law are still necessary (Solanke, 2021).

- In certain contexts, feminism has been co-opted by xenophobic, anti-Muslim, and far right groups. Femonationalism antagonizes and discriminates, especially racialized and non-western groups under a false pretext of protecting the interests of women. It does so, however, often at the expense of non-western, migrant women (Farris, 2017).
- Postfeminist logic has led to depoliticization of feminist struggles and overlooks systemic inequalities embedded in colonial (among others) legacies of European democracies (for more see neoliberal and capitalist legacies).
- Finally, in what Juliet Hooker (2009) called racialized solidarity the problem of Western liberal democracies is not only about structural racism which stays in a sharp contradiction to the universal ideas of freedom, equality, and brotherhood, but also embraces the significant gap in political solidarity (as a theoretical concept and political practice). Hooker stresses the existence of "the racialized contours of the politics of solidarity" which mean that the important civil attitudes of fairness, reciprocity and respect do not concern Black people and people of colour, who continue to stay outside of the political community of equal citizens, and "inhabit different political and ethical spaces" (Hooker, 2009).

4 Legacies of organized religion as polities

Historically across Europe, organized religion, polities, and state institutions have been strongly intertwined, across varieties of Christian religions and, at times, Islamic ones (while Judaism has never been part of state power). There is no clear separation of church and state in Europe yet. European countries may have an official privileged state religion, they facilitate taxation for organized religion's institutions, and they set up specific agreements of collaboration (see Höllinger et al., 2007 for a typology). To better understand the legacies that this constitutes, it is helpful to see organized religion as polities, following Walby (2009). In her theorizing about polities, Walby states that organized religions are polities when they have institutional moral, political, and sanctioning power over significant aspects of people's lives. She observes the sanctioning power of organized religion (Catholicism par excellence because of the global and hierarchical nature of its internal organization), especially in the regulation of sexuality and family relations (see also Engeli, 2009; Minkenberg, 2002). As a quasi-state within the UN system and based on its numerous and highly regarded 'ambassadors', Catholicism as organized religion moreover has political power at the global

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level, and in those states with which it has special arrangements (concordats). This includes European states. The actual power of governance of organized religion rests on three main sources of authority: moral as articulated through religious belief, political entanglement with political parties and state or key social institutions, and the power to sanction members of its religious community if the break the rules of a religion.

Organized religion does not tend to be seen in much of the literature on democracy as a democratically problematic entity, because this literature fails to see it as a polity. Sylvia Walby (2009) includes it in her theory about gender regimes as an entity that governs as an integral part of the polity domain and as a restraining force of democracy. The problem is that organized religion consists of non-elected officials, that often exclude parts of their community to occupy positions of power (exclusion of women and openly LGBT people), and that do not have any democratic values or practices. When functioning as a polity, they therefore create an undemocratic force within an otherwise maybe democratic polity. Moreover, they have been shown to play a key role in anti-gender campaigns and discourses. Therefore, it matters how strong is the capacity of organized religion in each context to influence policymaking in any policy field, such as education, health, social security and welfare provisions, fiscal regimes, and research, on, amongst others, gender & LGBT rights by promoting cisgender hetero essentialism and binarism.

Organized religion is key in the emergence and construction of the modern European nation state. European history is characterized by the struggles for power between organized religion, disposing of considerable political and economic power, and (other) socio-political actors. The founding of the modern nation states put this struggle centre-stage and led to many state-church relations being enshrined in constitutions and/or agreements that establish prerogatives for organized religion and its religious actors in each context, with reference to issues such as the role and financing of religious institutions and churches by the state (e.g. the exemption of churches from paying taxes, the clergy and religious infrastructure receiving state funding, as well as state services organized and or provided by organized religion, such as education or health care).

While many European states secularized over time in that the number of religious citizens shrunk and many citizens also became religiously less active, this did not necessarily impact the prerogatives of organized religion, or their polity power base. This shows in – at least – two features. First, the political and policy-making role of organized religion as enshrined in constitutions and/or agreements is still very much intact in many European countries. The Catholic Church is seen as the only organized religion with a longstanding highly institutionalised lobbying structure (European Parliament, 2006). Moreover, the shrinking welfare state across Europe, due to state impoverishment and/or weakness or not, leads to increasing state reliance on organized religion to provide basic social services (such hospitals and health care, education, care for the poor and elderly). This service provision has strong historical legacies predating the emergence of the welfare state in many countries, meaning that infrastructures are often still in place. This gives organized religion control over key social institutions and over society since they are gatekeepers of social benefits, resources, and hegemony. This hegemony over knowledge and service provision is a problem for democracy. Church influence on knowledge and education through the holding of private educational institutions has capacity of hegemony to shape people's ideas about gender and the legitimacy of key feminist issues such as sexual and reproductive rights and education, as well as gender and sexual violence, and LGBT rights. The Catholic church (and other Christian denominantions) seek epistemic power, aiming to replace research-based

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knowledge by religious truths dressed up as “natural law”. Another problem for democracy is the economic privileges that state agreements with organized religion allow, illustrated by the Vatican not paying taxes, and their exemption from democratic political accountability mechanisms.

Second, while a number of European states secularized, secular society is still based on the basic norms and values articulated and promulgated by organized religion (Gorski & Altinordu, 2008). Most especially South and West European states have firmly enshrined and internalized Judeo-Christian values. They constitute the DNA of a “European” identity. This also shows at the level of the European Union where heated debates took place in the Convention on the Future of Europe. They concerned the introduction of Christian values in the constitutional treaty, which were, in the end, not included in the treaty (Cvijec & Zucca, 2004). Secularism thus to a large extent stands for Judeo-Christian values, which feed into contemporary policies and discourses regarding education, health, families, but also migration and especially integration. The problematization of the veil, hijab, female genital cutting, etc., presented as attacks to the “Western” (secular) society, are mainly conceived as attacks to the Judeo-Christian tradition of these states.

In countries with post-socialist legacies the context is different. The accession of a large and strongly Catholic country like Poland to the European Union strengthened the potential for the Catholic church as a polity in the European context (Casanova, 2003; European Parliament, 2006). But while organized religion to a certain extent played an active role in the transition itself, currently organized religion has developed strong ties with conservative political forces in government, sharing patriarchal heterosexist ideological features (see also post-socialist legacies chapter). Trans/homophobic and other anti-gender actors voluntarily tap into these networks and discourses, using their homo- and femonationalist definitions to create clear boundaries between insiders and outsiders, advocating exclusion, or various forms of harm.

Organized religion is connected to colonial, class, and queer legacies, very visible in the European religious colonization of the African and American continent. The supposed “Christian civilization” was (and is) part of its power politics to subordinate people and enforce the colonizers’ gender, sexuality, and race norms. Christianity has been central in efforts to defend and spread ‘traditional’ family values. The bourgeois nuclear family model and monogamy has been enforced on working class peoples and former enslaved peoples since the 19th century. Maria Mies (1986) explains how the dissemination of this family model was part of the ‘civilizing’ missions of European colonizers and missionaries who believed equality was “backward”. While she identifies the Catholic Church, alongside the state, the bourgeoisie, and modern scientists, as an active guilty party in subjugating women, other organized religious players are also known for such missionary undertakings. The Catholic Church, and more broadly speaking organized religion, thus participated actively in colonial conquests, and contributed to imposing oppressive gender, sexuality, and race norms. This gender and colonial systems were mutually constitutive (Lugones, 2007): gender was raced, and race was gendered.

Catholicism was intertwined with fascist legacies in Italy and Spain and with current anti-gender movements; but organized religion is active in other non-Catholic contexts across Europe too, which need to be examined more. For instances, in some Eastern European countries, Orthodoxy is constitutionally recognized as historical religion (Krasteva, 2015) and is constitutive of national identity and “does not necessarily require belief in any form of divinity” (Ghodsee, 2009, p. 228).

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Organized religion is connected to capitalist legacies, in that its god-based logic is most consistent with accepting existing class hierarchies, although there have been some historical exceptions in Europe, mainly driven by competition with labour movements (van Kersbergen & Manow, 2009). Moreover, organized religion hardly contests private ownership, and rather sees it as an indispensable element of the social order.

The relevance of this legacy for understanding the drive, content and power of anti-gender campaigns, the dynamics of anti-gender forces and constraints and opportunities for feminist actors is substantial. Scholarship on anti-gender campaigns suggest that religious actors and play a prominent role in orchestrating the anti-gender campaigns (Beltrán & Creely, 2018; Case, 2016; Darakchi, 2019; Kaoma, 2016; Krizsán & Roggeband, 2021; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Norocel & Giorgi, 2022; Paternotte, 2023). The Catholic Church is identified as the architect and main promoter of anti-gender politics (Cornejo & Pichardo 2017; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). In the aftermath of the UN Beijing (1994) and Cairo (1995) conferences, the Vatican developed a global political strategy to counter "gender ideology" (Bob, 2012; Chappell, 2006), aimed at reinstalling their influence in secularizing parts of the world. To establish this narrative of "gender ideology", the Church reclaimed progressive notions (like gender and feminism) and altered their meaning (calling gender equality a form of "ideological colonization") (Korolczuk & Graff, 2018). This tactic altered and complicated their meaning for average people (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). In order to re-instate "traditional" family values, the Church adopted also a more secular discourse, emphasizing the "scientific" and "natural" binarity of sex (Kuhar, 2015). Since the mid 1990s the Roman Catholic Church played an active role in establishing what Louise Chappell (2006) termed an "unholy alliance" between fundamentalist religious groups, both Christian (catholic, evangelical, protestant, Pentecostal) and Islamic, and states with conservative governments that share a particular conservative and traditional perspective on gender issues. This alliance operates and mobilizes both at the transnational and national level to act in favour of traditional family values and roles for men and women and thus counteract gender equality progress (Chappell, 2006). Over the last decade, this transnational religious and conservative alliance has become stronger and better organized (Bob, 2012; Halperin-Kaddari & Freeman, 2016) and resonates particularly in contexts where the moral authority of organized religion is highly estimated (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2017). As Paternotte (2023) contends, the Roman Catholic Church no longer has the monopoly or even core role in opposition to "gender ideology"; in the CEE countries orthodox churches also play an active role as well as protestant (evangelical and Pentecostal) churches across Europe. The Russian Christian Right also plays a key role in pushing for the conservative anti-gender discourse in Europe and globally (Stoeckl, 2020).

4.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Colonialism: Christianity's relationship with empire building and colonization originates, at least in part, in its development in the fourth century when it became the religion of the Roman Empire. It expanded its power beyond Europe and Africa across the Atlantic with the conquest of the Americas. Christianity was also the state religion of European colonial powers. The colonized were forced to adopt the religious beliefs and Christian beliefs were used to justify the extermination of believers of other faits, the enslavement and exploitation of people and land.
- Fascism, builds on mainly Christian family values (see more under Fascist legacies).

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- Capitalism: Dominant legacy is on accepting private property and class hierarchies, although there have been episodes of some support for class struggle (e.g., Rerum Novarum 1891 from Catholic Church).
- Cross-cutting with race/gender/sexuality issues: organized religion promulgates cisgender hetero essentialized binary constructions and preaches the superiority of a Judeo-Christian tradition (which is white without being labelled as such).

