



CHAPTER 2

“We Don’t Want Rainbow Terror”: Religious and Far-Right Sexual Politics in Poland and Spain

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INTRODUCTION

In the 2000s, a rise in terrorist attacks struck Europe spreading public alarm. Then, a massive onslaught took place in Madrid in March 2004, when 193 people were killed by Al-Qaeda. Like Spain, the Polish state also took part in the coalition of forces in the military intervention in Iraq

The quote originates from the title of a report in a far-right Catholic newspaper on the rally “National March for Family” against LGBTQ* that took place in Warsaw in March 2019 (quote after Ślusarczyk/Gosc.pl 2019).

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C. Möser et al. (eds.), *Paradoxical Right-Wing Sexual Politics
in Europe*, Global Queer Politics,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81341-3_2

and the threat of terrorism was proclaimed by politicians in Poland, too. However, nothing that could be called “terrorism” happened in fact. Not until the 10th of October 2005—three days before the Polish presidential elections—when the police found 13 bomb mock-ups in Warsaw and declared that an attempted multiple “terrorist attack” had been averted. In an anonymous email sent to the mayor of Warsaw Lech Kaczyński,¹ the groups “GayPower Brigades” and “Strong Gay”² claimed to stand behind the operation (Machajski et al./Wyborcza 2006). Back then, mayor Lech Kaczyński was also one of the electoral candidates for president and, in fact, he won the 2005 elections, while the search for the so-called gay bombers continued with police raids on gay clubs and police searches of the homes of LGBTQ* activists. Finally, in 2006, this time before the regional elections, “PowerGay” was allegedly found and one club owner arrested, but then he was released again: “PowerGay” appeared to be the name of an energy drink sold in the club.³

While in Poland right-wing conservatives and the far right⁴ harassed LGBTQ* activists in 2005, Spain legalized same-sex marriage on the 3rd of July, 2005, becoming the third European country to do so and started a period of progressive policies to foster and protect sexual rights through general regulations like the Education Law (that includes sexual diversity in schools, 2006) and the Gender Identity Law (that allows quick changes of gender identity in official registers, 2007). Despite the early mobilization of the Catholic Church and conservative actors against same-sex marriage in 2005, the anti-LGBTQ* positions have remained marginal in Spain. The conservative People’s Party⁵ and Citizens party⁶ changed their position against sexual rights and maintained the previous laws when they were in government (from 2011 to 2019). Only the far-right parties (with no representation in the national parliament for forty years) and religious pro-life activists kept their former anti-LGBTQ* position aligned with the Catholic Church. Surprisingly though, in 2019, a new far-right party (Vox) unexpectedly gained 15% of the seats.⁷ Their anti-LGBTQ* activism played no role in their fast advance but rather the nationalist disputes between Catalunya and Spain.⁸ However, the first targets of the far right were not the Catalanian debates but gender policies: once in

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public institutions, Vox used their access to information to create black-lists of workers at anti-discrimination and sexual education programmes, while they spread international anti-rights rhetoric in the media.⁹

Despite constant struggles including some deadlocks (e.g. regarding recognition of same-sex partnership, hate speech and hate crime laws, implementation of sexual education) in the last decades in Poland also partial legal progress appeared in terms of LGBTQ* rights when it comes to employment (sexual orientation and identity), right to asylum in Poland (for those persecuted because of their of sexual orientation), next to this the right to public assembly has been confirmed by national and international courts. The civil society sector, including LGBTQ* NGOs, has made great efforts to introduce change, for example by organizing workshops on sexual diversity in schools, and some cities (including Warsaw in February 2019) signed LGBTQ+ Cards or Declarations. These Cards pledged to establish help centres, measures against violence and hate-crimes, anti-discriminatory and sexual education based on WHO standards, as well as better access to public administration in order to improve the situation of LGBTQ* people, but they have no legal consequences nor any legally binding force. After the mayor of Warsaw Rafał Trzaskowski signed the declaration in 2019, the fundamentalist Catholic and the far-right political spectrum reacted strongly. In the annual National March for Life and Family¹⁰ of 2019, anti-choice and anti-LGBTQ* activists taking part in the rally framed the LGBTQ+ Cards as “rainbow terror” (*tęczowy terror*): “Warsaw authorities introduced rainbow terror. This (their rally) is in opposition against the demoralization of our children” (Ślusarczyk/Gosc.pl 2019). But the reaction went beyond discourses on the streets and multiple municipalities made anti-LGBT declarations (called in the media “LGBT-Free zones”—TVN 2019), promising measures against the introduction of so-called LGBT ideology, or signed other analogue declarations called “Family Card” (“karta rodziny”) that focused on “protecting” the Catholic concept of the family.¹¹

By declaring “LGBT-free zones” in 2019, next to Lithuania and its anti-LGBTQ* “*Propaganda*” legislation, Poland has become one of the countries where the anti-gender and anti-LGBTQ* fears have been pushed the furthest in the European Union.¹² The two countries are good examples of the avant-garde and rearguard of the rise of the far right and its sexual politics in the European Union, which makes them interesting cases for comparison. Through the comparison, we expect to

gain a better understanding of how local contexts make sense of global trends and transnational discourses, reframing transnational ideologies differently according to collective memories and definitions of national identity, and how national backgrounds make a particular rhetoric of crisis more or less plausible, determining the triggers that will release collective reactions. In other words, we wonder how gender becomes a “dictatorship” and rainbows become a “terror”, and how it is that such a “terror” is active in Poland and not in Spain. In the next pages, we will explore this starting from our conceptual framework based on the idea of “moral panic” (Cohen 1972) and the theory of framing in collective action by Snow and Benford (1988). Then, we introduce the key actors (right-wing parties and activists, the Catholic Church and governments) to continue with the analysis of the rhetoric of crisis (how fear, familism and nationalism merged) and its paradoxes.

FRAMING PARADOXICAL PANICS

The fact that an expression like “rainbow terror” is nowadays intelligible for the readers of this book is the successful result of the cognitive politics behind the making of a moral panic, even if we do not feel the fear of rainbows. A moral panic was defined by Stanley Cohen as a “condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests” (Cohen 1972: 9). According to Cohen’s process-oriented approach, the drama starts when those who consider themselves as the right thinking people (Cohen mentions bishops, editors and politicians as “moral entrepreneurs”¹³) perceive their values or interests threatened by particular emerging ideas, situations, people, etc. The mere attribution of a threatening nature to something (or somebody) does not necessarily involve a moral dimension. According to Thompson (2005), the reason to use the word “moral” to label these episodes aims at the sacred credit of the orthodoxy under threat. Even if this particular understanding matches with our two cases (since they both present a significant religious dimension), we do not think that “moral” means generally “sacred”, but we agree with Thompson when he points out that moral panics are something more than just a panic: they indicate that the perceived danger is “a threat to the social order itself or an idealized conception of some part of it” (Thompson 2005: 8). The moral entrepreneurs (whoever they are, weak or strong, majority or minority) will invoke the essentiality of some particular community values, identity,

and sense of order and security as the core and the true nature of the larger society.

