

Ed. Elisa Gutsche

# TRIUMPH — OF THE — WOMEN?

**The Female Face of the  
Populist & Far Right in Europe**



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT**   
**STIFTUNG**

Forum Politik  
und Gesellschaft



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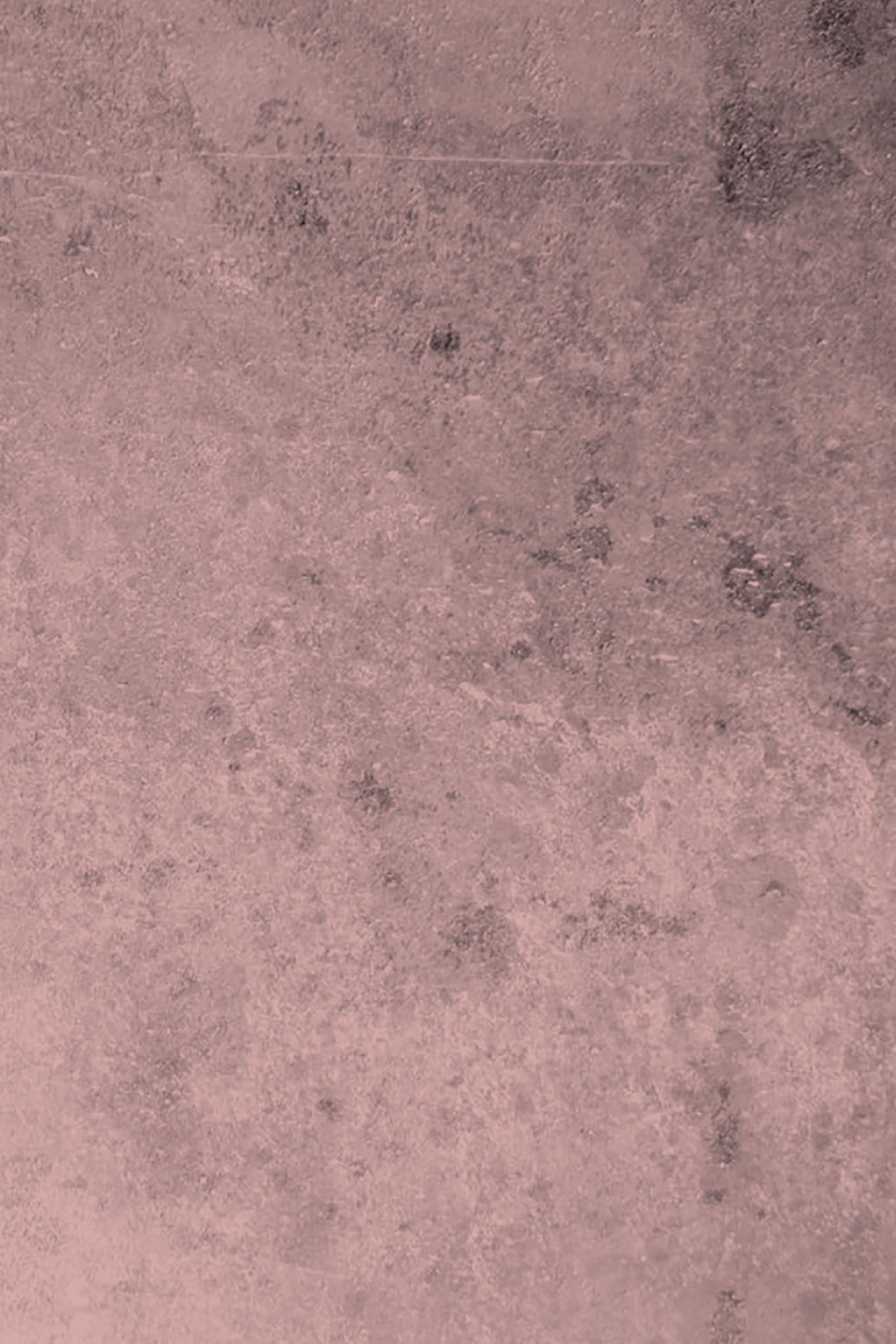
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## PREFACE

Women voters were long thought to be relatively immune to the election policies advocated by right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties. That has changed, however. In absolute terms the proportion of women voters for most of these parties is still lower than that of men, but the gap is narrowing. A number of women hold leading positions in right-wing populist parties, giving them a female face as it were, but what is the situation behind that facade? And what are the implications for gender and family policy? Should this be registered as a triumph for women, or the opposite?

Many women in Germany, too, voted for right-wing populists in the 2017 general election. Seventeen per cent of women in eastern and eight per cent in western Germany voted for *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). A number of women were leading candidates on the party list and were extremely vocal on TV talk shows. The main subject of discussion there was refugees, but on many occasions the AfD showed its true colours, first and foremost through derogatory comments about people with a migration background, but also about other groups in society such as single mothers. Such comments are based on regressive ideas about a traditional family and gender order that are sometimes linked with calls for further curtailment of women's reproductive rights. From a progressive and feminist viewpoint it seems impossible that a woman in Germany would vote AfD, and yet it happens.

Similar phenomena are observed in other European countries. Women are prominent in the leadership of right-wing populist parties, which meet with increasing approval from women voters. In Poland, the PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, Law and Justice) party even received 39.7 per cent in total from women, which is 1.2 per cent more votes than from men. Since being in government it has gradually restricted women's fundamental democratic rights and civil rights.

So why do women vote for right-wing populist parties and become involved in them? After elections in the United States and Germany, the media and political debate focused primarily on the electoral behaviour of *white* (in Germany's case, mainly *eastern German*) workers. Countless political analyses and newspaper think pieces explored why people who have lost out as a result of political changes or globalisation vote for right-wing populists. Since the 2017 general election in Germany, however, little attention

has been paid to why women vote for the right when the ever since the 1970s the predominant tendency has been for them to vote left – at least in Germany. Why has this change taken place? A question that ought to preoccupy progressive parties in particular is: are the policies they advocate (still) attractive to female voters? Or, conversely, do their policies even help to drive women into the arms of the right-wing populists, who capture them with simple truths and the image of an ideal, traditional family? One thing seems evident: any analysis of the causes of rampant right-wing populist ideas in Europe that focuses solely on white workers is insufficiently complex and falls short of what is required.

This comparative study considers the *Female Face* of right-wing populism in six European countries – Germany, France, Greece, Poland, Hungary and Sweden – focusing on the following key issues:

### **1. Right-wing populist parties' policy objectives and especially their relationship with women's rights and gender issues.**

On the one hand, right-wing populist parties throughout Europe present themselves as defenders of women's rights, particularly when it is a question of defending white women from allegedly misogynistic (Muslim) immigrants. However, when it comes to the topic of domestic and sexual violence committed by *white* perpetrators, demands to do something about them are often dismissed with references to "gender madness" and excessive state involvement. A glance at their election manifestos and representatives' statements reveals that in most cases right-wing populist parties advocate clearly anti-emancipatory positions in other areas, too.

Right-wing populists' central concern is to limit immigration and emphasise a distinct cultural identity as opposed to alien cultures. This is usually based on

a völkisch ideology that is openly acknowledged to a greater or lesser degree. The aim is to preserve the culturally homogenous nation. Against the background of demographic change, family policy thus becomes a key area of policy. Frequent repudiation of the right to reproductive self-determination can be interpreted partly against this background, although in some countries one sees the influence of (ultra-) conservative Christian players for whom right-wing populist parties often provide a platform. Moreover, because of the moral and ethical complexity of reproductive issues they lend themselves to emotionalisation and polarisation, a key factor in populist politics.

## 2. The role of women in right-wing populist parties.

In terms of personnel, men dominate most right-wing populist and right extremist parties, though women were and are increasingly seen as their public face. Such women include, for example, Beata Szydło in Poland; Alice Weidel and, until the 2017 general election, Frauke Petry in Germany, and last but not least Marine Le Pen in France, who gave the Front National<sup>1</sup> a “friendlier” image than under her father’s leadership. Above and beyond their role in leading positions, the question is why women become involved in these parties at all? Is there perhaps an element of personal and political emancipation? Are women really in the front rank?

## 3. Women’s voting behaviour with regard to right-wing populist parties.

Do parties’ female protagonists explicitly and implicitly address women as potential voters? Why are women inclined to support these parties, and what approaches exist to explain this? How has women’s voting behaviour changed in recent times?