4.2 Power dynamics / social struggles:

- Given that organised religion as polity is not democratic and has no internal democratic dynamics or procedures, access to its institutional level is very difficult, and their decision-making processes hidden or opaque. This hinders a proper analysis of the genesis and development of anti-gender positions and contradictions and dynamics around them.
- Given the lack of separation between church and state, organized religion can be at the heart of the state, and part of its core functions and competencies. While secularization drives organized religion to the margins, it can also trigger a fight to stay/remain centre stage.
- Some parts of organised religion's positions on class (attention for poverty, legacy of charity) opens opportunities for class-based struggles, as has been the case in the Latin-American Catholic church. This is visible in more 'socially' oriented Christian Democratic parties and trade unions, e.g. in Italy.
- This legacy is a strong root for the ongoing patriarchal character of the modern European states, because of its focus on sexuality and family relations that is based on an essentialist understanding of two binary sexes.

4.3 Feminist failures:

- For looking at feminist responses and developing coalitions it is unfortunate that the strong emergence of feminist theology in the 70s and 80s has dwindled away.
- The wider secularized influence of values and norms stemming from organized religion are still present and hinder the development of an explicitly inclusive feminism.
- There is also woman-based organising within religious institutions that defends so called traditional values on matters of intimacy, relationships, and sexuality, that supports or strengthens homophobia and transphobia, and that is strongly linked to forms of nationalism, as a form of femonationalism, with all the colonial legacies that come with that.

5 Fascist legacies

Literature on fascist legacies provides insights on how fascist actors in Italy and Spain exploited weaknesses of the state and civil society to their advantages, which anti-gender antidemocratic forces can do similarly in today's European contexts. Research shows that middle classes were central in helping Italian fascism to rule (Gramsci, 1973); in Franco's Spain there was a lack of civil society mobilization and of intermediate systems, a

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depoliticization and apathy that the regime exploited and alimented to its advantage (Linz, 1964).

The politics of knowledge and violence are essential parts of fascism (Eco, 1997; Gramsci, 1973) in both its historical manifestations (for instance in the cases of Italy and Spain) and in the features of "eternal fascism"[1] that according to Umberto Eco (1997) appear in different moments and contexts. "Eternal fascism" (Eco, 1997) resonates in anti-gender and far right politics and rhetoric, for instance in the features of traditionalism, anti-intellectualism, irrationalism, racism, hyper-nationalism, anti-communism, appeal to frustrated middle classes, conspiracy and xenophobia to provoke in followers fear of being besieged, anti-parliamentarism, cult of war, sexism, popular elitism, basic-poor language that limits critical and complex reasoning (Eco, 1997; Linz et al., 2008). Rosi Braidotti (2023) also thinks fascism is not just a historical past but also a state of mind, a culture, that includes power as domination on people that are identified as 'others' from the white European man, as well as other features connected to authoritarian nationalism and a cult of death.

In relation to democracy authoritarian legacy strengthens specific cleavages that are relevant in each context, for example it reinforced the central state in Spain and enacted the erasure of regional differences, and it strengthened the power of elite actors: prerogatives of the military and religion (Cornejo & Pichardo, 2017; 2018; Morlino, 2007).

Furthermore, we can find resonance of "eternal fascism" also in the way feminist demands are absorbed/co-opted by anti-gender actors and antidemocratic state similar to how fascism employed hegemony and structures organized by the regime to include some of people demands but in a subordinate position (Gramsci, 1973).

The type of transition to democracy in each context helps understanding the construction of democracy in relation to authoritarian past (Morlino, 2007) and the emergence of anti-gender and feminist actors. The moment and modality of transition to democracy (to what extent/how women/feminist actors are included/excluded) (Waylen, 2007) is important to understand weakness and strengths in today's gender regimes facing anti-gender and antidemocratic opposition (Alonso, Ciccia & Lombardo, 2023). It is important to analyse connections between the continuity/discontinuity with authoritarian or fascist past and manifestations of anti-gender movements and parties; selection of antagonisms and myths/cultural tradition by anti-gender antidemocratic actors to build their discourse and mobilize emotions (Linz et al., 2008). The type of construction of collective memory of fascist/authoritarian past can enable or hinder the legitimacy (social acceptability) of anti-gender antidemocratic discourses/movements; the high stigmatization of fascist past, of its illiberal elements, reduces the cultural opportunity structures for antidemocratic forces (Manucci, 2020).

The relationship between gender and fascism is a tightly linked one. For the establishing and maintaining of the fascist status quo, gender acted as a dispositive for both social control and organisation. The gender structuring of fascist states is crucial for the development of the

[1] Eco defines this as "a way of thinking and feeling, a series of cultural habits, a nebulous of obscure instincts" (Eco, 1997:14). Characteristics: 1) cult of tradition and block advance of knowledge, 2) refusal of modernity (Enlightenment; irrationalism), 3) cult of action & suspect of critical culture (intellectuals as "radical snob", "universities as communist hideout"), 4) fear of difference & racism, 5) appeal to frustrated middle class (economic crisis, political humiliation), 6) Obsession with conspiracy & xenophobia to make followers feel besieged (inside-outside e.g., Jews), 7) "Life as permanent war" cult of war 8) Popular elitism 8) Machismo 9) Populism & opposition to "putrid parliamentarism" 10) Poor lexicon.

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ultranationalist nativist project as it produces a social imaginary based on a sociosexual order developed on sharp gender roles, gendered division of labour, and the subsequent separation between the private and public spheres. Religion emerges as a pivotal cleavage for gender fascism, considering its socio-cultural influence in shaping gender roles appealing to a divine moral order that constructs men and women (and masculinity and femininity respectively) as different yet complimentary (López, 2008).

Gender nationalism or the mobilization of men and women to the fascist nationalistic project: The gender roles established under fascism were rooted in traditionalist and essentialist understandings of gender that were extremely linked to the construction of the nation-state. While men were imagined as the protectors, heroes and thus, bearers of social power being the sole participants in the public sphere, women were thought of to be the moral guardians of the nation (Blasco Herranz, 2014; Caviglia, 2004). Women were granted a specific part in the creation of the fascist nation by making them responsible of the private sphere, meaning, responsible for the caring, instructing and raising of the new generations. This politicised the private sphere, which produced an articulation of femininity that had a key political dimension as an active participant in the reproduction of fascism that went beyond subjugation to men (Blasco Herranz, 2014). In this regard, power dynamics infuse gender relations under fascism, and, although following a hierarchical order where men sat at the top and women at the bottom, the fascist social imaginary of gender co-opts women into an active role in the reproduction of the fascist nation.

The strict sexual division of labour, men's virility/domination/anti-intellectualism/war are exalted in fascism vs women submission-role-at-home, but motherhood is politicized in view of the regime's demographic and nationalistic project. Resonance of fascist ideas about gender roles appears in far-right discourse about conservative gender roles and its attempt of modernization of gender roles as compared with historical fascism. The politics of knowledge and violence is visible in the fascist culture of war and in the construction of a masculinity that is associated with violence.

5.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Queer: the reproduction of fascism, as described above, was premised on heterosexual relations. Queerness and any other non-normative sexual expression and gender identity was persecuted and positioned at the margins of fascist societies. The gender binary structured the social realm of fascism and defined the power dynamics founded on sexual division.
- Colonialism: the rise of different European empires was developed under an expansionist logic looking to expropriate the land and resources and enslave people for the benefit of the colonised nation. Although the majority of the colonies had been independent at the time of the rise of fascism in the 20th Century, fascist regimes reproduced a discourse that emboldened the glorious past of colonialism as a reflection of the success of the nation, as well as its superiority. The past colonial imaginary reproduced in fascist regimes was also developed through its connection with organised religion, considering the religious motivation to Christianise colonies and import forcefully the catholic understanding of gender and subsequent sexual division-based structuring of society. Moreover, white supremacy is rooted at the core of fascist regimes, where the nation is understood through its ties to whiteness and the purity of the race. People of non-white backgrounds were persecuted and murdered

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under fascist regimes in an attempt to keep the imagined nation white, thus implementing nation-wide eugenics to carry out "racial hygiene" (Campos, 2016).

- Organized religion: the interplay of organised religion and fascist regimes differ from varied articulations of fascist politics. While in Germany political use of religion was limited (although it is pertinent to note some scholars explain Italian and German fascism reproduced a type of "political fascism" whereby fascist ideology became a religion in itself as it provided a new type of collective affinity based on national identity and race (Gentile, 1990), Spanish fascism used organised religion to construct its base ideology of national Catholicism. The national catholic doctrine was thus present in all levels of society and institutions, from education, to healthcare, impregnating and shaping everyday social dynamics and thus reinforcing gender normativity, white supremacy, and the past colonial imaginary (Campos, 2016).

5.2 Power dynamics / social struggles:

- Ewa Majewska (2021): antifascist feminist response through feminist "counterpublics of the common" that develop solidarity struggles of what she calls 'weak resistance' from common, everyday resistance by other to the White, Western, masculine, straight, privileged to overcome the neoliberal brave heroic individualistic model of political agency. What the author calls antifascist feminism appears to be more a response to neoliberal individualism through collective solidarity.
- Experiences of women responses during fascist dictatorships include, for instance, participation in partisan resistance against the nazi-fascism in Italy (Tobagi, 2022) and clandestine work to help people targeted by fascists (Lussu, 1971). In Spain it included clandestine feminist and queer movement work during Franco's times, through hidden associations and unions linked to wider secret left-organisations, everyday networks of support, and covert publications (fanzines, self-made magazines) (Di Febo, 2006; Martínez, 2017). The explosion of anti-francoist movement led by feminist and queer organisations occurred during the 60s, with strikes and organised protests demanding better working conditions and a change in legislation that provided legal rights to women, who were subjected to men in all forms of life. During the transition period, feminist and queer associationism flourished, campaigning to allow divorce, abortion and to stop the criminal prosecution of queer people in the country (Di Febo, 2006; Martínez, 2017).
- Violence under fascist regimes were particularly harsh for women and queer people. Women were completely subjected to their husbands after marriage, or fathers/brothers before marriage. Divorce was banned and women were denied fundamental civil and political rights. Suspected wives of political prisoners under fascism faced brutal violence such as rape, forced imprisonment and labour in concentration camps (Muñoz Encinar, 2020). Racialised people, in particular the Roma community, suffered targeted violence with laws aiming to surveil them, criminalise their professions or ways to make a living and incarcerate them (Filigrana, 2020). Queer people also faced extreme violence of Nazi concentration camps. Specific laws were drafted targeting anyone suspected of being LGBT, who were subjected to forced internment in labour and re-education camps.

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- Transitions from fascism to democracy in Italy blocked the political system around the centre, fixing consensus between left and right-wing parties around “familialism”, hindering advance in policies to alter traditional breadwinning/care gender roles in family (Alonso, Ciccia & Lombardo, 2023). Connected to power of organised religion (Vatican interference in Italian politics) it hindered feminist politics in both movement and institutions. In the transitions from fascism to democracy in Spain the “double militancy” of feminists in both autonomous movements and left parties allowed the development of institutional feminism (Alonso, Ciccia & Lombardo, 2023); yet, it can generate exclusions of non-institutional topics from autonomous movements such as anti-racism, domestic work, queer, migration— and activists outside the prototype of institutional feminist –white, middle-class, able-bodied, cisgender women with Spanish citizenship.

6 Post-socialist legacies

While the post-socialist legacies are often seen as deterministic for the development path, and specifically for the gender equality status of countries in East and Central Europe and the Balkans, in this project we propose to see them as a factor influencing socio-economic and political trends but leaving fundamental diversity both between and within countries. Countries have different socialist legacies, different democratization processes, and more recently different modes of de-democratization leading to a variety of outcomes both for feminisms in the region and equality regimes. Homogenizing the region obscures the diversity in de-democratization patterns and resistance to it (Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley, 2018), gender policy regimes (Krizsán et al., 2010), and feminisms (Krizsán & Roggeband, 2017).