As a variety of the moral panics, our cases are also representatives of the “sex panics” that put the accent on the demonization of reproductive and sexual rights, and their defenders (Rubin 1984; Herdt 2009). However, we decided to stick to the more general concept of “moral” because we will focus on two key factors that make the “moral” particularly meaningful: nationalism and religion. Despite the presumable strengths of the nation and the sacred, their defenders are entirely immersed in the contemporary “post-truth” games. As Lewandowsky et al. (2017) pointed out (also implicitly in Joosse 2017), depicting something as a threat is a process of social construction of reality and it can be a game of confusion itself. In fact, one of the typical paradoxes of the far-right sexual politics consists of self-victimization (Paternotte and Kuhar 2017). This means that the strong pretend to be the weakest in order to gain legitimacy for their abuses. We understand this process of self-victimization as a political expression of the DARVO tactic (Freyd 1997), consisting of Denying the accusations, Attacking back and Reversing the Victim into the Offender. This approach was revealed and denounced by Jennifer Freyd as a typical tactic used against women by their abusers when the women denounce them, but the scope of the idea is broader since it applies to structural dimensions of abuse, such as the hegemony of the abuser’s social position, available resources and dominating values.

To navigate those confusing scenarios of making moral fears, we will adopt David Snow’s classic perspective on frame analyses (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988). From our point of view, the far-right moral panics are, among other things, the result of particular framing efforts. These framing efforts include a task of diagnosis as a starting point and more discursive, symbolic and strategic operations to align different topics in the same framework (e.g. sexuality, religious freedom, nationalism). Considering the different workings of similar ideologies in Poland and Spain, we also analyse different structures of political opportunities of the differential framing process, or what Snow and Benford (1988) named “empirical constraints”. As Stuart Hall et al. (2013) mentioned about the rise of crime panic (i.e. panic due to the fear of being assaulted, or robbed, etc.) in the United States, the way in which public concerns are labelled and imagined is one of the keys of the moral panic process. In this process, key words and expressions are connected to particular events or people and they become representative of a complete drama

and crisis rhetoric (Hall et al. 2013: 19). In our cases, the same representation of the same threats came out with dissimilar results, according to the differential contexts of the two countries.

ACTORS OF RIGHT-WING SEXUAL POLITICS

In both countries, the Catholic Church has had a prominent ideological role and has tried to lead the discourse about cultural values, cultural legacy and even national identity with different results. By assuming a crucial role in the propagation of patriotism and strengthened by the election of a Polish Pope (John Paul II), the Polish Church managed to obtain the position of the most important moral authority during the transformation of the political system around 1989–1990 and afterwards. In contrast, the Spanish Catholic Church is not so popular and is socially rejected as a political actor due to its collaboration with the Fascist Dictatorship (1936–1975, see Payne 1984), when the Church provided ideological support to repression through so-called National-Catholicism, a doctrinal and political corpus that imposed the idea of Catholicism as ethno-religion, similar to what is nowadays being fostered in Poland. In recent years, the adherents of Catholicism in Poland comprise about 92% of the population (CBOS 2017a), while in Spain the share is at 68% (CIS 2018). Attendance at religious services has been high in Poland (75% of the population, CBOS 2018) while very low in Spain (9% of the population, CIS 2018). However recently, a rapid decline in the support of the Catholic Church can be observed in Poland (2019b, c). The importance of religion to define the national identity reaches 34% in Poland and just 9% in Spain (Stokes 2017 for both). Even if both Catholic Spaniards and Poles are not morally strict about sex prior to marriage, divorce or contraception (Bericat 2015; Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2017 for Spain; Mishtal and Dannefer 2010; CBOS 2014 for Poland), the attitudes towards same-sex marriage and adoption are generally negative in Poland (CBOS 2017b, 2019a; Wike et al. 2019: 5) while positive in Spain (Toharia 2010).

In these dissimilar contexts, Spanish and Polish anti-gender activists still share some Catholic background, doctrinal language, anti-LGBTQ* agenda, nationalist and familist (“pro-life”) rhetoric, right and far-right political alignment and international networks. Besides the Catholic Church, and behind the political parties, some key lay associations are the civil society heart of anti-rights mobilizations. Since 2005, the already

existing anti-abortion associations reinvented themselves with the anti-LGBTQ* rights agenda. In Spain, they are small and aggregated in platforms. All of them have an explicit or implicit religious background which is visible in the use of the same doctrinal language and arguments about LGBTQ* rights, widely shared and identical in all of them (Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2018). In Poland, although the anti-abortion agenda remained dominant, the attention of national-catholic political fractions, far-right groups, the Catholic Church and ultraconservative anti-choice groups also moved in the mid-2000s increasingly towards anti-LGBTQ* topics (e.g. due to controversies about legislative proposals on same-sex partnerships, the public visibility of LGBTQ* people and, the organization of the first LGBTQ*-equality parades).

In Spain, the most important platform between 2005 and 2010 was the Spanish Family Forum (linked to Opus Dei) which had led the big marches against same-sex marriage. When the conservative People’s Party regained the government, the mobilization in the streets became subdued and different organizations emerged, like platform Yes to Life (led by RedMadre Foundation), which annually celebrates the Day of the Unborn Child with public events. Lately, the Catholic Association of Propagandists (a direct legacy of the dictatorship) showed up organizing anti-feminist marches through their branch Women of the World (in 2019 and 2020). Nowadays, the most influential association is the Spanish (but internationally projected) CitizenGo. CitizenGo became an important driver of the global anti-gender network in 2012, when they convened the influential World Congress of Families (WCF) in Madrid. Their shocking campaigns have captured international attention since their bus with a transphobic message toured cities in several countries in 2017.¹⁴ Other organizations like Christian Lawyers (*Abogados Cristianos*) give legal support and advice to anti-gender activists. Linked in different ways to all those groups is the remarkable organization One of Us, devoted to the EU political anti-abortion lobby. Led by Jaime Mayor-Oreja, a member of the conservative People’s Party, the main members come from Spain and include all the groups mentioned. Two Polish anti-choice groups also belong to the European lobby: the Polish foundation One of Us (*Jeden z Nas*) run by the Polish Federation of Pro-Life Movements (or PFROŻ) and the Polish Association of Human Life Defenders. They also have links with the Church through the Pontifical Foundation Aid to the Church in Need, among others.