## 4. Possible (counter)strategies for progressive players and feminist social movements.

A look at the (counter)strategies of progressive players and feminist social movements rounds off the individual country case studies. How are they embedded

in the respective countries’ political spectrum? What are the reactions of (feminist) social movements and progressive parties? Have they adopted certain positions or developed counterpositions? Are there any indications to suggest which counterstrategies were successful?

One thing is already clear: a triumph for women needs to be different. So what can progressive parties and feminist players do? This study contains examples of only a few countries. Many more could be added. It delivers some specific starting points for solution strategies, but no conclusive answers. Clearly, a self-critical scrutiny of internal policies, especially in respect of gender policy alignment, but also with an emphasis on women’s economic security, seems appropriate. At the same time it is important to act in solidarity, including in interaction between civil society, politics and science, and to openly take a stance.

We hope this project will provide an impetus for doing so. After all, how players on the progressive spectrum adopt positions and form cross-border networks is crucially important. That is the only way to counter right-wing populist tendencies and parties with an effective answer – that is, the *Female Face* of democracy, human rights, freedom and solidarity.

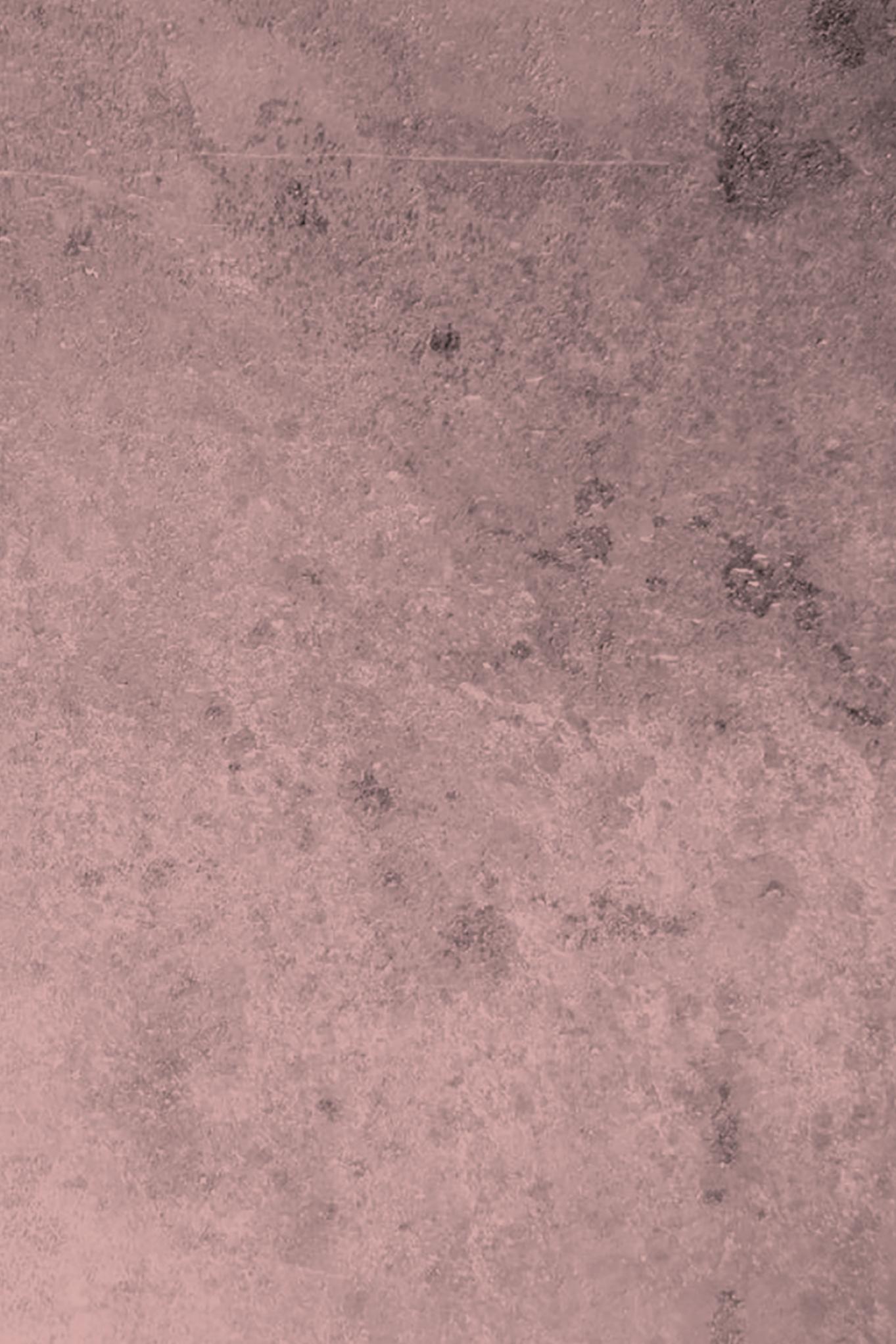
We thank all our contributing authors for their articles and their keen commitment. We thank our colleagues in the participating FES offices who have accompanied this extensive project in recent months. Thanks are due also to Susan Javad and Jonathan Menge, who initiated the project, and to Björn Klein and Stephanie Tröder, without whose support this study would not have come to fruition.

We hope you will find it interesting reading and that it will prompt improved analysis of our present situation, further thought and action.

Dr. Stefanie Elies und Elisa Gutsche  
Forum Politik und Gesellschaft  
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<sup>1</sup> On 1 June 2018 the Front National changed its name to Rassemblement National (National Rally). The previous name is used in this study.

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# WHAT ARE THE LESSONS FOR PROGRESSIVE PLAYERS?

ELISA GUTSCHE

Our studies consider six countries in Europe with different baseline situations that have right-wing populist parties and movements of different strengths anchored in a variety of institutions. In Poland and Hungary, right-wing populist parties are in government. In Germany the AfD determines public discourse, while in Greece such parties play a lesser role. Despite these differences, our analyses form the basis for deriving action recommendations for progressive, civil society players. These recommendations for action are not universally applicable in all countries that find themselves confronted with the problem of right-wing populism, nor should they be seen as final. In order to develop effective counter-strategies it is always essential to take account of the situation in a particular country, the country's history, its political discourses, majorities and its support networks, along with the relevance and sphere of influence of progressive and feminist players locally.

## 1. Raise awareness of anti-feminism and take a stance

In the current discourse about refugees and migration, the sometimes openly retrograde, anti-feminist and misogynist policy objectives of right-wing populist parties and players are often discussed only peripherally – in Germany at least. The right-wing populists' anti-feminist and sexist positions are less harshly criticised, or perceived as overstepping the mark and even echoed in the positions adopted by other parties.

What right-wing populists have in common is that their lists of political demands do not provide for women's freedom (of choice) to live self-determined lives in freedom and safety. Some call for cuts in welfare benefits for single mothers, some want to prevent access to abortions and contraceptives or to ban religious – usually Muslim – dress in public.

If the discourse on refugees recedes to the margins of public debate, right-wing populists will turn their focus on women's rights, family and equality policy. Civil society players and progressive parties must be prepared for this. The hard-won achievements of recent years are by no means secure. This is where not only feminist activists but also politicians and trade unions need to take a stance and adopt feminist positions. Debates about the legitimisation and political prioritisation of feminist policy, supposed identity policy and political participation by women are recurrent themes in progressive parties and among opponents of right-wing populist politics. Progressive parties in particular should take care, especially in governing coalitions with conservative partners, not to adopt the

latters' anti-feminist agenda in their labour market, welfare, women's and family policy agreements, but show solidarity with women and queers.

Conservative players and those in the liberal and Christian camp should likewise stand up for equal participation by men and women in social, economic, welfare and political coexistence. Right-wing populist tendencies call human rights and the foundations of our democracy into question. That is why conservative players, too, must draw clear lines and firmly defend our society's fundamental values.

## 2. A new understanding of equality policy and concrete policy ideas

However "taking a stance" and moralising outrage alone are not enough. In order to win back female voters, it is necessary to trace and understand the reasons for their voting decisions. The Hans Böckler Foundation in 2018 conducted several studies<sup>1</sup> to investigate the reasons why people voted for the AfD in the 2017 parliamentary elections in Germany. Although the Foundation's observations were limited to Germany, some of its findings could be informative for other countries, too. For example, people who vote for right-wing populist parties often fear social exclusion and worry about losing control. Around 63 per cent of AfD voters were worried about financial security in old age, 60 per cent about their children's future and 53 per

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dr. Kohlrausch, Bettina: "Abstiegsängste in Deutschland: Ausmaß und Ursachen in Zeiten des erstarkenden Rechtspopulismus", Hans-Böckler-Stiftung 2018. Link: [https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p\\_fofoe\\_WP\\_058\\_2018.pdf](https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_fofoe_WP_058_2018.pdf).

cent about their current financial situation, while 62 per cent expressed serious concern about crime and violence in their residential environment.