The ambiguous effects of the democratic transition on women’s rights are widely recognized. As Małgorzata Fuszara underlines, all countries in the region shortly after 1989 experienced “a visible masculinization of the public sphere” marked by a significant decrease in women’s participation in formal politics (2019, p. 689). The newly introduced free market economy and rapid privatization of major industries resulted in a visible decline in women’s employment, increased poverty rates, and escalating inaccessibility of institutional childcare. Therefore, some stress that liberation from communism paradoxically meant “liberation from the ideals of [feminist] emancipation” (Grzybek & Mrozik, 2009, p. 9) and a “conservative revolution (…) that aimed at re-establishing the patriarchal gender structure” (Grabowska 2012, p. 386). The debates around women’s rights in the 1990’s, most notably around abortion, played a significant role in defining and structuring national political scenes and their internal divisions. They brought very different outcomes on the rights to abortion in the region (Gal, 1994; Gal & Kligman, 2000).

Major tensions in the literature regarding the region revolve around the quasi-colonial and non-reflexive imposition/adoption of Western concepts and meanings relevant to feminism, and the consequent denial of agency of feminist actors in the region. Feminism is represented as coming from the West, and Eastern Europe as having to catch up with the West (e.g., formalize activism into NGOs) (Gagyi & Ivancheva, 2017; Krastev, 2010). Kirsten Ghodsee argued that western feminists came to the region on “a tidal wave of grants” without understanding the region’s history or politics, imposing a “feminism-by-design”: a feminism that no longer talks about class in this context and as such has lost the legacy of women’s organizing under socialism (Ghodsee, 2004). According to Ghodsee the NGOised model of feminism that emerged after transition is a Western neoliberal imposition, one that makes the emergence of genuine feminism impossible (Ghodsee, 2015). In response to this, authors

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such as Elissa Helms (2014) or Andrea Krizsán and Conny Roggeband (2018) show the compatibility of NGO based organizing and feminist projects.

Nanette Funk (2014) takes another perspective, critiquing the idea that there was a feminism to be colonized in state-socialist countries. For her "Feminist Revisionist Scholars" (such as Ghodsee, de Haan, Ghit, Popa, Daskalova, Grabowska, Novikova, Herbst, Bonfiglioli), overemphasize the existence and agency of feminist activism in the region during state-socialism. According to Funk "feminist frustrations at the difficulties of being effective under neoliberalism heightens the desire to find women's agency in an anti-capitalist Marxist past" (Funk, 2014, p. 356). So while Ghodsee argues for acknowledgment of the contributions of state socialism in women`s improved position in the society, Funk criticizes state-socialist women`s organizations and policies, as they "both were and were not agents on behalf of women, and also prevented women's agency" (Funk, 2014, 344). Funk thus dismisses the potential for women to consciously identify with Marxism-Leninism, or wishing to improve their material conditions defined by class (e.g., through providing kindergartens for working mothers) on their own merit.

Nevertheless, the democratic transition from communism in CEE after 1989 had a strong and uncritical leaning towards Western democracies, which at that time held the status of canonical models of political, social, and economic development for the region. The ideological supremacy of the West dominated the horizons and ambitions of local CEE political elites, who got involved into the "voluntary import" of Western norms and practices, and "the politics of imitation", which tacitly confirmed asymmetrical relations between post-communist countries and Western Europe, and in the long run provoked the current populist anti-liberal turn (Krastev & Holmes, 2020). The latter is supposed to be grounded in deep resentment, anger, and a sense of unjust underestimation from the liberal West. Elzbieta Korolczuk (2019) challenges this interpretation, underlining that polls in Poland show general support for liberal democratic rules and the EU, more so than in some Western countries. She argues that what produced people's disappointment and objections was not the political project of liberalism, but the neoliberal economy and its destructive impact.

Anti-gender discourses also tap into post-socialist sensitivities and use references to totalitarian regimes, social engineering, and communist ideology to undermine and demonize local feminist movements (Graff, 2021). As Magdalena Grabowska (2013) points out, the conservative religious-nationalist discourse in Poland equates gender equality with Marxism or Leninism promoted by feminist, LGBTQI, and atheist circles (Warat, 2017). Moreover, the centralised and top-down manner in which gender equality policies were adopted during Europeanization makes it easy for anti-gender actors to draw parallels between the communist past and what they call "gender ideology" (Rawłuszko, 2021).

A weak civil society is often identified as one of the main components of the post-socialist legacy and as an explanation of the weakness of democracy in countries in the region (Howard, 2003). This premise is, however, contested by Tsveta Petrova and Sidney Tarrow (2007) who argue that that participatory activism may be weak, but transactional activism is very lively and efficiently providing for strong civil society impact. More recent work also points to the need to challenge the "weakness of civil society" paradigm. Some speak about the problematic nature of hegemonic civil society discourses focusing on NGOs and their vulnerability to autocratizing states ignoring strong patterns of organizing below the institutionalized surface of NGOs (Gagyi, Szarvas & Vigvári, 2020). Such organizing, even if not self-identifying as feminist, may nonetheless be part of struggles for gender justice (Fábián & Korolczuk, 2017; Jacobsson & Korolczuk 2017). In this context the analysis of non-

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progressive civil society (Gagyi, Szarvas & Vigvári, 2020; Greskovits, 2020) highlights the importance to understand civil society organizing not just as progressive and supportive of feminism but also as supportive of right-wing, anti-democratic, and anti-feminist political powers. Some argue that a specific legacy of the region is the institutionalized civil society/organizing model used by the left (elitist, NGO model without appeal to the bottom), while the right has taken up space in bottom up organizing often under anti-liberal agendas (Greskovits & Wittenberg, 2016) and that this may contribute to democratic erosion. These right wing movements have launched successful anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQI* campaigns in Central and Eastern European countries that use anti-colonial frames reflecting the ambiguity vis-à-vis the (idealized but also despised) West (Graff and Korolczuk 2018). In these frames the alleged colonizers include feminists and LGBTQI activists, left-wing and liberal politicians, transnational NGOs and international bodies that impose Western liberal norms on countries in the region (Graff and Korolczuk 2018, 2022). Graff and Korolczuk argue that right wing populist forces and anti-gender campaigns build on resentment towards "the West" for the "package deal" Central and Eastern Europe received: "liberalism as an ideology and practice based on liberty, freedom and equality before the law came together with an economic regime and value system promoting rampant individualism, a small state and the decay of social citizenship" (2022, p. 108). Likewise, Marta Rawłuszko (2019) shows how gender mainstreaming efforts in Poland are depicted as an effort of EU and political elites to transform Polish society against the will of the people. The rhetoric taps into pre-existing divides and inequalities between East and West Europe which are echoed in current tensions within the European Union.

6.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Capitalism/neoliberalism - as described above.
- Queer margin: The productive, but also problematic tensions between Western / American epistemologies and the post-communist realities turn out to be present also in the area of LGBT and queer studies. Joanna Mizielińska and Robert Kulpa (2011) underline that whereas Western history of LGBT movement builds on 'Stonewall era' and AIDS activism, these two have never happened in the CEE region. The term LGBT itself was adopted by CEE activists as a label already used in the West, despite the fact that in the early 1990s it was a predominantly gay and lesbian movement. The CEE groups looked at Western models, which at that time were already at the "queer" stage with a long history of organizing and variety of strategies and experiences. In result, local, Eastern sexual politics represented sometimes a creative combination of ideas and forms coming from different historical moments and positions within Western LGBTQ activism, and in the new contexts, produced original and different results. Importantly, the question of LGBTQ rights has been instrumentally used to maintain a hierarchical division between the West (civilized, liberal, advanced, old democracies) and the East (primitive, conservative, lagging behind, new democracies), obscuring homo- and transphobia in the West and producing a patronizing pedagogy towards the East (Kulpa, 2014). Still, the homo- and transphobic realities for many LGBTQ people in the CEE region should not be underestimated, especially in empirical research. The hostile context greatly impacts queer lives and activist practices, producing different expressions of gender and sexual intimacies, and various definitions of what is understood as radical or subversive (Ayoub & Chetaille, 2020; Mizielińska & Stasińska, 2017; O'Dwyer, 2018).

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- Organized religion: In the years following the end of socialism, the common goal of both civil society and political elites was to establish a new set of social, cultural, sexual and gender norms contrasting those promoted by the previous political system. During transition in Poland, the Catholic Church and representatives of the former pro-democratic opposition worked closely together to establish new models of national and Catholic citizenship entangled with patriarchal and heterosexist ideological structures (Mishtal, 2015). The Church and mainstream political discourses portrayed post-socialist feminism not only as an 'ideology imported from the West' but also a remnant of the previous political system; an enemy of traditional femininity and heterosexual marriage (Graff, 2021). In this regard, feminist researchers point out that organized religiosity in post-1989 Poland is "one of the greatest barriers" (Środa, 2007) in the struggle for gender equality, since it serves to protect the patriarchal order and the Church political control of women in the private sphere (Warat, 2016).

6.2 Power dynamics / social struggles:

- Feminist and queer activism such as social reproductive work is one label under which this is discussed in Poland. Under the conditions of multiple and never-ending crises (COVID-19, ban on abortion, LGBT-free zones, pushbacks on the Polish-Belarussian border, Russian invasion in Ukraine etc.), feminist and queer activism becomes dispersed and diversified, but also: very practical, and contextualized. It covers a broad array of problems and needs, in many instances concerning social reproduction and the preservation of human life. Moreover, within the context of a hostile state, feminist and queer organizing becomes more and more informal, consciously anti-institutional, sometimes short-term / immediate, anonymous, and done in almost clandestine manner. Still, feminists provide front line responses to different human rights' crisis, and thus, as Ewa Majewska claims, are *per se*, antifascist (2021). Last but not the least, the oppression itself brings a lot of distress, but the state of permanent crisis and never-ending need for activism bring increasing burnout and exhaustion to the movement (Grabowska & Rawłuszko, 2021). The modalities of doing feminism or queer politics in Poland under state misogyny, homo- and transphobia challenge the universal, heroic, and masculine political subject, and promote an important alternative of weak resistance practiced by the precarious and marginalized subjects (Majewska, 2019; 2021). It is also important to acknowledge new discursive frames employed by feminist and queer movements in Poland, which rather than highlighting differences between men and women, express their connections to the notions of solidarities, care, and mutual support (Grabowska & al., 2022), which for some scholars mark "the social turn" in movement organizing (Struzik, 2020). In this context it is interesting to observe the reinvention of "strike" as a form of public protest, as it was the case in the massive demonstration against the new anti-abortion law (Kubisa & Rakowska, 2018; Kubisa & Wojnicka, 2018).

6.3 Feminist failures:

- The beginning of democratic transition after 1989 was characterized by taking "West" as the only important point of reference for democracy, as well as feminist theory, and organizing. American/Western feminist genealogies and theoretical categories (such as "waves of feminism"), used by local feminist movements to discuss their own past and present positionality, overshadowed the achievements of women's emancipation

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during the communist past, marginalized the question of class inequalities also within the movement, and re-direct the interest towards newly established, formalized and professional feminist and women's NGOs, overshadowing informal activities undertaken by rural women and anarcho-feminist communities. Despite these early "failures", it should be emphasized that both during transition and today, a tradition of grassroots feminist practice and theory has played a crucial role in the development of democracy and feminist organizing. For instance, after the collapse of socialism, the anarcho-feminist movements proposed alternative models of citizenship different from the ones imposed by the post-socialist state, the Catholic Church, and the liberal feminism related to European institutions. Through political resistance across national, political, gender and sexuality borders, they have disrupted and queered binary divisions (national/foreign, East/West) and demanded recognition of the political, legal, and cultural presence of feminists, lesbians, and queers in public space (Dynda, 2022). Still, these local legacies and archives (also in case of lesbian and rural activism) are rarely studied and known within the movement or academia.