With the help of the PFROŻ association, the IV World Congress of Families was held in Poland before the one in Spain, in 2007. President of Poland Lech Kaczyński granted honorary patronage to the WCF. In his speech for the WCF audience, Kaczyński honoured Bishop Kazimierz Majdański (survivor of the Nazi-German concentration camps), who was in the honorary committee of the WCF before his death in 2007. Bishop Majdański, amongst other as Vice-President of the Pontifical Council for the family, had influence on the development of the family theology of the Catholic Church. He was close to Radio Maryja and invited Opus Dei to Poland (Opus Dei 2013). The recent (2015–2019) government has publicly demonstrated not only its alliance with the hierarchies of the Roman Catholic Church, but also with the very radical National-Catholic fractions of the clergy. For example, in December of 2018, most members of the Polish government celebrated the 27th anniversary of Radio Maryja. Radio Maryja is linked to a media-enterprise and religious movement led by the highly influential priest Tadeusz Rydzyk (e.g. Lux Veritatis foundation, TV “Trwam”, newspaper “Nasz Dziennik”). It is known for its antisemitism (Pankowski 2010; Kunicki 2012: 185) and far-right positions based on the ideological corpus of the interwar movement of *Endecja*,¹⁵ that linked their ethno-nationalism with radical antisemitism and Christianity. Radio Maryja has been a driving force behind mass anti-choice mobilizations (especially in the 1990s).

Radical anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQ* actions (such as regular counter-demonstrations or the blocking marches) are organized by fractions of the far right such as the groups All-Polish Youth, National Radical Camp or the National Movement and the newly formed party *Konfederacja*, that entered parliament in 2019.¹⁶ Their world views stem from the legacy of pre-World War II *Endecja*, National-Catholicism and fascism (Marszał 2007; Minkenberg 2017). They form alliances with anti-choice organizations and activists or far-right representatives of the Catholic Church.¹⁷ Those groups link their sexual politics openly to white supremacy, racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia (cf. Ramme 2019a, 2020; Narkowicz 2018). They also compete in their extreme homophobia and anti-abortion stances with the ruling party PiS. Even closer to the Catholic Church, the most influential anti-LGBTQ* organizations in Poland originated from the international network Tradition, Family and Property (TFP),¹⁸ such as the institute and association of Priest Piotr Skarga, the Association for Christian Culture and Ordo Iuris—Institute for Legal Culture. After PiS won the elections in 2015, several members

of these organizations obtained high positions in ministries and other state bodies. So did Aleksander Stępkowski, long-time president of Ordo Iuris, who was first nominated undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015–2016) and then (2019) became judge of the supreme court.¹⁹ His organization, Ordo Iuris, also became a relevant international player, working on dismantling national and international legal frameworks (e.g. at the UN, OSCE and the Council of Europe), that protects the rights of women, non-heterosexual and non-religious people, allegedly in defence of Christian religion and the heterosexual “family”.²⁰ They support “conversion therapy” (e.g. Ordo Iuris 2018) and provide legal help and opinions for people supporting homophobia and the violation of women as well as far-right (including ultranationalists and religious fundamentalist) organizations. Ordo Iuris exemplifies the global entanglement of the religious fundamentalists’ far-right and ultra-conservatives networks, narratives and strategies, since its activities, although framed as expressions of “national nativity”, are neither limited to the national frame nor its only source (cf. Ramme 2019a). An identical role is played in Spain by CitizenGo (Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2017).

RHETORIC OF WHAT CRISIS? “CULTURE OF DEATH”, “GENDER IDEOLOGY” AND THE DOCTRINAL LANGUAGE OF FEAR

Considering the differences and similarities between the Polish and Spanish scenarios, one of the most interesting aspects of the comparison is the translation of a transnational agenda, language and ideological references to national arenas, where they are adapted in different ways. Both the language and the transnational ideological framework have been extensively analysed before (Case 2012; Garbagnoli 2014; Paternotte 2015) and there seems to be a consensus about the worldwide role of the Catholic Church in systematizing the concepts and arguments, despite the fact that they are not their only source and that the ideas are not new. In this regard, the Catholic Church led the biggest framing effort putting in alignment topics as different as stem cell research and same-sex marriage, euthanasia and transgender issues, abortion, assisted reproduction and Marxism (John Paul II 1995; Pontifical Council for the Family 2006). From its point of view, same-sex marriage, sexual education, anti-discrimination policies, voluntary interruption of pregnancy and other

topics are: (1) a complex array of misconceptions labelled as “gender ideology” and inspired by Marxist feminism; (2) at the same time they are framed as an expression of the present evil “culture of death”, whose aim is to extinguish human life on Earth, against the biblical mandate to reproduce, as the *Evangelium Vitae* encyclical clarifies (John Paul II 1995). The intensity and level of a political operationalization of the discursive frameworks and related terms by local Catholic Churches might, however, differ, as it depends very much on the local opportunity structures and possible discursive frame alignments.

“Culture of death”²¹ is the master frame that allows the doctrine to go beyond pastoral concerns and allows the ideological alignment with other pro-natalist agendas, like nationalisms. The alignment does not only support familist and pro-natalist positions, but targets particular moral offenders: gender scholars, feminists, LGBTQ* activists, Marxists, liberals, anti-natalist politicians and demographers, the European Union, etc. This targeting is visible in right-wing speech in both countries. In Poland, politicians, fundamentalist NGOs, members of the Episcopacy and right-wing media use an openly homophobic and misogynistic vocabulary. In Spain, politicians and activists refuse to be considered “homophobic” at the same time they talk in terms of LGBT doctrine, “false right to homosexuality” or do transphobic campaigns.²² Until now, LGBTQ* associations’ attempts to bring homophobic, misogynistic and transphobic speeches to trial have been dismissed and considered expressions of religious freedom (Cornejo-Valle and Pichardo 2017). In Poland, religious and juridical NGOs and actors also declare to defend their religious convictions by invoking the UN Human Rights Council resolutions “On the Protection of the Family” (OHCHR, n.d.). Both Polish and Spanish organizations (Ordo Iuris and CitizenGo among others) lobby for international ratifications of a so-called Convention on the Rights of the Family²³ and actively work on changing the UN Framework²⁴ as well as trying to influence domestic and European jurisprudence on this issue.

Besides, the language of “culture of death” and “gender ideology” has been useful to cognitively align not only ideas but also facts and feelings in a similar rhetoric, by framing different experiences of crisis, threats, insecurities and supposed moral outrage all together. Hence, economic crisis, political disappointment and migration have been framed by moral entrepreneurs in terms of values and moral crisis, family debacle or the apocalyptic “demographic winter”²⁵ (Schooyans 1999), all of them orchestrated allegedly by “international Marxist feminists”, “the gay

lobby” and “Machiavellian demographers” (López-Trujillo 2003). But not all types of framing make sense in domestic scenarios. The transnational doctrinal language allows local moral entrepreneurs to adapt the domestic crisis according to collective emotions, memories and domestic “folk devils” in order to instigate moral panics that make local sense.