So along with racist prejudices and a negative attitude to immigration, social issues are key drivers for people to vote for right-wing populist parties. These are issues to which either current progressive and social democratic policy pays too little attention, or that were not taken seriously enough in recent years. This is also evident from the collapse of the vote in recent years for social democratic parties in Hungary, Poland, France, Greece and Germany in particular.

One possible interpretation of the present country analyses ties in with Nancy Fraser's comments on progressive neoliberalism<sup>2</sup>. Neoliberalism picked up on elements of feminism, giving rise to a form of progressive neoliberalism that concerned itself mainly with identity policy issues (see the debates on quotas for women's representation on corporate supervisory boards) while ignoring fundamental questions about the causes of social inequalities and insecurities.

Here the duty of strategists in party headquarters and "equality professionals" in politics, administration and trade unions is to record what actually concerns women and what policies are needed to cushion risks in the course of people's lives and to deliver a secure, good life for all, so as to contain fears of social exclusion and of losing control, especially among the core voters of relevance to social democratic parties. A Friedrich Ebert Foundation study titled "Was junge Frauen wollen" (What Young Women Want) provides some relevant insights.<sup>3</sup>

The current market-oriented equality policy, as seen *inter alia* in Germany, is mainly geared toward integrating women into the labour market and solving the work-life balance. This cannot be the ideal solution. Rather, in the current environment it is more likely to lead to insecurities than to economic security. An extremely high level of temporary employment contracts, low pay for women in the service and care sector, exploding rents in urban areas, a lack of childcare facilities, unanswered questions about the consequences of digitisation, globalisation and immigration, prob-

lems in finding a balance between family and work, and the threat of poverty in old age place excessive strain, and not only on women and families in economically strong Germany. This is where the debate about migration and refugees comes back into play. At the lower end of the social ladder people compete for precarious jobs and scarce affordable housing. Structurally, the most badly affected are women.

Even in Sweden, where the social democratic welfare state model is still firmly established, the Sweden Democrats (SD) are rapidly gaining ground in the run-up to the next election. Opinion polls show them running neck and neck with the governing Social Democrats. Central to the SD's equality policy strategy is the accusation that feminists in Sweden do not care about the concerns of "normal" women like those in low-paid jobs in the public sector, or poor pensioners, but showcase only well-educated, cosmopolitan, middle-class women. They also accuse feminists of failing to defend gender equality achievements against the effects of immigration. Here, too, social democracy is under attack in traditional policy areas

Feminist players and social democratic parties should therefore return to the question of welfare and pay closer attention to class relations. If they fail to do so, they too will be preparing the ground in which the right-wing populists' simplistic answers can flourish. Inspired by the strategic recommendations for Poland, progressive parties in the other countries need to return to a political agenda that counteracts socioeconomic inequalities in their respective countries and offers the prospect of comprehensive, far-reaching social safety nets for women. Otherwise, it will not be possible to counter socially oriented right-wing populism.

Moreover, in view of the upcoming European elections in 2019, it is important not to leave the European-level debate about social security for women and children to conservatives and right-wing populists, but as progressive players to develop viable ideas for the future that women voters in Europe find convincing.

### 3. (Re-)mobilising women voters: practical versus strategic gender interests

To understand the interests and motivations of women voters for right-wing populist parties, it is worth taking a look at Poland and France.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, Nancy: "Eine neue Linke oder: Das Ende des progressiven Neoliberalismus", *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Dr. Wippermann, Carsten: „Was junge Frauen wollen?“, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2016. Link: <https://www.fes.de/studie-was-junge-frauen-wollen/>.

To classify the right-wing populist PiS in Poland and the Front National in France as misogynistic would be too sweeping a generalisation because they are not completely opposed to women's rights. The reason why women vote for right-wing populists – despite policy objectives that oppose their reproductive rights – is best explained by their *practical and strategic gender interests*. Women's practical gender interests arise from the concrete conditions to which women are exposed in the context of gender-specific division of labour, but which have no strategic goal. Strategic gender interests in contrast are formulated more at the theoretical level on the basis of an analysis of the subordinate position of women. The PiS is very good at satisfying primarily the practical gender interests (family welfare, household income, improving the economic situation by increasing family benefits). For many women, strategic interests such as reproductive rights are then marginalised.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in France. There, too, the Front National connects with the anticipated living conditions and everyday situations of women voters. Opinion polls have found that women who vote for the Front National say that their personal experience and concrete living conditions outweigh the ideals upheld by intellectuals. So in this case, too, the Front National utilises women's practical gender interests. In the 2017 presidential election, Marine Le Pen had no clearly anti-feminist measures in her manifesto, though admittedly no equality policy ideas either. However, what worked in the sense that it took Marine Le Pen into the second round of the French presidential elections was her announcement that her party would draw up a national plan for equal pay, and would tackle precarious employment conditions and social inequality.

#### 4. Women in leadership roles – more than a facade?

In some countries it is clear that individual women really are the *Female Faces* of right-wing populist parties and therefore appeal to more women, as for example in France, Poland and Germany. Yet a brief analysis of the underlying structures shows that men still dominate at all levels.

After the last parliamentary elections, the proportion of women in the German Bundestag sank to just

30.7 per cent, mainly as a result of the entry of the AfD and the FDP, which have hardly any female parliamentarians in their ranks. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Sweden, where the proportion of women members of parliament also fell when the Sweden Democrats (SD) entered parliament – from 47 per cent in 2006 to a still comparatively high 43 per cent in 2014. Moreover, the SD has few women on its national executive, where only five of the 17 members are women. It is therefore suggested that progressive players should repeatedly mention and expose this situation, especially to female voters. Progressive parties should ensure that they are well positioned in this respect and reflect the broad mass of the population in their membership, in their leadership echelons and among their workforce, and that they are a place where political participation and creative possibilities are there for all citizens. This is not least about implementing the policies for which one stands in terms of content. For how is one to credibly make policy for women if all the key posts in a party are held by men and women have scarcely any power to shape policy?

#### 5. Feminist counter-movements – in Germany and Europe

What conclusions can be drawn for civil-society feminist counter-movements? Apart from the “black protest” in Poland, no feminist mobilisation of broad social strata can be seen. That is because of the different preconditions and circumstances in individual countries. In Hungary, for example, large sections of the population associate feminism with left-wing liberal parties or communism, which makes it difficult to reach a lot of target groups. In other countries such as Greece, which is still struggling with the consequences of the economic crisis, feminism as a civil society movement tends to play a subordinate role.

One striking feature of all analyses is that there are few incidences of a strategic formulation of goals and partnerships with trade unions, progressive parties and other civil-society players. Areas of civic engagement such as community building and community organising – grassroots work – are often neglected. That leads to a situation where feminists and citizens involved in equality policy often keep to themselves, act in individual strictly demarcated contexts and support

different, or even contradictory, demands. Where possible, it is recommendable to enter into alliances with parties, trade unions and associations and to develop a common agenda that connects with women's practical and strategic gender interests, beyond progressive neoliberalism. The lack of two-way communication between trade unions and the civil society feminist movement is especially evident in Germany. The Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Confederation) represents more than two million women, yet the feminist movement in Germany makes hardly any use of this potential and these structures. Why is unclear. To hazard a guess: different "languages," subject areas and accesses.