- Another problem emerging after 1989 in feminism in this region is side-lining class issues and the impact of neoliberalism on democracy, women's position, and the feminist movement. The Polish feminist movement, for instance, was criticized for taking a neoliberal turn (Charkiewicz, 2009), promoting a liberal-individualist vision of emancipation, and of depoliticization (Korolczuk, Kubisa & Szelewa, 2017). Researchers emphasize that during transition, institutional feminism of post-socialist countries was significantly inspired by liberal and radical American feminism, while disregarding the thought associated with socialist/labour rights feminism (Korolczuk, Kubisa & Szelewa, 2017). Feminist organizations' agenda at that time ignored class issues, violations of labour rights, and different economic positions of men and women, while emphasizing entrepreneurship and the empowerment of women in the market. As Julia Kubisa points out, feminist adoption and acceptance of free market economy model as the only one possible shaped "an excessive familiarity between feminists and neoliberalism" (Korolczuk, Kubisa & Szelewa, 2017, p. 6), contributing to the strengthening of the classless discourse and prioritization of the market over other spheres. At the same time, Polish feminist activists at that time completely ignored the welfare questions and did not represent interests of women from lower working classes. These were grassroots feminist communities, especially the anarcho-feminist one, which after 1989, sensitized feminist debates on class inequalities, and applied those hierarchies to the reflection over reproductive rights, gender-based violence, and gender and sexual citizenship.

7 Queer[2] / transgender legacies and queer resistance

As a Western idea, gender has been fundamental in the structuring of societies across time. Specifically, the gender binary, underscoring the sexual division of labour, has worked as an immutable social infrastructure. Binary conceptualisations of gender posit the existence of two mutually exclusive genders where women are seen as naturally belonging to the private

[2] In this section we rely on theories and terminology, which depict sexual and gender diversity and come from the Western context. We are well aware that this theoretical and linguistic coding of sexual dissidence cannot be treated as universal, and it remains highly contested in other political and geographical contexts.

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sphere and men to the public one, and establishes a fixed sexual orientation based on heterosexuality (Harris, 1996). Queer theories question the rigid identity categories of gender, norms of sexuality, and the ways in which the functioning of power acts to legitimize and institutionalise specific forms of sexuality and gender expression, thus leading to the stigmatisation of others. Gender, in queer theory, emerges as a construct, rejecting its earlier essentialist and biological groundings. Regarding this, critical queer theorists have shed light onto how one's learned gendered behaviour (what has been traditionally associated with masculinity or femininity) can be understood as a performance (never fully determined and never fully personally chosen) that is heavily shaped by normative heterosexuality. Performing an identity that escapes the norm can have violent outcomes, since gender acts as a dispositive of biopolitical power (Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 1997; Foucault, 1976). In this light, a key contribution from queer theory has been the destabilization of the gender category through a critique of power, privilege and normativity that configures it, in order to allow for unconstrained interpretations of it opening up forms of political freedom that encourage the fight for the possibility of being differently in the world (Ahmed, 2023; Butler, 2019).

Important parts of queer theorizations of liberal democracies draw from Critical Race Theory and its critique of liberal reform strategies focused on legal equality and "rights framework", i.e., using the principle of antidiscrimination as emancipatory tool. Individual formal legal equality expressed in anti-discrimination law tends to leave structural inequalities unaddressed; the focus on legal reforms and formal equality does not address structural inequalities and underlying mechanisms of discrimination. It creates an illusion that with anti-discrimination laws everyone is equal (Spade, 2015).

Transgender people's political needs are increasingly transformed into a "culture war issue". Trans persons lives have been rendered into an "issue" that has been reduced to a handful of topics: the existence of non-binary identities, gender neutral pronouns, trans women in sports etc. Stemming from transmisogyny, the resistance against trans women's presence in different areas of society is especially contested. All this contributes to the creation of trans people as folk devils (Faye, 2021).

Democracies are not exempt from resistances to sexual and gender rights, even when they are considered LGBT friendly. Heteroactivism (Nash & Browne, 2020) names the ideologies and practices around re-asserting heteronormativity as foundational for society. It aims to affirm the superiority and centrality of heteronormativity through different alliances with organized religions, political actors, and cultural movements among others. However, their formation differs depending on historical and spatial contexts. Heteroactivism claims to support sexual and gender equalities, while at the same time arguing against liberalizing legislation. Furthermore, it seeks to narrow and individualize the term "homophobia", pathologizes trans and gender nonconforming people, and implies a deficiency of non-heterosexual relationship forms. This struggle for heteronormativity has also been theorized as "compulsory heterosexuality", in which a heterosexual orientation is assumed to be "natural" contrary to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other sexual or romantic orientations (Lorde, 1984; Rich, 1980).

Judith Butler (2015) underlines that for democratic politics, and especially the democratic understanding of equality, it is essential to define who counts as "the people". In that sense, (mis)recognition, inclusion, and exclusion and (in)equality are all reproduced by the implicit or explicit demarcation lines around "the people". Butler stresses in their performative theory of assembly (2015) that different forms of public gatherings take part in struggles to define "the people", with the very physical presence of bodies. Neoliberal economics make certain

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parts of populations disposable (see also Achille Mbembe, 2019), inducing conditions of precarity, "in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others, and become differently exposed to injury, violence, and death" (Butler, 2015, p. 33). Importantly, "precarity is (…) directly linked with gender norms, since we know that those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk of harassment, pathologisation, and violence" (Butler, 2015, p. 34). Butler (2015) insists that gender politics must embrace other precarious groups and form uneasy alliances with those deemed disposable. For them, it is essential to recognize that such broader assemblies can express an opposing form of ethics – the ethos of solidarity, and thus make an important claim on the political.

This also means to see and understand democratic politics not only from the perspective of formal rules, elections, and legal reforms. From the perspective of people facing precarity, including transgender and queer people, administrative regulations and institutional practices connected to legal recognition, access to health care, social services, education, protection from police violence are crucial as life threatening or lifesaving. As Dean Spade (2015) underlines, liberal democracies distribute life chances/insecurity/vulnerability of transgender people through administrative law. From this perspective lesbian/gay politics centring legal equality claims (marriage equality and hate crimes legislation) are useless for trans politics. "Formal legal equality" approach is part of a neoliberal abandonment of the broad redistribution and social justice demands. Neoliberalism "produced a specific gay and lesbian rights formation" (Spade, 2015, p. 21), where leadership of the movement is provided by white, upper-class, well-educated people. NGOs are infiltrated by business management models and their ideas of effectiveness, they rely on external funders and their political goals, and get involved in competition between each other over scarce resources. Thus, lesbian and gay rights agenda has shifted towards presenting and promoting the class and race privilege (Spade, 2015).

Audre Lorde (2007), a Black lesbian feminist, grounded her well-known argument that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" in her personal experience of attending an academic conference. She was invited to the only panel where Black feminists and lesbians were represented – the rest of the conference did not make any reference to the knowledges of these minoritized groups. Lorde underlines that this is extremely problematic in case of feminist conferences as the situation represented the mechanism, where "tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of the same patriarchy" (2007, p. 74). This kind of a failure on part of academic feminists is often accompanied by the expectation towards Black or lesbian women to educate white women (within and outside of the academia) about the minoritized existence and experience. This is also 'an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns' (2007, p. 75). Thus, Audre Lorde makes a crucial argument about how domination/oppression works and what are the proper strategies of building emancipatory knowledges.

Queer studies have consistently presented itself as antinormative and disruptive, but actually in many cases failed to disrupt academia itself. They reproduce race and class stratifications and produce the "palace discourses" and knowledge accessible only to the very few at the best/most progressive universities. There is an important challenge of how to teach queer studies to poor and working-class students (who are also queer, black etc.), and how to produce knowledge accessible and useful for people, who academia speaks about (Brimm, 2020).

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7.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Neoliberalism/capitalism: gendered bodies are crucial for biopolitics, as the way in which they are governed and constituted is fundamental for the reproduction of the capitalist society. The gender binary and heteronormative social relations create 'coherent' (albeit deeply fragile) identities necessary for capitalist production. Queer theory has evidenced that sexual politics are intrinsically related to the economic sphere, demonstrating how both Fordism and post-Fordism worked through notions of desire and sexuality to build an overarching social order based on order, stability, and sexual division (Ludwig, 2018). In this light, LGBTI-phobia has been fundamental in the configurations of the state as a capitalist structure.
- Fascism: heteronormativity and the gender binary underpin the logic of fascism and the social structuring of fascist societies that are built upon the sexual division of labour and life. Consequently, under fascist regimes, the marginality of queerness becomes extremely evident, forced into secrecy and restrained visibility as self-protection measures. However, it is important to note that queer movements under fascism developed through clandestine subversion of the gender regimes, creating networks of solidarity and community-building, which would be crucial for transitional periods towards democracy, acting as political lobbies against the criminalisation of (limited) queer relationships.
- Organised religion: organised religion conceptualises gender relations in binary terms, understanding it through a hierarchical logic based on a "divine" gender inequality. Men are constructed as rightfully (by divine powers) dominant and authoritarian (albeit just and fair), and women as complementary and obedient to men, and thus totally subjected to their divine order. Organised religion therefore helps solidify normative assumptions about gender and sexuality that has historically excluded and dehumanised queer people.
- Liberal democracies: it is crucial to note the role of state and liberal democracies in production of what accounts for acceptable subjecthood/citizenship secured and recognised in fundamental human rights. By questioning who democracy works for, queer people have been placed at the margins and outside the scope of democratic states. In this sense, democratic participation as a marker of democratic success comes undone when considering that participatory practices and citizen's engagement are situated in the context of structural societal inequalities (Hill Collins, 2017). These inequalities make use of exclusionary mechanisms privileging subjects that fit, perform, and thus strengthen heteronormative configurations of the socio-political field.
- Colonial legacies: political and socio-cultural colonial thinking is based on heteronormative and binarist understandings of gender and sexuality conflated with white supremacist logic. Vergès (2022) explains how gender binarism is an "attribute of whiteness", inasmuch as racialised women are not considered to be completely "women" and racialised men not completely "men" due to inherited norms from colonialism and slavery. She argues black femininity and masculinity, in colonial times (and in contemporary society) are (re)worked grounds for the construction of white femininity and masculinity with blackness as its antithesis. While white women were associated with delicacy and fragility, black women (from slavery until now) have been perceived through notions of strength, hard-work, and lack of affection, which led to

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being assigned the most brutal tasks whilst enslaved (hooks, 1981; Vergès, 2022). Similarly, white men were associated with stoicism, just dominance and rationality, black men "were constructed as sexualised brutes" (Vergès, 2022, p. 93). Following this, Akwugo Emejulu (2022) argues black bodies have never been granted the category of human, explaining racialised gendered relations always took place under the rubric of the power relations of whiteness. Regarding this, queer theory has fleshed out the intersection between colonialism, anti-blackness, orientalism, and gender work to reproduce white supremacy.