In Spain, the first reference to “culture of death” was in 1994, through the pastoral message “The family, privileged place for the civilization of love” (SEC 1994), which celebrates the International Year of the Family by encouraging Christian families to defend Christian marriage (in the context of the European Parliament’s resolution that recognizes equal rights for same-sex couples as families on 8 February 1994). Despite the early mention of the term, it has not unchained public discussion in Spain beyond anti-abortion activism, in contrast to the expression “gender ideology”. The first reference to so-called gender ideology in Spanish Catholic Church’s documents can be found in the Pastoral Instruction entitled “The Family, sanctuary of life and hope of society” (SEC 2001). However, the emergence of a public debate around “gender ideology” started in 2004 during the campaign for the national general election, when the candidate Rodríguez Zapatero (Socialist Party) announced reforms like: marriage for same-sex couples, improvements on gender equality, new laws for assisted reproduction, stem cell research and therapeutic cloning (Rodríguez Zapatero 2004: 18). During Zapatero’s two terms of progressive reforms, the bishops openly talked in terms of “gender conspiracy” and the doctrinal language consolidated.

In Poland, by contrast, although “gender” was framed as a threat already before 2013 (Duda 2016), the heated public debate around “gender ideology” started with a Pastoral Letter released on the 29th of December 2013 (KEP 2013). At that moment, the “culture of death” discourse had already shown its potential as a conceptual umbrella and moral panic instigator. The expression was applied to values protecting “children”, “the family”, “the nation” and “Christian civilization”. That same year (2013), Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek stated that “gender ideology is worse than Communism and Nazism put together” (in Graff and Korolczuk 2017: 432). In 2014, the book “Dictatorship of Gender” exemplified a typical post-truth framing and DARVO tactic. Regarding the “anti-gender” campaign, one could read: “the defence of an extreme minority has turned into an attack on a large majority (...). This way a new dictatorship is born in front of our eyes. The new ideologies do not

only want to control our minds, but they also want to control the bodies of the young ones” (Biały Kruk, n.d.).²⁶

Among the many “anti-gender” activists in both countries, the most eloquent in Spain has been Mons Fernandez, Bishop of Cordoba, who is a good example of how the doctrine entangles different political topics. Mons Fernandez affirms that UNESCO has created a great plan in order to achieve that half of the world population will become homosexual in the next 20 years.²⁷ The “UN-gay conspiracy” meant “the death of family”, the plummeting of birth-rates and the end of human life on planet Earth as its consequences. According to the bishop, gender ideology is the tool of human extinction: “Facilities for divorce, for contraception, for abortion, are all attacks on the family, the loving plan of God for life”.²⁸ On other occasions, he warned: “here comes a radical feminism that breaks with God and Nature itself, as God has made it. This feminism is spreading its ideas relentlessly everywhere, even in schools”.²⁹ At the same time that he targeted feminists, the bishop presents the Catholic Church as the victim of a political prosecution: “The Catholic Church is hated by the defenders of gender ideology just because the Catholic Church is strongly opposed to this”.³⁰

When the bishop was criticized by feminist activists and some progressive politicians, the group CitizenGo and the Catholic media started a campaign in defence of Mons Fernandez based on the DARVO strategy (Freyd 1997): they denied the Bishop’s offence against feminists and LGBTQ* people and, instead, attacked an alleged “gay lobby” and progressive actors by accusing them of insulting and intimidating the bishop, thereby reversing the offender into the victim of a conspiracy against the freedoms of belief and expression.³¹ Other bishops like Antonio Cañizares, Juan A. Reig Pla or José I. Munilla are also well known for their misogynistic, homophobic and victimist statements. The language of other anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQ* activists is similar. Moreover, it is not much different from the global far-right script as also the Polish case confirms. Similarly to the Spanish bishops, the Polish ones were calling “gender ideology” a “dangerous ideology”. However, the clergy and high representatives of the Polish Catholic Church stand out by expressing literally far-right ideologies. As famously stated by influential Archbishop of Łódź and since 2014 vice chairman of the Polish Episcopacy, Marek Jędraszewski, “gender ideology” not only leads to the “death of a civilization”, but threatens the survival of the entire “white race” (Jędraszewski 2013 in eKai 2013). The example above shows that

the “Culture of Death” frame can be compatible not only with the far-right frame of a “Death of the Nation” but might also resonate with white supremacist ideologies worldwide.

In this line, a new massive anti “LGBT ideology” campaign was launched by the right wing in Poland in 2019. While the anti-gender campaign was targeting gender mainstreaming, feminism and ideas about gender equality or sexual diversity, this campaign targeted programmes on sexual education and public expressions of sexual and gender diversity, while framing the LGBTQ* community as a threat to the family and nation. Similar to the 2013 “anti-Gender ideology” campaign, it was precluded by scandals revealing the abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. This time it was not only the Catholic Church, ultra-conservatives or far-right extremist groups involved in the hate campaign, as the anti- “LGBT ideology” rhetoric became a central element in the election campaign of PiS in 2019. Jędraszewski stated:

Fortunately, the red plague does not crawl upon our earth anymore, but this does not mean that there isn’t a new one that wants to conquer our souls, hearts and minds. Not a Marxist, not a Bolshevist but one that is born out of the same spirit, a neo-Marxist one. Not red, but in rainbow colours. (Jędraszewski 2019 in TVN24 2019)

YouTube’s blocking of the video with this speech resulted in a heated debate in the parliament about censorship. The Polish Episcopacy representative’s statement that was part of the campaign also illustrates how vivid the references to the legacy of state-socialism and the soviet dependency are still in contemporary politics in Poland. Anti-communist demonization is a hegemonic mode of politics in post-1989 Poland, whereby “communism” according to Moll (2019) functions as an empty signifier. Not just the Catholic Church, but the far right in general (including national-Catholic, ultra-nationalist and neo-fascist actors) frame emancipatory and egalitarian ideas as “totalitarian” and equate sexual and gender diversity and rights with state-authoritarianism (state-socialism/Stalinism) and fascism (German fascist occupation) and present themselves as the only “innocent” and “native” alternative not only to communism, but also to (neo)liberalism and, paradoxically, even to fascism. The latter is equated in Polish far-right discourses with historical *Nazism*, understood as German National-Socialism, but also a special form of “Socialism”, while (neo)liberalism is framed as a project introduced in Poland by

former state-socialist elites (“communists”) in order to further exploit Polish people.