In parallel with a common agenda at the national level it is important to press ahead with networking progressive players, including at the European level, and to strengthen their strategic alignment. This is especially important in the run-up to the 2019 European elections, given that right-wing forces are better networked. By invitation of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, players from the world of politics civil society and the scientific community held discussions in the context of *The Female Face of the Far Right* workshop at the European Council's *World Forum for Democracy* in November 2017 in Strasbourg. Workshop participants formulated the following approaches to a progressive strategy for counteracting the spread of right-wing populism:

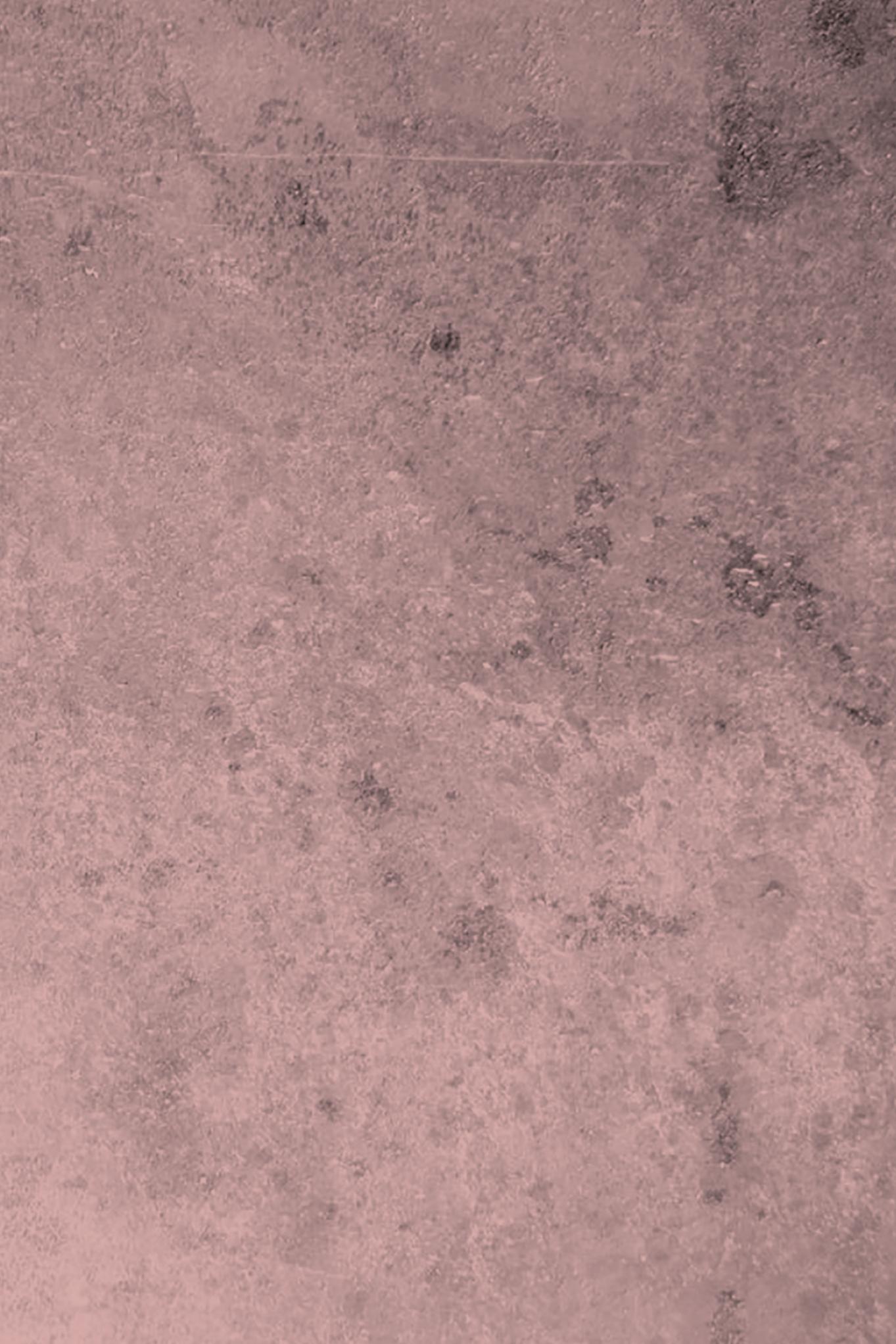
- Transnational alliances between progressive players and networks and "learning from one another" are important.
- More education: above all in gender issues, democracy and media use.
- In civil society there is a need for greater awareness, more democratic know-how, and understanding in order to push-start and support progressive legislation.
- Trade union and party structures should be used for support and networks.
- Men should be addressed and included as feminist players.
- Social issues are closely interwoven with gender policy issues and cannot be separated. This should be taken into account in political communications.
- The very communities addressed by right-wing populists should be taken into consideration as target groups. It is the task of social democratic players especially to contain authoritarian tendencies in precarious and insecure communities by adopting policies geared to social security.
- Male and female politicians are required as feminist role models. In addition, party manifestos should be geared more to feminism and gender equality.
- Right-wing populist parties now dominate the discourse on refugees and migration. Progressive parties should not cede the debate about women's and family policies to them as well.

Democracies not only in Europe but also worldwide find themselves confronted by the rise of right-wing populism. In addition to the countries examined in the present study, it is worth taking a look beyond them to learn more and to trigger transnational communication about strategic approaches and creative ideas for civil-society mobilisation in support of democracy and gender equality. On International Women's Day this year, more than six million women throughout Spain, from Queen Letizia to migrant cleaners, went on strike. In January 2017 the Women's March mobilised several million women in the United States and worldwide and their supporters to make the case for women's rights and workers' rights, and against racism and homophobia.

Right-wing populism is attacking the foundations of our democracy. The bounds of what can be said and done have already shifted far into the right-wing political spectrum. We as progressive players should also ask ourselves to what extent we are responsible for that. Where are there blind spots? What questions are ignored? Which people that we ought to have reached did we fail to reach with our policies, ideas and views?

Although we live in uncomfortable times we should not see confrontation with right-wing populism only as a threat, but also as an opportunity to reflect critically on our own attitudes, to develop new ideas, to network transnationally and to learn from other countries. In the final analysis, only together can we fight the fight to prevent our society from drifting further apart and for a good life for all.

3



# INTRODUCTION

BJÖRN KLEIN

In Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film "Triumph of the Will," which the title of this study alludes to, and which chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party congress in Nuremberg, the progressive women of the Weimar Republic no longer exist.

In the Weimar Republic very heterogeneous and fluid images of women and men existed. In the early 1930s, these were curtailed and increasingly fell into line with a "German Fräulein" type. More and more, reference was made to women's role as mothers who were meant to devote themselves to full-time household duties (Sutton 2011). Masculinity took up an (even) more central position in social, political and cultural respects. Finally, under National Socialism the female body was mythologised and nationalised.

Reference has often been made in recent years to the warning signs of "Weimar conditions". For example, after right-wing populists won seats in the German Bundestag last year, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published several essays examining the differences and similarities between the Weimar Republic and current conditions. Such emotional-seeming comparisons have not dwindled in number since countless right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties with regionally distinct fascist players have returned even to the European Parliament and regional parliaments.

History does not simply repeat itself, nor is it possible to derive laws from a retrospective look at past processes. Nonetheless, the current reactionary tendencies show that certain recurrent patterns of thinking and norms exist that shape our societies and that are in turn inherent in quite concrete words, images and ideas. Now, when we consider the growing right-wing populist and right-wing extremist movements in Europe, the analogies drawn between present and past often lack an absolutely central connecting link: gender policy.

This study thus analyses a central connection accompanying the change in right-wing parties in respect of gender policy in recent years: women in, and the image of women held by, right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties and their environment in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden and Greece. The central questions are: how and on what premises do

right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties conduct women's, gender and family policy and what is the role of women in these parties?

Alice Weidel, Marine LePen, Beata Szydło, Ildikó Pelczné Gáll and Dóra Dúró – in many right-wing parties in Europe, women hold or have held leading positions. In Germany, players such as Pegida and the Identitäre Bewegung that are close to these parties also have women such as Tatjana Festerling and Melanie Schmitz in their leadership ranks. As well as occupying a prominent place in their parties, women are now more visible away from the political party landscape, for example at demonstrations and online, thereby giving other women the opportunity to identify with them and to vote for right-wing parties.

In ways that vary widely from country to country, these women pursue anti-feminist policies and work in parties or groups that are largely very male-dominated. They call for prison sentences for abortion, while access to contraception is impeded, demonised or sometimes prohibited and women's right to self-determination over their own bodies is once more called into question. On the other hand, this right-wing party policy works, as the Poland case study in particular suggests, because it delivers real economic improvement to certain women. That seems contradictory, but only at first sight because, as the individual case studies show, the aim of such strategies is to render right-wing positions respectable. As the study also shows, right-wing women rate highly in regressive, reactionary and chauvinist policies.

Current right-wing interventions claiming to stand up for women as political subjects also differ widely from country to country. What unites them, however, is the fact that it is no longer adequate to dismiss this right-wing understanding as a simple "women back to the kitchen" programme, or to categorise right-wing women simply as "agents of the patriarchy". First and foremost, it is inadequate in view of the present expansion of and differentiation between right-wing

movements, which extends to the spectrum of right-wing female players and their (gender-) policy positions (Rahner 2018).