7.2 Power dynamics / social struggles:

- Audrey Lorde (1984) argues that the use of anger is an appropriate reaction to racist and homophobic attitudes, and as such it comes with information and energy. Everyone facing oppression is equipped with anger, which can be used against the structures which brought it into being. Anger does not come with moral authority but can be used in an empowering way to work across the differences and give insights into how power operates.
- Sara Ahmed (2023; 2017; 2010; 2014) uses the figure of the feminist killjoy to argue that killing the joy of others becomes a political praxis enabling us to question and shed light onto the power relations that underpin the social, and consequently, shape all domains of life (cultural, economic, etc.). The feminist killjoy, through her refusal to participate, to contribute, to maintain the norm of heterosexism, heteronormativity, and racism, disrupts the happiness of others, and consequently, social consent. However, Ahmed (2017) notes how the feminist killjoy, in naming the problem (pointing out a sexist joke, denouncing a LGBTI-phobic claim, walking of a racist movie) is perceived and framed as the problem. "When you give a problem a name you become the problem" (Ahmed, 2014), thus evidencing the way power rooted in sexism, racism, and LGBTI-phobia works to delegitimise and ridicule coming up against it from a feminist standpoint.
- Following Akwugo Emejulu (2022) Black women, next to being placed outside of the category of "human" have also been denied womanhood, ungendered. This position, outside of the gender binary as a marginal position, makes Black women disposable, but also presents an opportunity. Being at the margins makes it possible to be more radical in seeking an alternative outside of the binaries, on which the oppressive human symbolic order relies. Fleeing the gender binary purposefully can be a tool of liberation, a way towards the apocalypse of the human order and creation of a new symbolic order. Being a fugitive from gender and from the human means to seek the end of those binary systems that wreak oppression, chaos, and destruction. While this is not strictly speaking a queer theory, as it mainly relies on the human/Other binary, the process of ungendering and rejecting the gender binary is part of being a fugitive making it also relevant to the "queer margins".

7.3 Feminist failures:

- Identity politics can contribute to the visibility of queer and transgender people, however, the focus on representation and inter-group differences often disregards material conditions and intra-group differences. Better representation does not automatically lead to affordable health care, accessible administrative procedures, or

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a decrease of poverty among queer and trans people. Furthermore, identity politics centres capitalist approaches and spreads its message through consumption and the individualization of queer experiences. Companies abuse queer issues in order to sell useless items often produced by marginalized and underpaid women.

- Puar's (2007; 2013) idea of homonationalism questions how sexuality has become a mechanism for the articulation of state power and formation of proper citizenship within the context of the US. In rejecting the idea that states are exclusively heteronormative and queer is always placed at the margins or directly outside, Puar (2013, p. 336) explains homonationalism as a conceptual frame "for understanding the complexities of how 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated". In this light, homonationalism can be interpreted as an organising principle of global politics as well as social movements, whereby LGBT rights are progressively incorporated into the conceptualisations of nationhood, which is simultaneously premised upon the exclusion of who is still deemed as the other, Puar argues, nonnormative queer people, particularly and religious ethnic other, especially highlighting the Muslim community. In this regard, Puar argues homonationalism as a concept describes the convergence of state practices, human rights models, and the transnational pathways of queer commodity culture. Consequently, Puar (2007, p. 337) defines it as "a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states, a constitutive and fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality."
- Puar explains pinkwashing is a practice made possible by homonationalism. Homonationalism is always connected to a broader global system of power networks, where states construct themselves as protectors of LGBT rights and population, purely for economic benefit (i.e., tourism). These state count on complicit actors that also help shape this image by tapping into discursive crusades against the threat of Islam to gay and women. However, this positive construction rests on violence against other LGBT people and vulnerable groups. Puar mentions Israel as enacting international politics of pinkwashing thanks to the global homonationalism made possible by the heightening of homophobia in both EU and USA.
- "TERF" is a contested term rarely used by those who it is ascribed to (Williams, 2020), but applied to designate those opposing the existence of gender and, consequently, trans persons' autonomy. Its use is less about coherent feminist politics than about engaging in Twitter wars (Faye, 2021). Because of the disagreement on the term "TERF", we opt to describe those not integrating trans people in their feminism either as "transphobic" or as "trans-exclusionary". Transphobia is a tendency within white and Western feminism, which does not only deny trans people's gender identity, but also disregards experiences of black and disabled women who are already deemed less feminine by racist society (Camminga, 2020; Faye, 2021). Transphobic feminists can position themselves as vulnerable and are recognized as such because of whiteness and gender norms, a privilege trans or black women do not possess (Pearce, Erikainen & Vincent, 2020). Some argue that trans-exclusionary feminists are abusing feminism to spread anti-trans opinions and thereby, consort with extreme-right movements (Carrera-Fernandez & DaPalma, 2020). Others point at the internal differences within trans-exclusionary feminist movements where some associate with right-wing groups,

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while others are explicitly distance themselves from right-wing politics (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). In the US, the increasing transphobia has been addressed as part of “a fascist movement furthering a specifically genocidal ideology” seeking to annihilate trans people (Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, 2022).

8 Legacies of (liberal) representative democracy

Liberal representative democracies across Europe are established on the previously discussed legacies and bear the traces thereof. Even if countries made explicit transitions from one regime to another, legacies were often left undiscussed or unresolved. Cultural archives (Wekker, 2016) of these legacies remained intact and were often silenced and continue to inform current liberal democracies and their institutions.

Liberal representative democracy has been amply investigated by critical feminist and democracy scholars. There are three main blocks of takeaways from that literature for, mainly, democracy, but also the politics of knowledge and violence: while considered in some works the best we have so far (Phillips, 1995), (liberal) representative democracy is criticized because it presents limitations due to its 1) formalistic and electoral focus allowing but for limited participation and inclusion; 2) individual formal legal understanding of equality leaving structural inequalities unaddressed; 3) reproduction of existing inequalities and exclusions and production of new ones. The question is whether they are reparable or beyond repair.

At the outset, many liberal representative democracies reflected a very traditional patriarchal model, entitling only men to vote, often awarding those with property and heads of family extra votes. Direct universal suffrage for men was a struggle, extending it to women one that last even longer, not to speak of that for citizens with foreign origins. The model of the citizen in a liberal representative democracy was a (heterosexual cisgender) man, the political system was created by and for men, and liberal representative democracy enshrined a patriarchal logic (Gaspard, 1994). But even once women were granted suffrage, the individual formal legal understanding of equality was no help in unpacking structural inequalities in politics, let alone addressing them. Women and other socio-demographic groups were for long formally excluded from elected and governing positions, entered them like space invaders (Puwar, 2004), and they are still strongly underrepresented in politics and policy making, violence against them and LGBTQI+ politicians, misogyny and racism being a fact.

While equality and inclusionary policies for electoral politics have been designed, their implementation is problematic, both for democracy and gender equality. Parties, if not resisting the implementation of such measures, tend to instrumentalize inclusionary policies as vote-seeking actions, to win votes by different social groups and stay in power, not as a goal per se. They are also ineffective because of state weakness (rely on private institutions, clientelism, political corruption) and inability to implement and enforce (Lang, Meier & Sauer, 2022).

Feminist scholars criticize the problematic divide of the private and the public inherent to liberal democracy (Fraser, 1997; Pateman, 1970; Phillips, 1991), arguing that inequalities in the private influence the public, and democracy has to be enacted in all parts of society. Liberal democracies reproduce gender based and racial exclusion and inequalities – issues considered part of the private are not addressed or considered important – gender/race/LGBT issues and claims are side-lined (Rahman, 2018). Unequal power relations, including gender inequality in private (GBV) and public realms (decision-making and public deliberation) affect decision making and public policy making (Mansbridge, 1993), and economic inequality is

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perpetuated as policymakers are not responsive to the needs and interests of poorer groups in society (Rahman, 2018).

Proposals for good representation of women and other under-represented or excluded groups emphasize the need to overcome this divide of the private and the public (Phillips, 1995). They underline the connection of political institutions and society; agonistic creation and presentation of interests; more integration and deliberation by bringing affected groups to the polity, thereby forcing elected representatives to listen to these experiences and knowledge (Celis & Childs, 2020).

Indeed, majoritarian decision-making, lack of open extensive debate and participation, delegation of power, lack of its control and accountability mechanisms, little interaction between citizens and representatives in between elections (della Porta, 2020; Pateman, 1970; Young, 2000), and limited to no participation of non-hegemonic subjects (Fraser, 1997; Young, 2000), as well as the whole conceptualization of power underlying the design of representative democracy, are problematic for democracy, creating a disconnection between politics and society (Celis & Childs, 2020).

Feminist and critical democracy scholarship has widely explored participatory and deliberative forms of democracy to explore its potential for inclusion of marginalized and alternative voices and the protection of minority rights, emphasizing the need for multiple public spaces and democratic participation in all spheres of society, from workplace to household and university. Societal participation is deemed crucial for political participation and democracy, empowering and training citizens through interactions in societal institutions. At the same time, social movements are an important source of democratic innovation, and opportunity for better representation of interests of underrepresented groups (della Porta, 2019), expanding the power of social movements, grassroots organizations, and marginalized constituencies to engage in political action, social movements should have stronger links with state policymaking, and at the same time state capacity and institutions must be protected (Rahman, 2018).

Feminists study participatory and deliberative democracy as alternative solutions, underlining that such models 1) allow for decision making respecting the fundamental equality of each citizen, both as a participant in deliberation, and as the bearer of potentially equal power in decisions; 2) bear the potential to allow for a more diverse, inclusionary and dynamic group of representatives, enhancing the quality of debate, bringing democratic justice, and potentially move closer to parity or presence democracy; 3) can create intermediate spaces between state and movements, allowing for different institutions, movements, and citizens that monitor government (Rosanvallon & Goldhammer, 2008; Tilly, 2004) and for democratic control of major public services (finance, health, education, care) (Walby, 2015).

These advantages notwithstanding, participatory and deliberative forms of democracy also bear a range of challenges and problems. They do not pay sufficient attention to power dynamics – intersectionally structured – existing in participatory and deliberative processes, due to pre-existing inequalities and exclusions that will prevent some people or groups from participating equally (Landemore, 2020; Martinez-Martinez-Palacios, 2018; Young, 1990). Marginalized groups have less resources and access to these participatory forms of democracy (Phillips, 1991). They often lack agency/mandate (e.g., citizen panels), thereby increasing the input of individual voices and their interests, mostly of those disposing of the resources to partake. Good deliberation leading to more equality and justice requires that everyone can partake equally (Fraser, 1997). Also, models of open democracy and

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deliberation tend to be individualized, lack mechanisms of representation of group interests, and as such may feed into a neoliberalisation of democracy. Furthermore, participatory, and deliberative forms of democracy unequally burden women and other groups in creating a democratic community (Mansbridge, 1993) and risk of ascribing certain work and qualities to women (e.g., care, solidarity, what Mansbridge refers to as “women’s experience”). In sum, participatory and deliberative forms of democracy do not really succeed in overcoming the flaws of (liberal) representative democracy.

Two further characteristics of such participatory and deliberative forms of democracy are even more problematic for an inclusive intersectional understanding of democracy. Deliberative democracy is built around ideas how best to come to consensus, and in doing so suppresses real differences in political positions and opinions. It views reason and rationality as the central issue of politics, and thereby erases ‘the political’. Consensus is always erasing the pluralism of positions and opinions and hegemony will always exclude some – often actually the majority of – people. The issue is how to be aware of this mechanism and accommodate for it. What about deep cleavages and fundamental differences? How to get those who see others as enemies to struggle as adversaries in an agonistic way (Mouffe, 2005; 2018)? Participatory and deliberative forms of democracy can also be instrumentalized, civil panels can be corrupted or influenced. Even more problematic is the fact that some of the suggested solutions come dangerously close to plebiscitary democracy models also promoted by authoritarian regimes, populist parties, and anti-gender movements, such as referenda and other ‘innovative’ direct democracy tools. While hollowing out contemporary institutions such as judiciary and legislative power, plebiscitary direct democracy tools connect authoritarian leaders directly to the public without much means of democratic control.