Despite the privileged position of the Catholic Church, according to the Catholic Church and National-Catholic right-wing discourse, Christians are discriminated and persecuted for their beliefs and the Polish people’s survival is endangered. This discourse has a long tradition, as even before World War I ideological leaders of the far right (Dmowski 2014: 134–140) portrayed the Christian civilization as being in danger and in need of defence from alleged enemies (e.g. Jews, freemasons, Marxists), while today’s far right portrays so-called gender or LGBT-Ideology as linked to the same source (Marxism, Jews, etc.). The country itself is often defined as the ultimate frontier of Christianity (*Antemurale Christianitatis*) defeating among others the “Muslim invasion” (Ottoman Empire) into Europe, while in contemporary right-wing discourses (especially prior to the elections in 2015) refugees were portrayed as the modern version of such an invasion (Narkowicz 2018) and a “sexual threat” to Polish women (Goździak and Márton 2018). The campaigns against so-called gender and LGBT ideology proved to be quite successful as in 2019 a national survey showed that 31% of the overall male population aged between 18 and 38, and 54% of all PiS voters defined “gender ideology” and the “LGBT movement” as the biggest danger for Poland in the twenty-first century (Pacewicz/Okopress 2019).

ENTANGLING IDEOLOGIES: NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTIES, FAMILISM AND CHRISTIAN SUPREMACY.

The far-right sexual politics in Poland have not only gone further than in Spain, but the Polish framing process also shows complex discursive developments and deeply elaborated metaphors. In comparison, even if the Spanish anti-gender and anti-LGBTQ* actors share the same ideological repertoire, the discourse had no success in making Spanish society connect the suggested topics, at least until 2019, when the nationalist rhetoric was unexpectedly connected to paradoxical far-right sexual politics in the public debate (as a result of the Catalan uprising and the far-right electoral rise). A key factor seems to be the different profile of nationalism in the two countries. As Meyer Resende (2015) has pointed out in a comparison between the types of nationalism in Poland and Spain, contemporary nationalism in Spain is a plural and secular concept,

based on the assumption that Spain includes several nations in an extroverted style, while Polish right-wing nationalism represents an introverted type, built on martyrdom (Janion 2006) and with a continuous revitalization of national traumata (like wars and exterminations). High church hierarchies even compare Poland and its Catholic Church history with Jesus’ suffering on the Way of the Cross (e.g. John Paul II; Jędraszewski 2019). The wounds are due to the tremendous suffering of the Polish population during the German Nazi occupation; Stalinist purges, inter alia the contemporary experiences of migration and the anti-Polish sentiment in other European countries,³² are politically operationalized by the far right, recreating an atmosphere of ethnic discrimination and national isolation.

The Polish nation is to this day portrayed as in urgent need to defend itself from hostile forces surrounding the country, occupying it or even colonizing from the inside, in the line of the interwar National Democracy (*Endecja*). Hence, today’s far right gets inspired by leaders from the past like, most importantly, Roman Dmowski (1864–1939),³³ but also Bolesław Piasecki (1915–1979).³⁴ Dmowski was opposed to human rights and women’s emancipation (Chojnowski 2000: 38) and has accused the freemasons and Jews of being responsible for the “decline of the Christian European Civilisation” (Dmowski 2014: 134), while Piasecki claimed a Spanish-like Falangism and National-Catholicism. The *Endecja*’s heritage was modernized in the 1970s and 1980s by radical nationalist groups whose ideology included elements of sexual politics alleging that the aim of granting reproductive choice is the so called “biological and moral destruction of the nation” through abortion.³⁵ According to some scholars (Umińska 2006; Ostolski 2005), the old far-right enemy of “the Jew” has been replaced by “the homosexual”. However, having in mind the long history of portraying women’s emancipation and sexual liberation as an outcome of a “Jewish masterplan”, the use of such terms as the “homosexual lobby” also shows the transnational circulation and continuity of old antisemitic style rhetoric. Instead of a simple “replacement”, the far-right practice of scapegoating Jews, Marxists, feminists and non-heterosexuals reveals the entanglement of antisemitism with sexual politics.³⁶

The myth of Poland not yet being fully independent from other nations, supranational institutions, the EU and post-communist elites combined with the politics of fear and a rhetoric of crisis is one of the major political strategies of the Law and Justice (PiS) party and is used

in order to justify the systemic changes called “Dobra zmiana” (good change) introduced by PiS after their election in 2015 as a remedy for the crisis (Ramme 2020). Part of this state programme is the achievement of a social regime where the Catholic family based on a heterosexual married couple is the basic unit of the nation, ensuring national sovereignty. After 2015, a major top-down institutional backlash took place in all possible areas of rights for women and LGBTQ* people: access to contraception, legal abortion, protection from domestic violence, etc. Individuals, communities and ways of life that stray from the government’s vision (e.g. unmarried couples, single mothers, LGBTQ* people) are partially excluded from state support or directly suppressed, by denying the right of public gathering, access to public services or even citizenship (ibid., 2020). The Catholic Church, that has been giving electoral support to certain political parties since 1989 (Mishtal 2015), continuously pressures for implementing even more conservative sexual politics such as a complete ban of abortion, restricting access to contraception or against in vitro fertilization. In 2019, the church was also heating up the “anti-LGBT ideology” campaign. At the same time, all criticism of clerical hate speech against LGBTQ* people or the lack of any prosecution of clerical paedophilia is considered proof that the Church is being “brutally attacked” while the defence of the Church is a “patriotic duty”, as the head of the governing party PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński, declared in 2019 in the TVP,³⁷ thus echoing a rhetoric known prior to World War II (for the latter compare Porter-Szücs 2011: 349–350). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of opportunities to protest were used by politicians to further dismantle democratic structures. In April 2020, among others a bill introducing a three-year penalty for sexual education referring to non-heterosexual sexuality and the bill “Zatrzymaj Aborcje” (Stop Abortion) criminalizing abortion based on the premise of high probability of a severe and irreversible foetal impairment were debated in the Sejm (Polish Parliament) and sent on to further consideration in committees. Kaja Godek, parliamentarian and representative of the Foundation Life and Family (Fundacja Życie i Rodzina), described such abortion as “eugenic abortions”, comparing them with eugenic practices on disabled people conducted by German Nazis during World War II, while declaring abortion a “worse” and “more deadly pandemic” than the corona virus.³⁸

In comparison with Poland, the anti-gender and the national agendas did not match well in Spain. In fact, the juxtaposition of gender and

nationalism is identified in Spain as a vestige of the Franco era dictatorship (1939–1975), whose sexism and conservative morals were considered a symbol of national identity under the ideology of National-Catholicism. However, values changed deeply in the democratic transition and the two topics, nationalism and sexism, became disentangled in time (Thre-fall et al. 2005). On the one hand, Basque and Catalan nationalism surged after the dictatorship and contributed to redefining Spanish identity in a more complex way. In fact, the democratic political scenario redefined the meaning of the word “nationalism” in Spain completely, and for years it referred only to non-Spanish domestic identities and sovereignty demands. On the other hand, values changed so deeply that Spain became the third European country to recognize same-sex marriage (2005), and the second to recognize full marriage equality, including adoption.³⁹ In time, anti-sexism and sexual diversity became new symbols of a progressive Spain. However, the increasing hegemony of new values also triggered the early response of nationalist and anti-gender activists starting in 2005. For some years, the mobilization against same-sex marriage and other progressive policies on sexual and reproductive rights was not very successful: some conservative regions adopted soft measures to prevent abortion and the term “gender” itself was progressively erased from public policies and documents, but same-sex marriage has not been abolished and elective interruption of pregnancy is not banned. Nevertheless, the anti-gender campaigns meant the renewal of the far-right image, resources and agenda, and in 2018, the nationalist domestic disputes finally opened a structure of political opportunity to merge nationalism with combating sexual and reproductive rights.