Polish authors Weronika Grzebalska and Elena Zacharenko explore this differentiation, taking as examples the governing Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) party and the smaller political grouping Kukiz'15, via which several members of smaller right-wing extremist parties were elected to parliament. In the Hungary study, Anikó Félix likewise examines two governing parties, Fidesz and its Christian Democratic coalition partner KDNP. She also casts light on the role of the neo-Nazi Jobbik, the "Movement for a Better Hungary". Aleandros Sakellariou casts a spotlight on the neo-Nazi and fascist party Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi) in Greece, the third-largest party in parliament since the last parliamentary elections, albeit still a long way behind the first two. Ann-Cathrin Jungar examines the achievements of the Sweden Democrats, a party she assigns to the populist far right, which according to the latest opinion polls when the study was conducted was set to become the second largest party after the Social Democrats. Christèle Marchand-Lagier's study analyses the connection between the Front National, the women in the party, the image of women and potential female voters in France. For the Germany case study the Amadeu-Antonio Stiftung availed of the expertise of Enrico Glaser, Marius Hellwig, Simone Rafael, Judith Rahner, Jan Riebe and Rachel Spicker to analyse the rise of Alternative für Deutschland, which was founded in 2013 and has developed during the last few years from a national liberal into a national conservative party.

The questions we must ask ourselves – and which we also asked the authors – are:

*What counter-movements are there?*

And:

*What might they look like in future? What is to be done?*

What kind of politics can prevent further consolidation of anti-feminist politics?

One central answer arising from this study points in particular to grave omissions in the containment of authoritarian tendencies by neoliberal politicians in the last few decades. Policies that question binary classi-

fications and value concepts of gender only from a neoliberal-feminist, or what Nancy Fraser calls a progressive-neoliberal angle, cannot provide an answer to these questions.

In the concepts right-wing populist and right-wing extremism, histories and power interests are inherent. Failure to question these, along with the relevant movements – and in the worst case to counter them with nothing more than outrage and moralising – is harmful to feminist and enlightened gender and women's politics. Moreover, it encourages a normalisation of neo-Nazism and fascism that shifts the boundaries of what can be said.

National conservative, national liberal, neo-Nazi and neo-fascist parties, movements and initiatives in Europe make skilful use of this loss of alternatives to neoliberal policies by referring to "gender madness" or so-called "gender ideology". The case studies show that the right-wing fight for women's rights, family policies and motherhood is conducted especially via the term gender. Gender thus functions simultaneously as a discursive node (Mayer, Ajanovic, Sauer 2017) and a symbolic glue (Pető 2015). A wide variety of players come together in "anti-genderism," which can be regarded as a modern variety of anti-feminism (Lang, Peters 2017). They range from Catholics and Evangelicals via so-called worried parents, national conservatives and national liberals to neo-Nazi, fascist and increasingly also pro-Islamic groups such as the BIG (Bündnis für Innovation und Gerechtigkeit, Alliance for Innovation and Justice) party.

In these circumstances it is no longer enough to speak of a right-wing backlash. As Weronika Grzebalska and Elena Zacharenko rightly note, that is not sufficiently complex. Women have long been in exposed positions in right-wing populist, right-wing extremist and fascist parties and movements. Their motivations are diverse and in most cases are and were accompanied by an enhanced self-image and in some cases with real economic improvements in their lives.

A successful progressive policy must therefore not only find answers to market-oriented feminism and its equality and family policy. It must recognise that this confrontation is central. Above all it must once again prioritise the social question without reproducing new exclusions of a racist and xenophobic kind in doing so.

Something else is important, too:

Progressive players from politics, civil society and the scientific community must link arms – in ideals and physically – so as to have something to counter right-wing populist tendencies. That would be the true triumph of women who want a democratic and gender-equitable Europe.

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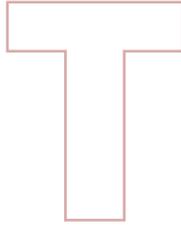
4

**GERMANY**

# 4.1 COUNTRY CASE STUDY GERMANY

BY ENRICO GLASER, MARIUS HELLWIG, SIMONE RAFAEL,  
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The New Right that has been emerging and growing stronger in Germany in recent years can be associated with different ideological tendencies, first and foremost with anti-liberal and anti-modern, neoliberal, right-wing conservative, völkisch-nationalist and in some cases even neo-fascist leanings. In some cases, its representatives take their cues from well-known front men and women from the academic world, various political parties or radio and TV. This right-wing formation is embedded in a current mood in society and in the normalisation of racism and anti-feminism, with numerous attacks on refugees, their accommodation and mosque congregations, along with violence and intimidation of minorities such as Muslims, Jews, persons of colour, political opponents or feminists, both in the street and online.



he basic principles of neo-right and right-wing populist policies include antagonism to gender equality, feminism and diverse ways of life of women, to gender and sexual diversity, to gender research and rejection of equal rights for LGBTI<sup>1</sup> people, along with constant vilification of the emancipation of social groups as »political correctness. These policies function by stirring up feelings of resentment and purporting to uphold supposedly traditional, conservative or Christian values, thereby eliciting a positive response and enabling them to connect with society in general.

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party was founded in 2013, since when it has developed into the leading party-political player of the New Right in Germany. It was founded under the impact of the euro crisis, adopting a stance of clear opposition to the government, arguing that Greece should leave the EU and Germany should abandon the euro. As the influx of migrants to Europe, and to Germany in particular, increased, refugees and migration replaced the euro crisis as the AfD's central concern. Within the party racist and, in some cases, extreme right-wing positions gained ground. Elections have shown that the AfD's clear standpoint of opposition to refugees and to Islam in Germany gain it a great deal of support. Women's and gender issues are an inherent part of the party's ideology and political objectives and frequently a key component of comments about refugees and Islam rather than a topic per se. Anti-modern family politics, the alleged emergence of insecurity for women and children as a result of migration and an emphasis on the »naturalness« of gender differences is targeted especially at women. The AfD is now represented in 14 state assemblies, and 94 AfD candidates (92 after resignations), some of them highly controversial characters, were elected to the German Bundestag on 24

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation LGBTI stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Trans- and Intersexual and covers the diversity of genders, identities and sexualities.

October 2017. Along with conspiracy theorists, Holocaust deniers and Islamophobes, anti-feminists will have influence and will try to reverse emancipatory gender policies. In order to understand the anti-feminist positions adopted within the New Right or right-wing populist factions, we will analyse these positions below, paying special attention to the AfD. We will highlight different women's and gender policy positions published in policy documents such as election manifestos and political programmes, and in public statements by leading politicians. We will then consider women and their attitudes within the parties and right-wing groups and investigate gender-specific motives in female voting behaviour. We will conclude by describing counter-movements and empowering and emancipatory strategies adopted by different (feminist) social movements that are successfully resisting the rise of right-wing gender policies..

### 1. Policy Objectives in the Area of Women's, Gender and Family Policy

Anti-feminist, sexist, racist and völkisch-nationalist ideologies found in right-wing populism<sup>2</sup> take centre stage in the AfD's policy objectives<sup>3</sup>. They feature in the party's 2016 political programme, in election manifestos for the 2013 and 2017 Bundestag elections and for individual state assemblies, and are communicated at public appearances or in relevant publications and via social media. The gender images promoted there are linked with racial and nationalist ideals that propagate a patriarchal and authoritarian social order.<sup>4</sup> Central to these ideals is the traditional family, seen as consisting of a heterosexual alliance between a »na-

<sup>2</sup> Right-wing populism is seen a »popular and rebelliously authoritarian pronouncement of extreme right propositions on the basis of emotionalised agitation« that »with propagandistic reference to fears and prejudices presents itself as action-oriented »people's advocates« (see Häusler 2008). Central to this are two rhetorical demarcations: one of »we down below« against »those up there,« and »we« against »the others.« Attitude research defines a right-wing populism orientation first by misanthropic attitudes, especially toward people perceived or labelled as »aliens,« Muslims, asylum-seekers, Sinti and Roma, secondly by rightist authoritarian orientations, and thirdly by mistrust in democracy and disassociation from arbitrarily definable elites (see Amadeu Antonio Stiftung 2016b: 6).

