Evidence Bite: Counteracting Anti-gender through Feminist Knowledge

This article from CCINDLE partners Emanuela Lombardo and Paloma Caravantes explains how feminist knowledge and democratic practice can be mobilised to challenge anti-gender opposition and strengthen democracy across Europe. Anti-gender politics occurs within a wider spectrum of far-right, anti-feminist, and anti-LGBTQI+ forces, and it poses a growing challenge to equality and democratic inclusion in Europe. The article focuses on feminist knowledge production as a key strategy to counteract exclusionary politics and build inclusive democratic spaces. This evidence bite offers a concise summary of its conclusions.

The **key observations** of the article include that:

1. Feminist knowledge is both a target and a resource

Anti-gender actors attack feminist scholarship and gender expertise as 'ideology' to delegitimise equality agendas and bolster conservative norms. At the same time, feminist knowledge (particularly when tied to intersectionality and democratic values) is a critical resource for resisting anti-gender discourses.

2. The co-creation of knowledge strengthens democratic inclusion

The CCINDLE project emphasises co-creation, i.e. developing feminist insights in dialogue with civil society, institutional actors, and marginalised groups. This collaborative approach:

- Challenges anti-gender narratives
- Expands the public understanding of equality beyond academic silos
- Fosters solidarity across movements for gender, race, and LGBTQI+ equality

3. Feminist knowledge drives participatory democracy

Feminist schools of thought highlight how knowledge production is inherently political, and that what counts as 'true' or 'expert' knowledge shapes whose voices are heard in democratic processes. By centring embodied, intersectional, and collective forms of knowledge, feminist actors help to undo exclusionary knowledge hierarchies and support broader participation in policy debates and civic life.

The **key takeaway messages** of the article include to:

- **Defend feminist knowledge as democratic infrastructure:** Attacks on gender expertise undermine not just gender equality, but the quality of democratic debate itself.
- **Co-create knowledge with communities:** Collaborative, intersectional knowledge practices help expose exclusionary logics and build alternative democratic worldviews. This is a key principle of the CCINDLE project.
- **Make knowledge public and participatory:** Opening up feminist research to a broader public beyond familiar academic circles strengthens resilience against anti-

Evidence Bite: Counteracting Anti-gender through Feminist Knowledge

gender narratives and facilitates inclusive policymaking.

Anti-gender opposition is not only a political threat, it attacks the intellectual foundations of equality by discrediting gender research, delegitimising feminist discourses, and shrinking the space for critical inquiry. Recognising feminist knowledge as a democratising force reframes the fight against anti-gender politics. This is not mere opposition to a set of ideas, but a struggle over what kinds of knowledge shape our shared futures. Feminist knowledge is not abstract academic theory, it is a practical tool for defending and expanding inclusive democracy. Read the full article here.

For more information on the CCINDLE project, as well as publications, evidence bites, podcasts, videos and more, please visit our website: https://ccindle.org

Email: ccindle.info@ru.nl

Funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union under grant No 101061256. UK consortium partners are funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee [grant numbers 10051932 and 10048433].
Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency or UKRI. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.