The uprising for the independence of Catalonia in 2018 stirred up the Spanish unionism of the general population in Spain, and the far right waved the national flags successfully this time. The rise of the far right happened in just a few months. In October 2018, the Catalans organized an informal referendum for independence that was brutally repressed by the police. In December 2018, the traditionally leftist (but very Spanish nationalist) region of Andalusia held regional elections and the far-right party Vox unexpectedly gained 12 seats in the regional parliament. Their discourse was strongly nationalist (unionist) but also openly homophobic and misogynistic with constant references to “family”, “values”, “defence of life”, Christian civilization and Islamophobic anti-immigration claims. The anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQ* champion Bishop Fernandez publicly celebrated the rise of the far right in his

sermons, and as soon as Vox arrived in the regional parliament, they dropped the sovereignty demands (not very relevant at the regional level) and tried to set the “anti-gender” agenda into first place. They pushed the moderate right-wing parties to negotiate restrictions of gender and anti-discrimination policies, in exchange for their support for the presidency of the region. They also kept going with one of the strategies of CitizenGo, the blacklisting of gender activists and workers hired by the former regional government.

Vox rapidly became an important national actor, getting the attention of all the media, spreading their anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQ* discourse, and influencing the language and the agenda of the other conservative candidates (the People’s Party reoriented their messages against “radical feminism” while Ciudadanos started to present themselves as LGBTQ* defenders). On 10th February 2019, Vox, the People’s Party and Ciudadanos emulated the nationalist protest of 7th October 1934 (before the fascist uprising against the democratic Republic) and concentrated together in Madrid against Catalanian nationalism and the dialogue policy of the central leftist government. That was part of a long electoral campaign for the national polls in 2019. In November 2019, Vox gained 52 seats in the national parliament, jumping from nothing to 15% of the national representation in only one year. The strong media coverage amplified far-right content and strengthened its influence on society. Unexpectedly again, the COVID-19 outbreak in the next months (2020) became a new opportunity to develop the arguments of the global right on the domestic stage: Vox and the People’s Party assumed a xenophobic discourse (in terms of “Chinese virus”) and Vox even suggested barring irregular immigrants from access to health services during the outbreak if they do not pay for it.

The rise of Vox in Spain led Catholic media and the Spanish Episcopal Conference to discuss whether they should recommend to Spanish Catholics that they vote for the party (since they defend the Church’s demands on abortion and marriage). Besides, the Episcopal Conference has been traditionally a Spanish unionist actor against separatist nationalisms, through the National-Catholic framework of the fascist dictatorship, but also in the democratic period.⁴⁰ The discussion is still open and while some Catholic activists see the far right as good representatives of the Church’s demands, others criticized the anti-immigrant positions as un-Catholic.⁴¹ On the Polish side, there are some similarities like the historical association between Catholicism and national

identity and the ideological resonance with right-wing conservatives and even the far-right political spectrum. Despite the ambivalent role of the Polish Church in state-socialism and under the hegemony of the Soviet Union (and during eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century territorial partitions by Imperial Russia, Prussia and Austria, Porter-Szücs 2011), contemporary narratives among Catholic Poles depict the Church as a fighter for national independence and the preservation of national identity. While today’s right-wing organizations in Poland are divided on many issues, they mostly agree on defining their nationalism through Catholicism and familism.

The link between Polish nationalism and familism today is well rooted in Cardinal Wyszyński (Primate of Poland 1948–1981) “theology of the nation” (Porter-Szücs 2011: 350), whose doctrine was expressed in the famous phrase “The family’s strength through God is the strength of the nation. For the nation, the most important strength and bastion is the family. Those who are friends of the nation strengthen the family, those who are enemies of the nation, destroy the family” (Wyszyński 1961, in KEP 2001). Wyszyński defines the nation as the family of the families and, according to him, both nations and families are natural and God-made communities. He also drafted the entanglement with right-wing sexual politics since he demanded a “moral renewal of the nation” whereby Catholicism represents the “soul of the nation” and preached the “defence of life” within the family as a national duty, while another duty was to send children to the Church once they are born.⁴² Although the Cardinal embraced the universal declaration of human rights, he also demanded that nations and their dignity be protected by the human rights framework. His theology had a big impact on John Paul II, who advanced his own doctrine of family and contributed to the perception of the Polish and transnational Catholic Church as a major protector of Polish national sovereignty.⁴³ After the regime change, the Church managed to position itself as a victim of state-socialism and the main defender of the Polish nation, helping it to gain many privileges after the system change in the 1990s.

The circumstance that the Spanish Church was a fascist collaborator with the Franco regime until 1975 led the Church to avoid public support of National-Catholicism and the association with Fascism during the democratic transformation. While in Spain the Church (at least in their public discourse) is more moderate and avoids strong ties to state politics or associations with National-Catholicism, in Poland the Catholic

Church, usually remains quiet, when it comes to critique of far-right politics and environments or nationalism as such, simultaneously issues a countless number of statements against sexual diversity, LGBTQ* rights or reproductive rights and choices.⁴⁴ Conservative gender and sexual politics helped not only to consolidate the religious fundamentalists, ultra-conservatives and the far right, as they found a common ground despite many differences in other areas, but also allowed them to introduce a discursive shift. From the position as *none* or *incomplete Europeans*, that are lagging behind “western” (sexual) modernity (Buchowski 2006; Keinz 2008), right-wing organizations and the clergy managed to shift themselves from the *margins* back into the *core of Europe*, by claiming to present the last frontier of the European Christian civilization.