<sup>3</sup> We concentrate below on the AfD, even though before its foundation there were already regional and national attempts to establish right-wing populist parties in Germany. These all failed or fell far short of the influence and success of the AfD in recent years.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis of different tendencies within the AfD and their connecting points with gender policy positions see Kemper 2014.

tive« man and woman and their children. Such families are described as »worthy of protection as the germ cells of civic society.« Since it was founded, the AfD has outlined strategies and instruments to »influence« supposed »demographic decline« with the aim of preventing the German nation from extinction and has linked that topic with the need to fight »swamping by foreigners« due to the influx of people from other countries. In doing so the party takes up what has always been a central ideologue of völkisch right-wing extremism (see Botsch 2017, p. 53ff). In terms of action to be taken, the party proposed that the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth be changed into a Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and Population Development (AfD 2017, p. 49). Calling for a »culture of welcome for children,« the election manifesto relies on playing off the acceptance and care of refugees against the interests of children born in Germany. It is probably no coincidence that the subheading »Deutschland nicht abschaffen« (Don't abolish Germany) echoes the almost eponymous 2010 bestseller »Deutschland schafft sich ab« (Germany is Abolishing Itself) by Thilo Sarrazin, a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and former Finance Senator in Berlin. In his book, Sarrazin linked social and population policy with racial biology theories, thereby playing a major role in paving the way for right-wing populist arguments in Germany. The AfD also stokes this racist fear of being swamped by foreigners and combines its ideas on native population policy, or a »low birthrate in Europe« with a colonial and racist interpretation of an Africa where population numbers are said to be exploding (AfD 2017: 28). The AfD wants to halt what it claims will be a subsequent influx of migrants to Europe by closing national borders (see AfD 2017:20) – with enforcement if needed by the use of firearms even against women and children (ibid 2016) – and by implementing an active domestic population policy that counteracts »swamping by foreigners« while simultaneously aiding »preservation of the native population« (see AfD 2017:49).

The website of the North-Rhine Westphalia state unit of the AfD shows the role that women should play in the planned population policy: »The ideal place for a small child to be looked after is on Mummy's lap«

(Mieruch 2014). Childcare outside the family should be »seen as a stopgap rather than as a socially desired norm« (ibid). The AfD whose conservative attitude is based on stereotypical gender roles disguises a criticism of feminism as a neoliberal logic of exploitation. According to the AfD, a »misconceived feminism only appreciates women who go out to work and not women who are 'only' mothers and housewives« (AfD 2017: 41f). Thus, feminism only serves economic interests and is responsible for a low birthrate (ibid). Political regulations and instruments designed to improve the balance between family and work and make both parents share responsibility are to be terminated in favour of a family policy whereby women do the care and upbringing and defer their own professional aspirations. The AfD election manifesto sets out »measures aimed at a medium-term increase in the birth rate of the native population.« Accordingly, »the mother will be paid a lump sum child allowance of 25,000 euros.« Fathers are not taken into account. Moreover, this measure is restricted to mothers who »live in ordered circumstances,« which is taken to mean a minimum age, a vocational qualification and permanent employment. The AfD's family policy is also targeted against »one-parent families,« which statistically means single mothers. According to the AfD, the supposedly negative effects on the child of being brought up by a single mother are alarming (see AfD 2017: 40). This fits with the fact that the party is also in favour of reintroducing the principle of blame into divorce. A woman must not have »herself to blame« for getting into a divorce situation. »Serious misconduct against marital solidarity« is once again to be punishable (see AfD 2017: 38). In order to teach children the »rules of partnership and family, housekeeping, protection of life and child-raising« these subjects should again become an »inherent component of syllabuses and schoolbooks« (AfD 2017: 37). The AfD also wants to curb terminations of pregnancy and thus limit women's physical self-determination and reproductive rights. In this, the AfD finds allies and widespread support among players from right-wing conservative, Christian fundamentalist and anti-feminist circles who, for example, have held a »March for Life« in Berlin every year since 2010. These players' closeness to the AfD became obvious in 2014, for example, when Be-

atrix von Storch, a former AfD member of the European Parliament, carried the banner at the head of the procession, and again in 2015 when she led the march along with others (see Klapsa 2015).

The AfD's population policy is also directed against LGBTI families. Despite this clearly homophobic position in family policy, the party's attitude is not unambiguous. In the past, progressive actors and parties promoted legal and sexual equality for homosexuals, while for right-wing populist actors lesbians, gay, bisexuals, transsexuals and intersexuals were the target of homophobic and transphobic rhetoric and violence. As right-wing actors and groups have become more diverse in recent years, this relation has become more complex, as reflected in public statements by leading AfD politicians and their statements in the party programme. On the one hand one can find numerous homophobic and transphobic statements by AfD politicians: Andreas Gehlmann, for example, a member of the Saxony-Anhalt state assembly, called for homosexuality to be punished by prison (see Denkler 2016). Corinna Herold of the AfD in Thuringia asked during a session in the state assembly how many homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexual people were living in the state and why they were »in need of special protection« (see Klages 2015). Kay Nerstheimer, a directly elected AfD member of the Berlin state legislature, described homosexuals as a »degenerate species«. Due to his right-wing extremist and anti-homosexual statements he quit the AfD parliamentary group (see Mc-Minn 2016). Furthermore, AfD Bundestag member Nicole Höchst rejected the right of adoption for homosexuals on the ground that homosexual men were more likely to be paedophiles than heterosexual men.<sup>5</sup> Homophobic debates among conservative and right-wing populists gained currency and an edge when the Bundestag resolved that from October 2017 gays and lesbians would have the right to marry. One day after the decision, former AfD party chairwoman Frauke Petry posted a statement on Facebook describing same-sex marriage as an »ideological experiment.«<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.rhein-zeitung.de/region/lokales/nahe\\_artikel-goettenbachgymnasiasten-heizen-kandidaten-kraeftig-ein-arid,1696082.html](https://www.rhein-zeitung.de/region/lokales/nahe_artikel-goettenbachgymnasiasten-heizen-kandidaten-kraeftig-ein-arid,1696082.html).

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/alternativefuerde/posts/1543239092373091:0> (accessed on 20.11.2017)

On the other hand there are openly homosexual and a few openly transsexual AfD politicians, even in leading positions. They deny the existence of homophobia in the party and see themselves as the voice of politically conservative homosexuals. According to them, sexual orientation should be kept in the private domain. Moreover, there is no point in demanding further rights for LGBTI people because they already enjoy equal rights. Equality is considered to be threatened only by »external enemies,« supposedly Muslims or refugees which are understood as a uniform group. The existence of queer black people or migrants and homosexual or trans\* people of colour is denied. Even pro-homosexual campaigns or public statements relating to LGBTI issues are constantly linked with racist and Islamophobic attitudes. For example, leading candidate Alice Weidel dismissed the same-sex marriage as insignificant in the face of doom scenarios of alleged »swamping by foreigners.« On the national party's Facebook page she is quoted as follows: »marriage for all while the country is being Islamised«<sup>7</sup>. It is probably no coincidence that this statement came from the openly lesbian Alice Weidel, who would seem to be above any suspicion of homophobia and who acts as a principal witness to her party's homosexual-friendly stance.

Despite its sometimes proactive attempts to recruit homosexual voters, the AfD does not argue for LGBTI rights in its party programme. On the contrary, it plays off children's and family policy against the interests and rights of LGBTI people: »The AfD wants both national and federal states' family policy to be oriented to the image of the family comprising father, mother and children. We reject all attempts to extend the meaning of the word 'family' in Article 6, Paragraph 1 of Basic Law [the German constitution] to cover other relationships and in doing so to deprive the family of special state protection« (AfD 2017: 40). This blocks out the reality of numerous children and young people growing up with same-sex parents. Moreover, the AfD opposes the modernisation of sex education in schools which covers sexual and gender diversity. According to the AfD, a modern sex education causes a »prema-

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/alternativefuerde/photos/a.542889462408064.1073741828.540404695989874/1543239092373091/?type=3&theater> (accessed on 20.11.2017)

ture sexualisation«. Moreover, integrating sexual and gender diversity into the sex education leads to an »unilateral emphasis on homo- and transsexuality,« and an »improper interference in the natural development of our children« (AfD 2017: 41).