Do these proposals for participatory and deliberative replace liberal democracy or do we need to keep liberal democracy as an overarching framework? While it is important to be critical of liberal democracy and its exclusionary tendencies, not everything can be solved or governed using participatory and deliberative democracy. Hélène Landermore argues we should not get rid of liberal democracy altogether: it is the best of what we have seen so far, we should imagine ways to change it into a more inclusive form (Landemore, 2020). Representative and electoral democracy should be complemented with participation, inclusion, and deliberation, to maximize chances for a good political outcome. In addition, do we need a strong state to actually be able to introduce equality and inclusion policies (Rahman, 2018, in line with Tilly, 2007)?

Democracy is an unfinished, contested process of democratization and de-democratization; it is not linear (Tilly, 2007). Since antifeminist politics intervenes in democratic backsliding, and feminism intervenes in democratization, we need a theoretical model to understand what mechanisms and interactions allow us to link the diagnosis of the problems with democracy with solutions to it; a model that can help us to understand the dynamics between antifeminist forces, democratic backsliding, feminism, and democratization. We have some ideas to explore such a model from gender regime theory (Walby, 2009; 2020; 2022; Verloo, 2018; 2022a; 2022b), more particularly looking into the economy, polity, violence, civil society, knowledge, cathexis domains, hegemons.

8.1 Cross-cutting themes with other legacies:

- Liberal representative democracies are rooted in and shaped by all previous discussed legacies.

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- Colonialism and the definition of human/citizen in an (implicit) unquestioned very narrow understanding.
- Capitalism/Neoliberalism and the unquestioned equal individual and individualisation of society.

8.2 Power dynamics / social struggles:

- The institutionalization of gender equality policies (e.g., gender mainstreaming, gender quotas and efforts of political intersectionality) and feminist governance structures created to promote gender equality policies at different levels of governance (Sawer et al., 2023)
- The failure to (sufficiently) see, even in the alternatives put forward, existing power relations and hierarchies and their (re)production through the processes and mechanisms of "democracy".

8.3 Feminist failures:

- The abundant literature on – especially – the political representation of women focusing on procedures, looking into different dimensions separately, and having a narrow view of "women's interests", not intersectional (Celis & Childs, 2020)
- The co-optation of feminist actors by political institutions, the destroying of velvet triangles and pentagons; the replacement of feminist actors by "alternative" experts
- The shrinking, bending and hijacking of feminist concepts, discourses, and projects by political institutions, thereby getting beyond feminist reach. This especially includes the bending of gender equality projects to serve the neoliberal project.
- Colonization of the concept of intersectionality by white scholars, activists, and feminist policymakers (Emejulu, 2022) (see section on colonial legacies)
- White, liberal feminist movements appealing to universal sisterhood, based on false assumption of all-women's, same kind of oppression (hooks, 1986) (to which we can add especially class and ableness) (see section on colonial legacies)

9 De-democratization, democratic backsliding

The past decade is marked globally by a tendency of erosion of democracy with democracy indexes dropping globally (Alizada et al., 2021). Literature on democracy turned its attention increasingly to democratic de-consolidation, backsliding, regression, or erosion (Bogaards, 2018) pointing to worrisome trends. These typically lead to incremental erosion rather than sudden collapse of democracies (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; Bermeo, 2016). Analysts understand the current crises of democracy to be somewhat different compared to earlier democratic reversals that often consisted of drastic changes in the forms of authoritarian coups (Bermeo, 2016). Instead, they use concepts like backsliding, erosion, or "creeping authoritarianism" to stress that current processes of change are more gradual and incremental, with democratically elected autocratic leaders and executives progressively extending their power while questioning the legitimacy of political opposition and undermining civil liberties. Democratic institutions are dismantled, and existing checks and balances subverted, gradually declining the quality of democracy. The de-democratization literature

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that emerges also talks about defective democracy, hybrid regimes, and electoral autocracies (Bogaards, 2018). Cianetti and Hanley (2021) speak about “death by a thousand cuts” in which pluralism and political competition are slowly killed. Greskovits (2015) discusses the combined hollowing and backsliding of democratic institutions. All these concepts highlight the complexity and specificity of current processes of de-democratization. Most extensive attention focuses of the decay in rule of law, legitimacy of democratic institutions including political parties and governments, the rise of populist leaders and parties with illiberal inclinations, and the emergence of autocratic states in places that were previously seen as democratic (della Porta, 2020; Rahman, 2020; Scheppele, 2018).

Two tendencies can be identified in this emerging scholarship about democratic decay. First, many contributors to the debate come from a notion of liberal representative democracy, focusing on formal aspects. Much of the focus is on the erosion of democratic institutions and processes such as rule of law, checks and balances, free and fair elections (della Porta, 2019; Rahman, 2020). Such accounts of current problems tend to focus on the formalistic and procedural aspects of democracy, suggesting that preservation or restoration of institutional structures like elections, party systems, or the separation of powers would keep democracies healthy and stable. Sometimes they deal with the effects of political polarization. Yet, this approach ignores the many (pre)existing problems of exclusion and inequality in liberal democracies across the globe. Focusing on procedures or the wrongdoing of illiberal leaders could overshadow the social dimension of the discontent with liberal democracies, which some have rooted in the increasing insecurities produced by neoliberal reforms (Lorey, 2015) on top of previous exclusionary mechanisms.

Second, democratization is often interpreted as a linear process in which reversal takes place (Carothers, 2002; Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley, 2018), and where a return to the status quo ante – state of democracy - is the desirable outcome. Yet, this focus on current problems ignores pre-existing problems with democracy, that we discuss under legacies above. Many groups have been historically excluded from suffrage, but even with universal suffrage many are indirectly or informally excluded and lack the protections and resources necessary to participate. Even where participation in electoral processes is largely guaranteed, influence on public debate, agenda-setting, and decisions can be highly unequal (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962). Democratization processes were often contradictory and non-linear and only partially dissolved (political) inequalities. Despite the fact that inequalities and specifically gender inequality is often at the centre of protests against democratic erosion, gender aspects are largely neglected in this literature, or subsumed under cultural (Norris & Inglehart, 2019), or ideological problems (Enyedi, 2016; 2023) that only indirectly impact democracy.

For Charles Tilly, democratization is a process of struggle and negotiation between groups that ebb and flow over time instead of a linear process. He (Tilly, 2007) proposes four elements in the political relations between the state and citizens that help to distinguish democratization from de-democratization: breadth, equality, protection, and mutually binding consultation. Breadth refers to wide political inclusion of people and their expressed demands; equality refers to extensive equality among categories of citizens in the translation of their demands in state action; protections is from the state’s arbitrary action; and mutually binding consultation means that “state agents have clear, enforceable obligations to deliver benefits by category of recipient” and there is no evidence that “seekers of state benefits must bribe, cajole, threaten, or use third-party influence to get anything at all”. Thus, “e-democratization”, for Tilly (2007, p. 14), “means net movement toward narrower, more unequal, less protected, and less binding consultation.”

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Neglect of a more thorough assessment of economic and social aspects of de-democratization is also problematized (Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley, 2018) and seen to contribute to a simplistic and unsatisfactory understanding of current processes. It makes understanding why some regimes witness democratic erosion while others don't in post-communist Europe difficult. Backsliding is a result of a trade-off between democratic quality and stability in the region (Cianetti, Hanley & Dawson, 2020; Dimitrova, 2018). A way back to democracy is contestation and protests and grounded bringing back the social and economic with popular demands. A new set of literature brings a political economy reading of de-democratization (Scheiring, 2020) and economic factors contributing to the sustainability of recent autocracies (Magyar, 2016). This literature views transition to democracy as a critical juncture for the emergence of the far right due to the disregard of class and economic issues by the left, elitist politics, and exclusion of women from the democratization process. Elitist organizing in big cities, in the NGO model prevails thus creating a niche for the right, which mobilizes popular support for the newly emerging radical right (like Orban in Hungary) The dismissal of economic and social issues during transition, created a division between "losers and winners" of democracy and economic integration with western capitalism. Right-wing populists are using this to redistribute some of this money through clientelist practices that establish a network of exchanges of "favours" between the corrupt politicians and a few private citizens to the benefits of a few, instead of a right-based system of redistribution of rights, benefits, and resources that is equal and beneficial for all.

Political corruption is discussed in the gender literature as one of the factors underpinning the reproduction of democratically eroding systems (Alonso & Lombardo, 2018; Krizsán & Roggeband, 2021;). Democracy requires the rule of law as well as the pre-eminence of the common good as a guiding principle of government (Morlino, 2009). However, corruption subverts both premises by yielding "the supremacy of particular interests in public decisions and, thus, the exercise of authority for the sake of a few" (Villoria, Jiménez, & Revuelta, 2014, p. 198). In so doing, it has deep implications for other democratic dimensions such as responsiveness to citizens' demands or substantive equality, argue Alba Alonso and Emanuela Lombardo (2018). Political corruption has gendered effects. Since political corruption produces inefficient public services because it aims at benefiting a few individuals rather than the common good, women suffer a greater impact of corrupt practices, reporting higher levels of corruption victimization (Villoria, Jiménez, & Revuelta, 2014) because they have a more direct contact with the public sector (Stensota, Svensson, & Wängnerud, 2015). Political corruption undermines the effectiveness of gender equality policies because of budget cuts and deprioritisation connected to the squandering of public funds, as in the case of Spain (Lombardo, 2017), the disruption of policy strategies such as electoral quotas undermined by clientelism and informal power networks of male political dominance (Bjarnegård, 2013), and the ineffective implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender equality measures in public procurement regulations impeded by corrupted practices. Corrupt states also erode democracy by severely limiting access of women's NGOs to policymaking, implementation, consultation, and monitoring gender equality policies, as the analysis of Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) has shown in Central Eastern Europe.

In response to the mainstream debates about de-democratization/autocratization feminist and queer scholars have pointed to the particular gendered dynamics and implications of the current wave of democratic decline. A separate but very rich scholarship discusses anti-gender campaigns (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Paternotte, 2023). Feminist scholarship discusses the resurgence of anti-gender, homophobic or xenophobic discourses as one of the political tools that enable new political actors to redirect people's frustration and fears,

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and disappointments caused by flaws of democracy and consequences of the neoliberal economy (Fraser, 2019). However, the hostility against "gender ideology" cannot be reduced to its merely instrumental role in transforming anger into political support for particular far-right parties. Quite contrarily, the full-fledged misogyny and homophobia constitute the core element of the transnational anti-gender politics deeply rooted in social conservatism and/or religious fundamentalism. These ideas were initially advanced by the Catholic Church and Evangelical Protestantism but increasingly also by a host of other religious authorities (see the part on organized religion), and secular conservative political actors, civil society, and social movements (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Krizsán & Roggeband, 2021; Paternotte, 2023; Verloo, 2018). As gender conservatism and anti-feminism rise globally, some scholars speak about a new stage in "culture wars" (Graff, Kapur & Walters, 2019). This poses further challenges to democratic orders. Right-wing populists claim to "recover democracy" and give the power back to "the people", and at the same time they negate the democratic principles of inclusion and participation of certain groups, and involve in antagonistic conflicts, treating political adversaries as enemies that need to be eliminated or pushed out from the polity (Lombardo & Kantola, 2021; Mouffe, 2018). Agnieszka Graff and Elżbieta Korolczuk (2022) claim that gender – as in gender identity, sexuality, kinship and reproduction - is at the heart of the ongoing process of political realignment that can be termed " a populist moment", a realignment which includes negotiations concerning who are the people in a democracy.