CONCLUSION: PARADOXICAL PANICS AND TRANSNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR NATIONALIST AGENDAS

Like in other countries, Polish and Spanish conservatives tried to create a moral panic by accusing LGBTQ* and feminist activists of being a threat to society, to children, to the nation and even to the entire European civilization (which is claimed as a Christian civilization). They came across with different levels of success in public opinion and electoral results. We used “moral panic” as a conceptual lens from which we could examine the commonalities and differences between both countries, assuming that we are analysing the making of social emotions and meanings, instead of assuming that they have any essential nature. With that in mind, we paid special attention to those elements that make the comparison sustainable. In our case, we had at least three strong elements: totalitarian and authoritarian pasts, Catholicism and nationalism. Considering these aspects, the first outcome of the comparison is the dissimilar combination of the three aspects in our two historical scenarios. On the one hand, the combination of religion and nationalism has been crucial in highlighting sexism and homophobia as a political creed, and we have seen the same in other countries with Christian backgrounds, too. Typical nationalist concerns like territory, national unity and sovereignty can be and have been linked to sexism, homophobia, familism, natalism, etc. But, on the other hand, the ethno-religion combination played different roles in Polish and Spanish recent histories considering its relationship to the totalitarian or state-authoritarian legacy. In Spain, National-Catholicism was associated with

the fascist dictatorship, while in Poland it was revisited as a post-state-socialist mindset, whereas fascism was “externalized” by reducing it to the memory of the Nazi-Regime. According to the historical legacy of each country, the collective memory of authoritarianism, the understanding of national sovereignty and the collective fears that each country harbours, the anti-gender and anti-LGBTQ* moral panics are differently accepted or refused. Sexism and homophobia are popular in Poland (Takács and Szalma 2020) since they are embedded in an effective anti-Marxist nationalism combined with a Catholic moral renewal and familist ideology, but the same was not so popular in Spain since that recalls the values of the fascist era.

The second outcome of the comparison is a common framing effort around the same rhetoric of crises. Polish and Spanish far-right actors share a similar doctrinal language that targets feminist, leftists/Marxists and LGBTQ* people, among others, as conspirators of a “culture of death”. The Master frame “culture of death” entangles with Catholic sexism, homophobia and a dogmatic reproductionist imperative. In the Polish case, this pro-natalist and anti-gender familist rhetoric also matches with conservative narratives about national sovereignty and survival. It matches better as well, because the nationalist far right in Poland is more focused on governing bodies and minds in order to force homogeneity, rather than on issues of territorial unity, as is the case in Spain where various separatist movements struggle for national independence. However, in the Spanish case, “the culture of death” rhetoric, including the anti-gender agenda, is in an early stage of a mere juxtaposition with the nationalist struggles, which means that the far right as well as the Catholic Church is positioned in the same framework as the Polish conservative actors, but the framework was not well spread in broader Spanish society, among voters or in public opinion until 2019, when the rise of the far right in the electoral polls surprised analysts.

The use of the same rhetoric of a multidimensional moral as well as demographic crisis, successfully or not, shows up one of the most interesting paradoxes of far-right sexual politics in Europe and in other parts of the world: local nationalist agendas use international discursive repertoires (e.g. the language of the International Catholic Church, the World Congress of Families or the TFP network). At the same time that Polish and Spanish far-right parties invoke their particular image of national identity and nativity, they use similar arguments and words and aim at

similar enemies, taken from the global right repertoire of fears: feminists, leftists/Marxists, “gay lobby”, non-Catholics, refugees (in Poland), migrants (in Spain), etc., while the local emphasis on a “main enemy” is variable and depends among other things on political windows of opportunity or the potential alignment with already active framings and moral panics. Even if we look at the national contexts, the paradox of an international, global repertoire for nationalist rhetoric and politics emerges from the comparison and, according to the literature available for other contexts, it seems clear that the international dimension of nationalism, far-right ideologies and religious fundamentalism is one key factor behind the rise of the anti-gender politics, although it could become a weakness eventually. But this is not the only big paradox in our cases.

A second emerging paradox is the victimization strategy, also found in other countries, with identical strategies. In this respect, “anti-gender” and anti-LGBTQ* actors both in Poland and Spain use the DARVO tactic by trying to turn the victims into the offenders. This strategy is particularly visible from the perspective of how moral panics are created and set up. Far-right politicians and the Episcopal Conferences discriminate women and LGBTQ* people with doctrinal support, spreading the fear of unlikely threats (such as the extinction of human life on Earth) and invoking religious freedom claims to defend hate speech. The strategy consists of discriminating and denying it at the same time. For example in such cases, when the far right and the Church present themselves as the only true defenders of “families”, “womanhood” and freedom of speech, but at the same time defend a narrow concept of a “family”, and “women” only as mothers and as complements for men, which excludes and discriminates women and non-heterosexual families. From this perspective, successfully or not, the strategy of framing of gender equality and sexual liberation as expressions of authoritarian projects and creating a moral panic around them is paradoxical in itself since it is done by environments that modernize and follow National-Catholic or even directly fascist traditions of thought, which have traditionally suppressed women’s and sexual liberation. Contemporary far-right politics and related discourses aim to reverse achievements in terms of gender and sexual equality. Since it is a political dispute, there is no doubt that the far right’s goal is to (re)gain influence and control over the state and its inhabitants by suppressing diversity and by forcing homogeneity, in both a cultural and sociological sense.

NOTES

1. Lech Kaczyński and his twin brother Jarosław (since 2003 head of the party Law and Justice, PiS) belonged to the right wing of the *Solidarność* (Solidarity) trade union and social movement, the most significant opposition during state-socialism in 1980s Poland. Lech Kaczyński became internationally known for banning Warsaw’s LGBTQ* “Equality Parade” twice (in 2004 and 2005). He died in an airplane crash on Russian territory in 2010.
2. Originally *Brygady GayPower* and *Silny Pedał*.
3. Finally, after 2 years, the case was officially suspended as no tortfeasor could be found (TVN24 2008).
4. Following Mudde (2019), we understand the far right as a category of the right-wing political spectrum encompassing the radical right, the extreme right and the radical populist right. As an umbrella term, it includes among others, ultraconservatives, religious fundamentalists, nationalist political actors or alt-right, and neofascist groups. In a different approach, we will use terms such as “conservative/progressive,” “right/left” and “far-right” according to the parties’ alliances with the European parliamentary groups. Therefore, we consider “far-right” those associated with the group Europe of Nations and Freedom and European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). Nevertheless, actors of various other political fractions and environments (e.g. liberals or even women’s rights activists) might also share some elements of typical far-right world views. Typical elements within far-right world views are, e.g. anti-pluralism and exclusivism, essentialism and conservatism, anti-individualism and authoritarianism (frequently expressed by nationalism, theocracism, heterosexism, familism, etc.).
5. The People’s Party (*Partido Popular*) is the Spanish majoritarian conservative party, in the tradition of the European Christian democracy. It is associated with the European People’s Party.
6. Citizens (*Ciudadanos*) is a liberal party associated with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.
7. Vox was founded in 2013 by splitting from the majoritarian People’s Party. It is part of a range of minor Christian and far-right parties.
8. The region of Catalonia has a strong nationalist movement that claims the independence of the region from the Spanish State.

In 2018, there was a conflict about the legality of the Catalan referendum for independence. The conflict involved weeks of riots and severe police repression as well as the prosecution and imprisonment of senior Catalan politicians and officials.