The AfD deals similarly with gender research and gender studies. In the party's 2017 election manifesto all references to the subject of gender are in a chapter headed »A Culture of Welcome for Children«. Thus it seems that both fields were conflicting and that the topic of gender were a danger to children. At various points in this chapter gender is depicted as biologically determined and binary:: »The Gender ideology marginalises natural differences between the sexes and questions sexual identity. It wants to abolish the traditional family as a way of living and a role model. It thus clearly contradicts Basic Law (...)« (AfD 2017: 40). The Equal Pay Day campaign, which seeks to highlight pay inequality between women and men, and feminist calls for gender-sensitive language are disparaged as »propaganda campaigns« (ibid). In the election manifesto gender research always appears in inverted commas and is described as unscientific and ideologically motivated. To quote: »Gender ideology contradicts both scientific biological and developmental-psychological findings and many generations' actual life experiences.« (AfD 2017: 40). Consequently, the AfD calls for the abolition of »gender professorships« (AfD 2017: 41). Although this relates to only four per cent of all professorships in Germany and the federal government funding for equality and gender projects and research accounted for only 0.24 per cent of total funding between 2010 and 2017, this demand comes under the heading of »Waste of Taxes«. The existing funding are to be terminated and »(...) the commissioners for women's affairs at universities committed to 'gender ideology' are to be abolished.« (ibid) Active use is already made of the opportunity to exert influence on the handling of women's and gender equality issues. On 1 March 2018, AfD member Nicole Höchst gave a speech during a Bundestag session on the occasion of the International Women's Day. In doing so, she defamed endeavours to reduce discrimination against women as »gender mainstreaming totalitarianism«. There was no such thing as structural discrimination such as a gender pay gap or a lack of women in lead-

ership positions. It was »like the yeti; everyone talks about it but no-one has ever seen it«. And »as for equal opportunities officers, we reject the idea of an instrument for systematic discrimination against men.«<sup>8</sup>

In summary it can be said that women's, gender and family policy are a key point of reference for right-wing populist statements. They are instrumentalised and at the same time undermined and aimed to be abolished: They are only mentioned when they serve »western values,« a »German defining culture« or to serve racist resentment. In contrast, current women's and LGBTQI\* rights and feminist demands are rejected as unnecessary or exaggerated.

## 2. Women and the AfD: From Party of Professors to Party of Protest?

We will now investigate the role played by women in the AfD and the extent to which as a party with a decidedly anti-feminist profile it can win over women voters, and discuss the reason why women vote for the AfD.

Until now Frauke Petry, Alice Weidel and Beatrix von Storch have been central to the AfD's image, although men dominate the party in parliament, state assemblies and high office. Until Frauke Petry resigned directly after the 2017 general election, there were three women in the party's leading circle, giving the party a feminine and therefore »peace-loving« face. It is notable that none of the three is considered as belonging to the radical, völkisch-nationalist wing of the party even though they have made völkisch and nationalist statements. In general, no woman is a member of the immediate leadership of the national-völkisch circle.

This gender gap is reflected in the party's elected representatives.<sup>9</sup> Women are in a clear minority in every state assembly where the AfD holds seats. While up to 25 men have been elected to different state assemblies, the highest number of female AfD parliamentarians is in Saxony, where there are four. In state assemblies such as those of Saarland or Bremen, where the AfD holds only a small number of seats, the proportion of women is zero per cent. Even in Mecklen-

<sup>8</sup> See Plenarprotokoll 19/17, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> See table of proportion of women AfD members of state assemblies.

burg-Western Pomerania, where the AfD had a large group of 18 elected representatives, they included only one woman (5.56 per cent). Since her resignation, the AfD party in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania state assembly has consisted solely of men. In none of the 14 state assemblies where the AfD hold seats do women make up anywhere near one third of the parliamentary party. The highest proportion of women elected, just under 28.6 per cent, was in Saxony. In Thuringia, too, the proportion of AfD women members of the state assembly changed as a result of resignations. After three men resigned from the group, this rose from 18.2 per cent to 25 per cent. As of mid-May 2018 the AfD group in the Thuringian state assembly had the highest proportion of women of all AfD parliamentary groups because the proportion of women in Saxony had decreased after resignations. In the Bundestag, since the resignation of Frauke Petry and Mario Mieruch, the AfD has 92 elected members, including ten women. In all state assemblies and in the Bundestag, the proportion of women in the AfD groups is below the parliamentary average.

A gender gap is also identifiable in the party membership. According to the party's own figures, in 2016 only 16 per cent of AfD members were women (see Niedermayer 2017). Thus no party with seats in the Bundestag has a higher proportion of male members than the AfD. The proportion of women members of the Christian Social Union (CSU) in Bavaria is 20.3 per cent, while the Free Democratic Party (FDP) has 22.6 per cent women members (see Geyer 2017) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) currently has around 32 per cent women members.

AfD state executive committees are male-dominated too.<sup>10</sup> Berlin has the highest proportion of women: a little over 27 per cent, the lowest being in the Rhineland-Palatinate and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, with no women at all on their executive committees. In Saxony (Frauke Petry<sup>11</sup>) and Berlin (Beatrix von Storch<sup>12</sup>) women were the party's state chairs until autumn 2017. At present, women chair the AfD state

executive committees in Schleswig-Holstein (Doris von Sayn-Wittgenstein) and in neighbouring Lower Saxony (Dana Guth). Since the resignation of Frauke Petry the position of national spokesperson<sup>13</sup> has also been an all-male domain. At the national level only the position of parliamentary party chair continues to be equally represented in gender terms.

A comparison between the general elections of 2013 and 2017 shows the AfD's development in terms of voters. In 2013, 40 per cent of the party's voters were women. In 2017, the figure was 35.7 per cent. The results of state assembly elections show that the AfD had its largest percentage of women voters when Bernd Lucke was party spokesman. The four state elections (Thuringia, Saxony, Hamburg and Brandenburg) with the highest proportion of women among AfD voters all took place before the fall of Bernd Lucke in July 2015. With Lucke's deselection in 2015, the election of Frauke Petry as party chairwoman and the associated radicalisation of the AfD, the party's percentage share of women voters declined. However, the AfD still scored its best election results after Lucke's deselection, gaining large numbers of women as voters.

In the 2013 Bundestag election the proportions of AfD voters with a secondary school, a high school and a university education were almost identical (six per cent each) while the proportion with lower secondary education was half that (sueddeutsche.de 2017a). In the 2017 Bundestag election, persons with lower secondary education (14 per cent) and a secondary school certificate [Mittlere Reife] (17 per cent) were the largest groups of voters for the AfD. The proportions of voters with a high school certificate [Abitur] (11 per cent) or a university degree (seven per cent) were significantly lower. In 2013 the AfD with Bernd Lucke at its helm was considered as a party of professors, but by 2017 it was seen rather as a right-wing populist to right-wing extremist party of protest. What remained constant is that it had most support among 30- to 59-year-olds and in the federal states of former East Germany. As regards occupation, blue-collar workers and the unemployed are the largest groups of AfD voters nationally. However, the AfD has ten- to twelve-per-cent support among white-collar workers, civil

<sup>10</sup> See table of proportion of women members of AfD state executive committees.

<sup>11</sup> The position is currently vacant due to Frauke Petry's resignation from the AfD.

<sup>12</sup> At the 4.11.2017 conference of the Berlin AfD Beatrix von Storch was not re-elected as chair.

<sup>13</sup> As of 8.11.2017, due to Frauke Petry's resignation from the party, the party's sole national spokesperson is Jörg Meuthen.

servants and the self-employed (see Naumann 2017).

The AfD currently holds seats in 14 out of 16 state assemblies. In all elections, a higher proportion of voters for the party were men than women. For example, in the 2016 election for the Saxony-Anhalt state assembly the AfD achieved its best result to date (24 per cent), but only one third of AfD voters were women, the lowest proportion of women to date. (For comparison, see the state assembly election in North Rhine-Westphalia: approximately 24 per cent, general election 2017: 35 per cent, or state election in Thuringia: 42.5 per cent). As regards the gender ratio of AfD voters there is no difference between East and West Germany. Summarising, one can say that the AfD voters are mainly men. In addition, the percentage share of female voters at 33-42 per cent is usually nowhere near reflected in the holding of party offices. However, because of the high media profile of leading figures such as Frauke Petry, Alice Weidel and Beatrix von Storch, the dominance of men is far from being reflected in public perception. This may begin to explain why the percentage of female voters is much higher than the number of female candidates, parliamentarians or office-holders would suggest. The connection that is becoming evident here has been proven *inter alia* by studies from Denmark, that female heads of a right-wing extremist party increase the party's appeal to women voters (see Kosiara-Pedersen/Hansen 2015: pp. 26-48).