Populist right-wing parties and backsliding governments not only promote misogynist and homo/transphobic discourses and ideologies, but also use specific gendered repertoires of repression, what Chenoweth and Marks (2022) coin the "autocrats playbook". First, we see concrete attacks on and attempts to roll back or block gender and sexual rights, often resulting in policy dismantling or backsliding. Studies assessing the consequences of democratic backsliding for gender equality rights, policies, and institutional arrangements (Krizsán & Roggeband, 2018; Roggeband & Krizsán, 2020) indicate that such attempts are particularly targeting policies and laws that aim to transform gender and sexual relations or that challenge established gender hierarchies. This does not mean to autocratic leaning governments and regimes do block or oppose all gender equality measures. As research indicates autocrats do occasionally promote (certain) women's rights, like gender quota to keep up their international reputation (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2022; Donno & Kreft, 2019; Tripp, 2019; Donno, Fox & Kaasik, 2022 - coined gender washing). Yet, autocratic regimes seldom do pinkwashing and research indicates that the advancement of LGBTQI rights is correlated to the quality of democracy (Corrales, 2021; Encarnación, 2014)

Certain policies (SOGI, sexual and reproductive rights) are openly attacked and radically dismantled but often policies are incrementally and gradually dismantled (by default) (Krizsán & Roggeband, 2018; Krizsán & Roggeband, 2021; Roggeband & Krizsán, 2018; Roggeband & Krizsán, 2020). This happens either by:

- (re)framing existing policies to serve objectives contrary to gender and sexual equality;
- undermining implementation capacities such as institutions, planning or budgets that make laws and policies operational in practice which contributes to sustaining facade democracies in which laws and policies remain "dead letters" (Falkner et al., 2008)
- eliminating accountability mechanisms by changing or closing altogether consultation platforms for human rights advocates from policy processes including implementation and policy monitoring or replacing human rights activists with "alternative" CSOs that support the regime.

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- discrediting of gender and sexual equality objectives and policies by high-level political actors openly question the legitimacy of gender and sexual equality as a goal and discredit existing policies thus undermining them and giving permission to lower-level state officials to circumvent/obstruct legislation and commitments.

Overall, backsliding regimes may keep laws and policies protecting human rights in place but undermine those in various ways. Dismantling of implementation arrangements, or obstructing them in the first place, is a relatively easy and low-key form of rolling back rights. It is also a rather invisible way of eliminating rights as these remain formally still existing, but ineffective due to a lack of implementation resources.

Second, backsliding and autocratizing regimes attempt to control the production and dissemination of critical feminist and queer theories that question binary and essentialist notions of gender and sexuality and attack critical race theory. Such critical theories as well as study programs are not only delegitimated and declared unscientific, but also banned from universities and school curricula (Korolczuk 2020). Feminist, queer, and critical race scholars are subjected to smear campaigns, but also harassed, threatened, and persecuted, forcing some of them into exile (Paternotte & Verloo, 2021; Ryder, 2022).

Third, and related to the previous, autocratic leaning and backsliding regimes often condone and sometimes also perpetrate violence against gendered, racialized, and sexual minorities. States routinely fail to protect these groups by refusing to investigate and prosecute violent assaults (Hawkesworth, 2020), and oppose transformative policies to counter gender-based violence as illustrated by the opposition to the Istanbul Convention (Krizsan & Roggeband, 2021). Backsliding governments and leaders circulate harmful speech as part of the nation-building project, deploying political trans and homophobia, misogyny, and racism (Hawkesworth, 2020; Kaul, 2021). Mary Hawkesworth calls states that fail to investigate, prosecute, and punish GBV even while formally professing equality of gender, racialized or sexual minorities, “femicidal states” (2020, p. 314). Femicidal states “actively or through omission create a politico-legal environment that reaffirms and reproduces race- and class-specific modes of male power by maximizing women’s vulnerability” (ibid). Within this gendered political violence as a subset particularly targets feminist, queer, anti-racist politicians, and activists to block or effectively kill their resistances and struggles to counter inequalities. Such violence is also effective in prevent or diminishing opportunities for collective action.

Fourth, democratic backsliding regimes seek to curtail the collective power of feminist and queer movements by squeezing and reconfiguring the space of civil society. Governments use deliberate, selective strategies to exclude or obstruct civil society perceived as threatening to their ideology using legal restriction as well as extra-legal strategies, while supporting or opening opportunities to CSOs ideologically and/or politically aligned with the political regime. Governments instrumentalize ideologically aligned civil society organizations to their own benefit: they are sponsored and used to influence the realm of civil society in ways that directly legitimize state power and uphold a façade of democracy (Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021).

9.1 Cross-cutting themes:

- De-democratization and its modalities connect in one way or another to all legacies discussed above. Tendencies of democratic erosion will be defined by various contextual specific patterns of legacies: by the quality and exclusionary logics of liberal

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democracy in place, by the specific combination of colonial, neoliberal, queer, post-socialist and/or fascist, or organized religion legacies in place.

9.2 Power dynamics/ social struggles

- De-democratization, especially its extreme form hitting Hungary and Poland is a fundamental challenge for feminist struggles in countries of the region. Autocratizing states target feminist and other gender equality organizations in a variety of ways from marginalization, through de-funding to persecution (Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021). Feminist responses are twofold. On the one hand, we see powerful resistance and reinvigoration of feminism through democratic innovations, social justice and pro-democracy coalition work, inclusive grassroots and community organizing, various innovative subversive strategies making up for previous patterns of cooperation with states. On the other hand, we see negative consequences as well. Many feminist groups go in abeyance, others change names or strategies, there is fear, exhaustion, lack of hope, and mental health problems (Krizsan & Roggeband, 2021). A renewed suspicion vis à vis states and possible feminist responses instilled by it are an important lesson feminist struggles is post-socialist countries can teach other feminisms across Europe. These strategies are not necessarily effective and they may also have paradoxical effects of facilitating mass mobilization as in the case of Poland (Korolczuk, 2022_.
- Backsliding regimes support/instrumentalize conservative civil society and opponents of “gender ideology” as defenders of the patriarchal and heteronormative status quo in a more privileged and powerful position compared to the promoters of the feminist project (Roggeband, 2018), thus creating a major power disparity where conservative groups possess of strong institutional ties and other allies like organized religion or vested interest groups, disposing them of more resources, better mobilizing structures, and frames that defend well-known principles, values, norms, rather than on more disruptive transformative feminist, queer and anti-racist frames. The dynamic relationships between feminist/queer movements, state-actors and anti-gender actors are a starting point to further theorize the power dynamics between these actors within a particular context and serves to analyse the implications of de-democratization for civil society.

9.3 Feminist failures:

- The progress bias of especially liberal feminist thought and practice, the uncritical assumption of the benevolent state and prioritizing institutionalized feminist action have contributed to a disconnect between the grassroots constituencies and feminist NGOs. Technocratic feminism (Rawłuszko, 2021) brought progress in terms of policy change but achieved this at the expense of political debates about gender equality issues in the wider political community, but also within potential feminist constituencies. This contributed to the vulnerability of both feminist achievements and to risky feminist dependencies on states, which in the context of democratic erosion turn away from supporting gender equality transformation. As showed in the case of more general social movement activism, left wing progressive grassroots and community-based organizing was left behind compared to right-wing organizing (Greskovits & Wittenberg, 2016) thus making the democracy project highly vulnerable to co-optation and widespread popular support for de-democratization projects.

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- In some countries feminist organizations have not established strong links with other pro-democracy actors, which makes feminist resistance to de-democratization less visible and separate rather than mainstreamed. While patterns of coalition formation tend to evolve in times of democratic erosion, to overcome exclusionary paths of coalition work require serious efforts.

10 Conclusions and take-aways for the other work packages of the CCINDLE project

The main contribution of this theory state of the art is that in order to understand the problems that current anti-gender and antidemocratic forces pose for democracy in Europe it is necessary to investigate the legacies that are problematic for democracy in Europe. We understand legacies as often / sometimes? overlooked roots of ongoing problems with democracy. We argue that anti-gender and antidemocratic forces draw on and tap into these legacies. Indeed, anti-gender and antidemocratic forces can develop and grow because of these roots of ongoing problems with democracy in Europe and beyond. Therefore, to address problems that these forces create for democracy we need to challenge more profound – and predominantly intersectional – power inequalities that are located in the foundations on which European democracies are built.

The legacies we deemed problematic for democracy in Europe and considered more in depth are those of capitalism and neoliberalism, colonialism, fascism, organized religion, post-socialist legacies, and (liberal) representative democracy. While some of these legacies have already received ample attention from feminist scholars, such as neo-liberalism and (liberal) representative democracy, pointing at the exclusionary nature of the systems and often also of the solutions meant to improve the system, this literature has left many shortcomings unchallenged.

The main problem with all these legacies is that they are systems of domination and oppression. The legacies that we have discussed in this state of the art overall point at power understood as domination, that is “power over” someone (Allen, 1998), the exercise of power over someone constructed as “Other”. These legacies, in different ways, contribute to projects of dehumanizing, as are the anti-gender and antidemocratic forces that today deny the very humanity for Black, Muslim, migrant, trans people, people from the LGBTQI+ community, thereby policing the borders of the human.

Many of these legacies pretend to put “power to” (Allen, 1998) act as central, that is the power to act as an autonomous individual disposing of their full capacities. What these legacies deliberately ignore and play down is the fact that because of these same legacies and the way they interact and mutually reinforce each other, many people do not dispose of the same – often any – of the options and possibilities available to a small hegemonic minority.

Furthermore, as we demonstrated for many of these legacies, very explicitly for instance for the capitalist and neoliberal legacies, the colonial, the fascist, as well as the one of organized religion, is that they diminish and cut out “power with” (Allen, 1998), the power for communities and groups of people to act together in order to build a life and world beyond the hegemony.

In terms of a theoretical follow up from this state of the art, feminist and other critical theory and praxis emphasize that power is not just domination. The concept of power also includes empowerment to act, to resist such domination in affirmative and proactive ways, to build futures based on other premises than the ones democracy in Europe – and beyond – is based

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on today. Democracy involves dynamics of power struggles. These power struggles are reflected in the notions of “power to” and “power with”, that is respectively the feminist individual and collective actors’ resistance to “power over” mentioned before. Such dynamics are an affirmation of feminist and other social actors’ political projects that put an intersectional inclusive humanity, caring for people and their living environment, not the least nature, centre stage. Feminist, queer, antiracist, decolonial, antifascist, anti-capitalist, ecofeminist approaches contain the potential to respond to the shortcomings of democracy, and to move beyond it, putting forward inclusionary, participatory, and egalitarian visions of democracy aiming at social justice.

These insights suggest that saving or repairing existing democracies and democratic institutions will not be enough to fix and overcome the current crisis of democracy. The critical reading of the legacies analysed in this state of the art and the fluidity of institutional frameworks and processes brought by contestation around what? invites to rethink democracy more fundamentally in ways that, on the one hand, pre-empt current problems of legitimacy, inclusion, participation, and citizen involvement, and, on the other hand, also challenge existing social and economic inequalities that undermine political equality.

We think we need to conceptually develop intersectionality regimes starting from gender regime theories; race/ethnicity and migration/integration regimes; organized religion and state-church relations/degree of secularization; welfare regimes; Europeanization; the type of interface between state and civil society in each case is relevant to understand how anti-feminist actors can exploit them and how feminist responses can better be organized; political corruption is an important de-democratizing factor (to bring in the analysis of polity and which other domains?); party system (e.g. weakness of left parties; ambiguity of centre parties that ally with far right parties); public opinion ideas about gender/LGBT/race.