9. “Vox claims to Madrid Council to identify those who talk about LGTBI at schools (León 2019)”; “Vox requests the names of the public workers on gender violence from the Andalusian government to <<depurate ideological cases >> ” (Eldiario 2019).
10. The National Family March is far-right rally and the Polish celebration of the Day of the Unborn Child (25th March), unofficially declared by John Paul II in 1999 and celebrated by anti-abortion activists all around the Catholic world (see Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood, n.d).
11. Such declarations have mainly been made in the south-eastern parts of Poland until now (2019).
12. Russia and several post-soviet states went the furthest with anti-LGBTQ* legislation in Europe, but there are similar attempts in European Union member states (IGLYO 2018).
13. As opposed to the use of “moral majority” in feminist theory, Cohen’s “moral entrepreneurs” might not base their legitimacy on their numbers.
14. The bus rolled through several countries including Spain, France, Germany, Italy and the United States, where the bus provoked a situation at the Stonewall Inn.
15. The pre-World War I and II *Endecja Narodowa Demokracja* (National Democracy), according to Krzemiński, was a Polish version of a fascist movement (Krzemiński 2017). The political movement itself began at the end of the nineteenth century and was the right-wing fraction of Polish national independence movements competing with socialist ones. The most influential politician and creator of *Endecja*, Roman Dmowski, was inspired by Italian fascism and opposed to parliamentarianism. He founded the Catholic party Camp of Great Poland (Obóz Wielkiej Polski) in 1926, that was not only anti-Semitic, but also anti-German.
16. The original name for All-Polish Youth is *Młodzież Wszechpolska* (MW), for National Radical Camp, *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny* (ONR) and for the National Movement is *Ruch Narodowy* (NR). The full name of the party *Konfederacja* formed in 2019 for the

European Elections is Confederation Freedom and Independence (*Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość, or Konfederacja*).

17. For example, Kaja Godek who is a prominent representative of the restrictive “Stop Abortion” bill from 2016 and the later bill on so-called eugenic abortion debated in 2020.
18. The international network of TFP originated from the Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) in the 1960s and is an ultra-Catholic and anti-communist organization. The Brazilian leader Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira advocated a conservative revolution.
19. Next to this for example Jerzy Kwaśniewski (from Ordo Iuris) is part of the government’s Monitoring Team for Prevention of Domestic Violence (Kurasinska 2018). Two members of Ordo Iuris have been appointed to the supreme court. Prof. Krzysztof Wiak who is a member not only of the council of Ordo Iuris but also of the scientific council of the Polish Episcopate is another judge of the supreme court.
20. See, e.g. Ordo Iuris at the OSCE conference on hate crimes against Christians and defenders of life (Ordo Iuris 2017).
21. First Vatican document with reference to Culture of Death is the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (1991), although John Paul II had used the expression as early as 1987 during the apostolic visit to the United States and Canada. However, it was in 1995, at the same time the International Conference of El Cairo was taking place, that John Paul II devoted *Evangelium Vitae* to analysing and developing this notion.
22. See, e.g. the campaign against education in sexual diversity by CitizenGo on <http://hazteoir.org/educacion/alerta/66029-no-melame-homofobo-senor-ministro>; or their ideas about the “false right to homosexuality”.
<http://hazteoir.org/noticia/54428-diplomaticos-onu-com-baten-falsos-derechos-al-aborto-o-homosexualidad>; or the transphobic campaign we also mentioned before https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/06/06/madrid/1496747297_464939.html.
23. This pretend “convention” refers to Resolution 29/22, adopted by the Human Rights Council on 3 July 2015 and entitled: “Protection of the family: contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving

- sustainable development” (Human Rights Council 2015). Right-wing activists push the UN to define the family unity as the union of one man and one woman and their children.
24. For the list of institutional and civil society submitters, see UN Human Rights Council (n.d.) and also Ramme (2019b).
 25. The “demographic winter” is a prophecy about the radical decline (and eventual extinction) of human population on Earth. Inspired by the expression “nuclear winter”, Jesuit priest and intellectual Michel Schooyans (1999) denounced a UN conspiracy since the 1960s against the biblical mandate of reproduction in order to authoritatively control the population on the planet with excuses like ecology, women’s rights or sexual freedom. Also see Gerard-François Dumont in Pontifical Council of the Family (2006).
 26. The book includes programmatic texts by pope Benedict XVI, Gabriele Kuby, Adam Bujak, Aleksander Stępkowski, Waldemar Chrostowski, Krzysztof Feusette, Leszek Sosnowski and some most obsessed anti-gender voices of the Polish clergy—the priest Dariusz Oko and Archbishop Henryk Hoser.
 27. Homily of December, 26th, 2010 (for the full Spanish text see Fernández 2010).
 28. Extracts from the homily cited above.
 29. Weekly Letter January 4th, 2013 (for the full text see Fernández 2013).
 30. Same document cited before.
 31. More information in Aciprensa (2013), a Catholic press service.
 32. For example, an increase in hate crimes based on anti-Polish sentiments has been observed in the UK (McDevitt 2014), that was the number one destination of economic migration for Polish citizens.
 33. Dmowski was the most important leader of *Endecja* movement and producer of far-right nationalist doctrines.
 34. Piasecki was the co-founder of the National Radical Camp and led the Movement RNR “Falanga” and then, during state-socialism, the PAX Association (Lipski 2015; Kunicki 2012).
 35. NPG 1979—quote from a far-right group from this time after the controversial right wing author Jarosław Tomasiewicz (2016: f.25).
 36. Like in many other contexts, George Soros is frequently portrayed as the most important Jewish “puppet master” bringing the “culture of death” to the region. For the link between antisemitism and homophobia, see also (Kulpa 2019).

37. See the speech at a patriotic picnic in Pułtusk (TVP INFO 2019: 09:58).
38. See the video documentation of the debate in the Sejm on April 16, 2020 (iTV Sejm: 16:33 and 17:39).
39. The Netherlands (2001) was the first. Belgium approved same-sex marriage in 2003, but approved full equal rights only in 2006.
40. The official doctrine in this regard was expressed explicitly in the Pastoral Instruction entitled “Moral valuation of terrorism in Spain, its causes and consequences” (SEC 2002) in which the Bishops denied the right of sovereignty of the nations and criticized the demands of independence of the Basque and Catalan separatists. The term terrorism in this context refers to the Basque paramilitary group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom, ETA).
41. See the survey by the Catholic Association Enraizados (2019) and some discussion in other Catholic media (e.g. Cruz 2018; Otero 2018).
42. See, e.g. the patriotic sermon called “Jasnogórskie Śluby Narodu” (Wyszyński 1956) that was written by the cardinal during his imprisonment by the regime.
43. There are important documents defining the Vatican’s doctrine of familism, for example *Familiaris consortio* (1981) by John Paul II. Another document that has been a reference for conservative and religious sexual politics in Poland is the “Charter of the Rights of the Family” (Holy See 1983).
44. Despite the rise of the far right in Poland, the episcopacy has issued only one statement critical of nationalism (KEP 2017).

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