The study of feminist discourse and action to construct feminist future projects of society will be the next step of the theory work in this work package of the CCINDLE project. Feminist futures include understanding what feminist approaches so far often located in the margins – including queer, antiracist, antifascist, decolonial, anti-capitalist, ecofeminist and other inclusive intersectional feminisms – contain the potential for challenging power as domination – also within feminist circles – and the identified legacies that support power as domination in Europe. Of particular use for looking at anti-gender and antidemocratic forces are queer and decolonial approaches for feminist futures. Queer approaches challenge the “heteronormative cisgender binary”, both queer and decolonial approaches challenge who is included or excluded from the possibility to be considered 'human' according to hegemonic norms. They go to the core of what anti-gender and antidemocratic forces stand for.

This next step in CCINDLE theory work includes exploring what of the legacies that are problematic for democracy are feminist projects targeting and how they are addressing such legacies, as well as how context matters for the type of feminist projects that are developed. Overall, it includes a study of how feminist futures work to humanize societies and overwrite contextually dependent legacies of exclusion.

A key learning of this state of the art for the empirical work in CCINDLE is for us researchers to be reflexive about how specific legacies matter in each national context, how they overlap and are intertwined. This is important for understanding local dynamics of anti-gender and antidemocratic forces. It is also crucial for capturing how struggles to resist their exclusionary effects address multiple legacies (and their interconnections) in different ways depending on the country under scrutiny. This will help us to understand relevant and feminist responses

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from movements and institutions. Detailed take aways for empirical work in work packages 2, 3 and 4 are included in the body of this document, under the various legacies analysed.

As mentioned at the outset, it is important to note that this state of the art is a living document. As the project progresses, our theoretical framework will also transform to include novel ideas crucial to our understanding of the relationship between feminism and democracy.

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11 Annex - Take-aways for WP2, WP3 and WP4

11.1 Introduction

- The SoA can be used to inform both: our research tools and our interpretative lenses. However, as the SoA is a long and comprehensive but still very general document, it should serve for different WPs and national case studies teams rather as a source of “sensitizing questions”. The latter should be relevant to particular contexts, specific research questions/topics and empirical data. As different legacies of capitalism and neoliberalism, colonialism, organized religion, fascism, state socialism, representative and liberal democracy, de-democratization and different anticolonial, queer and feminist struggles bear different meaning to different parts of our project, the critical reflection and selection is indispensable. It means that the whole SoA should not be applied to everything, it is not possible, nor necessary embrace its complexity in every

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WP or in every national case. The informed decision on the research design within the WPs and national teams are still needed.

It is still an open question whether we need to conceptually develop a theoretical model that would bring all legacies and margins together, and link them to more general gender regime theories, embracing also other varieties (of capitalism, of welfare regimes, of state-civil society relations, of state-organized religion relations, of party systems, of etc.). This is probably the question of how we see the theory – as an exhaustive, overarching, logically coherent, abstract system of arguments, or whether it rather resembles a rhizomatic, more uneven structure that informs context specific analyses of de-democratization processes and feminist responses. Similarly, this open question concerns whether we intend to build up a model (and of what kind) to better understand the relationship between anti-gender forces, feminism, democratization, and de-democratization. Still, all definitions proposed are provisionary, and they will evolve thanks to empirical research and voices from the feminist movements. This is a living document, the first version of it.

11.2 Democracy and de-democratization

11.2.1 How do we define democracy?

- Democracy, whether defined as an abstract, philosophical concept or as its historical articulation in a form of a particular political regime, is integrally connected to the act of setting its limits. In the case of Western, European democracy the boundaries of the democratic polity were clearly defined by needs of capitalist, economic expansion and the Other (women and slaves – degraded, dehumanized, and exploited). Since the beginning, protecting norms labelled as “democratic” and “liberal democratic” perpetuated sharp class inequalities and involved structural violence and injustice towards gendered and racialized subjects.
- From the perspective of formal rules, liberal democracy seems to be an unfinished, unilinear process, constantly embracing dynamics of democratization and de-democratization. Also, if the eventual outcomes of democratic procedures & democratically adopted politics on life chances distribution within the society are examined, democracy remains a much contested regime. The questions of representation, recognition, and redistribution should be all taken into account.

11.2.2 And what is a response to de-democratization?

- Charles Tilly definition of de-democratization’ as ‘means net movement toward narrower, more unequal, less protected, and less binding consultation.’ (2007, p. 14) is useful for our project. In Tilly’s view democratization is a continuing process with many twists and turns throughout history. It has no clear start or end point. The question is if the term "de-democratization" is actually an adequate concept to explain the many intersecting developments we are currently seeing across Europe, it may be too narrow to capture all problematic aspects we discuss in the SoA. The SoA also questions if the phenomenon of "anti-gender forces" should be viewed as a European novelty or, quite the contrary, part of a long-time, structural continuity rooted in the legacies of liberal democracy in Europe. If the latter is the case the responses to de-democratization should have strong feminist, queer, anti-racist, and anticapitalist

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profile.Feminist scholars have identified the specific gendered dynamics of de-democratization and autocratization processes that include curtailing of collective power of feminist and queer movements, gender-based violence against political and civil society actors and dismantling/backsliding of gender and sexual rights.

- Autocratization (and authoritarianism) in Hungary and Poland alerts us on important mechanisms of de-democratization both for CEE and other European countries: the paradox of keeping the rules of democracy but taking democracy away from the people, and of the role of political corruption as a key mechanism for maintaining the regime.
- As the processes of de-democratization are being rooted in capitalism and in its current neoliberal version, we can include as responses those initiatives/projects which aim at s: a) reducing / fighting against economic and social precarity of particular (gendered, racialized etc.) groups, and/or b) challenging or proposing alternatives to neoliberal norms of individualism, competition and self-reliance.

11.3 Anti-gender campaigns / forces

11.3.1 How do we make sure categories used in the project (like 'anti-gender') are not exclusive? Is 'anti-gender' the right term to capture what we're interested in? What is an anti-gender campaign?

- We can explore continuity/discontinuity/re-elaboration of fascist pasts in anti-gender and anti-democratic forces: in their politics of knowledge, anti-intellectualism, censorship, curtailing academic freedom, anti-woke culture. It is also useful to analyze how/where fascist understandings of gender resonates in far-right or anti-gender discourse on gender.
- In particular contexts, the transition to democracy from fascist or communist past could be a key factor to understand today's anti-democratic forces and their hegemonic potential (the civil society position after the transition, the feminist politics in both movements and institutions etc.).
- We should focus on dehumanizing/othering aspects of anti-gender campaigns – what kind of groups are constructed as Others and to what extent their humanity is undermined or denied.
- As race is a constructed category and different European countries have different legacies and different dominant expressions of racism towards different social groups, we should see as racist, also those anti-gender campaigns who do not use strictly anti-Black violence, but also target Jews, Muslims, Arab, Roma etc. We can embrace that these attacks can take place either within the framework of security (also of white European women) or within the framework of economic costs.
- For anti-gender and anti-democratic forces the kind of state-church relationship should be considered in each national case. Especially, it might be important to consider the relationship between the religious domain and the education (the extent of proposing religious teaching as part of official curricula).
- Sometimes neoliberal norms are used to dismiss feminist responses, especially those In institutional form, by anti-gender, conservative actors. In this critique feminist initiatives are presented as only responding to private economic interests of the well-

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off, elite women, who instrumentally use state resources to respond to the artificial, invented social problems. In our empirical work, we can try to check whether this kind of narrative is present in anti-gender campaigns targeting feminist actors in the national cases.

11.4 Feminism

11.4.1 Who should be classified as a feminist actor? Self-identification vs. activists doing feminist work but not sharing feminist identity? What counts as a feminist response?

- The CCINDLE project embraces an intersectional feminist perspective, meaning that it identifies misogyny, racism, homo- and transphobia, as well as class oppression as historically and practically intertwined systems of domination and exclusion that need to be tackled (or denounced). Thus, when studying feminist responses, we should pay full attention to the lip service given to intersectionality. Among the others factor, we should ask the question who is a part of feminist coalitions and movements, who is actually treated as a "comrade" for local feminist organizing, and to what extent the local "feminist" label omits or excludes important part of emancipatory and feminist work. In other words, "feminist identities" are also locally produced determining who is included and who is not, and for whom self-identification with constructed category of "feminism" is easier or not possible at all.
- CEE experiences show that is it important to study feminist responses without strong, *a priori* imposed definitions, as the realities may differ from the mainstream, mainly West theories of what "civil society" is. We should study and include different articulations of activism, both formal, and informal, and take into account the political context of explicitly or implicitly hostile state (towards women, feminist activists, Black people, transgender people, refugees etc.) and non-democratic conditions. Modes of resistance can be similar and can differ depending on different topic, group and political conditions involved.
- We should be careful about automatic use of "LGBTQ+" category as homogenous and unanimous while also recognizing the shared histories and oppressions. Trans politics and queer voices may differ from the positions held by NGOs focused and run by cisgender gay and lesbians.
- We should involve feminist/Black/queer responses which focus on the "outcomes" of democracy in terms of life chances distributed by states and state policies: not only recognition is important.
- We could check whether the feminist actors, who we identify as developing "responses", define their target as "anti-gender campaign", "ant-LGBTQ force" or in any other way ("fascists")?

11.4.2 Do we use "proactive" vs "reactive" division to describe feminist responses?

- During the SoA development we have never used the proactive vs. reactive distinction to differentiate between different feminist or other movements' responses. Instead, we suggest that throughout the history of transition to democracy in each national context is important to see the strengths and weaknesses that feminist actors inherited, and how these enable or constrain feminist responses to anti-gender, homo- and transphobic, racist forces, in movements and institutions nowadays.

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- We also suggest that when thinking about feminist pro-democratic responses, we could try to see whether they address the weaknesses that anti-gender, and anti-democratic actors exploit to their advance, e.g.: mobilization of civil society; anti-intellectualism, anti-parliamentarism; nationalism; and whether they articulate alternative narratives. To what extent feminist pro-democratic responses counter antidemocratic constructions of gender roles of women, connected to demographic and nationalistic projects, and of men, associated to violence, and to the culture of war? To what extent do feminist responses address the problem of organized religion, if it is relevant in the country case context?
- With a reservation that not everything can be solved or governed using participatory and deliberative democracy, our research on feminist experiments with democracy could involve the question of participation/inclusion/deliberation practices and their eventual outcomes

11.4.3 How can clashes within feminism be captured, issues that unite and fracture?

- During the SoA development, we admit that feminist movements are diverse, internally divided, and that they dynamically change. We also admit that the history of feminism is a history of exclusions and failures, which have brought harmful effects on the feminists themselves and broader society. In other words, feminist movements have been always entangled within the legacies we describe in the SoA. At the same time, we have learned from vast, critical literature on feminism written by feminists, so maybe the only way out to this question is to be very cautious about whether we can see differences and clashes within the empirical data we will gather?

11.4.4 How do we position self-identified feminists who are openly transphobic?

- As anti-gender campaigns, also known as anti-LGBTQ ideology campaigns, do have strong homophobic and transphobic content, the very same elements present within the feminist movement (often labelled as TERFs), despite the fact of difference in actors' self-identification, should be recognized as a part of anti-gender campaigning. To avoid using the self-assigned descriptor "gender critical", which legitimates and obscures transphobia, we will call "gender critical feminists" (as often they self-label themselves), "transphobic actors". This to avoid the contested term "TERF" and to make visible the transphobia of some feminist actors.

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