With Frauke Petry's resignation the AfD lost one of its most important female leadership figures and an important role model for AfD voters. It remains to be seen whether Alice Weidel, co-chair with Alexander Gauland of the parliamentary party, can take over this role and attract women to the AfD. But the surprise deselection of Beatrix von Storch as party leader in Berlin and the fact that 14 of the 16 state chairs and the national spokesman of the AfD are now men suggest that with the party's radicalisation and increasing success women are being pushed out of leading positions within it.

The AfD is often seen as a party of protest, but empirical surveys leave scope for interpretation here. Their findings point to radicalisation in terms of content having been completed. In surveys conducted on the day of the Bundestag election of 2017, 31 per cent

of AfD voters said they had voted AfD out of political conviction. Sixty per cent said they had done so as a protest against and because of disappointment with the established parties. However, the AfD's success cannot be explained by protest alone. Issues such as internal security, combined with Islam, refugees and German identity are decisive factors in the AfD's electoral success. The survey found that AfD voters were worried about »the loss of German culture« (95 per cent), »that the influence of Islam in Germany is becoming too great« (92 per cent) and »that criminality will increase massively in future« (91 per cent). What is more, 99 per cent of AfD voters said, »I think it is good that the AfD wants to reduce the influence of Islam in Germany.« Ninety-six per cent agreed with the statement: »I think it is good that the AfD wants to place more restrictions on the influx of refugees« (wahl.tagesschau.de 2017). This shows the AfD is not purely a party of protest but that people essentially vote for it out of content-related conviction.

Looking at the AfD's results in the 2017 Bundestag election, the following arguments are put forward in public discussion as an approach to explaining why people vote for the party. Basically, new lines of conflict between sceptics and supporters of modernisation are seen. Two thirds of AfD voters are said to be »sceptical about modernisation« (Bertelsmann Foundation 2017). Sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer cites experience of disintegration and hollowing out of democracy in globalised authoritarian capitalism as an explanatory approach. He suggests that some parts of the population experience this as a loss of control and recognition. People have the feeling that they or the group they feel they belong to have no voice in politics and are not noticed at all. The AfD promises those who feel powerless that they will regain control and can thus »transform individual, anger-soaked apathy into collective power fantasies« (sueddeutsche.de 2017b). Similarly, the AfD's good election results in social flash-points are linked with »a sense of being forgotten« and a lack of prospects (see Keller/Strauß 2017, Fiebig 2017). In rural, deserted and neglected regions with high emigration and a dismantling of public infrastructure, it is said that the »wrath of those left behind« (see *inter alia* Bangel 2017) makes people vote AfD as a kind of »revenge of the periphery« (Rada 2017). As

regards the economically strong southwest of Germany, it is pointed out that the underlying factors there are not so much objective as subjective feelings of »being disadvantaged« (See Gerlach/Götz/Maas 2017). Finally, some suggest that specific East German post-socialist transformation experiences make people perceive social changes in the context of globalisation and global refugee movements as threatening (Prof. Dr. Dorothee de Nève in *daserste.de* 2017; Gerlach/Götz/Maas 2017). Sociologist Andreas Kemper points out that election results must be considered region-specifically and taking into account different milieus from which the body of AfD voters is made up. Regional analyses showed a connection with unemployment as a fundamental pattern, above all in the north and west of Germany (with high figures locally especially in »social flashpoints«) along with a specific »East German mentality«. In addition, regional influences of Christian fundamentalism overlay this basic pattern (Andreas Kemper 2017), along with a strong tendency for ethnic German migrants from Russia to vote AfD (See Gerlach/Götz/Maas 2017).

Against the backdrop of attitude research, women's votes for the AfD are not surprising. This research has shown for several years that women support elements of so-called group-focused enmity just as much as men. In recent years they have been more inclined to »xenophobia,« racism and Islamophobia than men (Küpper/Zick 2011: 187-210). In the most recent survey conducted in 2016, support for priority rights for established persons was significantly more widespread among women than among men. The demand for priority rights for established persons goes hand in hand above all with racism, xenophobia, degradation of asylum seekers and support for Islamophobic views. Women are also somewhat more inclined than men to support »new right attitudes« (men: 26%, women: 30%) (See Zick/Krause/Küpper 2016: 143ff).

A 2005 study investigated women's greater hostility toward groups who supposedly come from outside their own, German society – that is likewise »xenophobic,« racist and Islamophobic attitudes. It found higher levels of hostility among poorly qualified women from eastern Germany who are particularly badly affected or threatened by disintegration. Findings that explain differences between the sexes are the percep-

tion of a »non-specific, vague threat from foreign men« and emphasis of a »demonstrative belongingness« to »German-ness« especially among East German women. They also placed stronger emphasis on capitalist performance imperatives, as expressed in an assertive attitude. Accordingly »hostile women« tried more than men to achieve their own social, political and economic equality within society via the inequality, that is, degradation, of weak groups – above all when they were unable to realise their own life plans (see Küpper/Heitmeyer 2015: 108-127).

One important motive for women (and for men) is the instrumentalisation of gender policy issues and feminist demands. »Violence against our wives and children« is currently a key mobilisation issue used by right-wing populist actors – and one that is proving popular in the western federal states. The occasions are crimes of violence widely covered in the media. Under headings such as Mothers Against Violence (Bottrop/Duisburg), Parents Against Violence (Essen), the Kandel Women's Alliance and the Women's March (Berlin) AfD politicians and sympathisers are active in organising, advertising and as speakers. The choice of topics, labelling and representation of events by women with experience of migration and calls to leave AfD appeals and symbols at home stand for hopes to achieve the highest possible level of support (see Keßel 2018, Prothmann 2018, Rafael 2018 and Sommerfeld 2018).

Linking racism and sexism is formulated in at least three ways. The central motif is the hostile image of the »abusive foreigner,« especially in debates about flight and asylum. By ethnicising sexism and using the mechanism of repression and projection one can externalise and cover up one's own – experienced and acted out – sexism. At the same time, this enables racism, and especially Islamophobic lines of argument, to be legitimised. Secondly, the stereotype of the (sexually) oppressed Muslim woman can be used to illustrate the progressive nature and self-assurance of »our culture.« Thirdly, because of her prolific childbearing the Muslim woman also figures as a population policy threat – linked with demographic discourse. These ways of thinking are combined in *völkisch* and racist protests with the conspiracy theory of a supposedly imminent or already ongoing »population exchange« (see Amadeu Antonio Stiftung 2016a/2016b). The in-

strumentalisation of feminist topics is also seen when in discussions about refugees the fear is expressed that »Islamisation« will lead to the abandonment of »hard-won equal rights for women« (Hähnig 2017). In the same connection the AfD presents itself as »the only genuine protecting power for gays and lesbians in Germany« (rundschau-online.de 2017).

With their attitude that a »stop must be put« to the current system and that the only thing that will help now is protest by the »silent majority,« right-wing populist parties make themselves attractive to insecure, angry men in particular, political scientist Lars Geiges suggests. Movement researcher Dieter Rucht points out that the idea of »resistance,« which in the AfD and Pegida (so-called Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West) has a strong physical component with »propaganda of the deed« appealing to men in particular (see Greven 2016).

Nonetheless, women are active both in anti-asylum protests and in right-wing populist movements, often in prominent positions, as well as in the AfD. They have the important public function of conveying the picture that the AfD is not an old-style right-wing party but is open to women, and therefore a modern party. They also act as role models for other women (see Schroeder et al. 2017). Women are good »poster girls« for an image transformation: »They play their roles more convincingly – partly because women expect always to adopt several roles, with everyday life, family and career.« In addition, they can stir up fears about refugees more credibly than men. Frauke Petry described Germany in former days as once a country »without Islamic terror and exploding violence,« as a country »where it was inconceivable that women and girls would be sexually abused and raped on a massive scale« (Hensel 2017).

Most female right-wing activists do see right-wing populist movements, despite their published programmes, not as misogynous: »some describe themselves as differentiated feminists or conservative feminists, while others completely reject the term feminism, but see a form of state-supported equality policy as the true threat to »women's and men's freedom to shape their own lives« (Heß 2015). Motherliness is seen as a strong model for women to identify with. Making an issue of supposed »premature sexualisation of chil-

dren« or »preservation of the family« articulates an idea that »appeals to women precisely because of their supposed ability to [combine] solicitude, care and a family role [with] presence and a voice in public discussion. Like this, in the context of national conservative ideology, a 'caring' but 'strong femininity' is propagated that is capable of connecting with many life experiences of women« (Hajek 2017).

Reference to biologicistic ideas of gender but also to neoliberal guiding principles enables women to collaborate – on the basis of shared racist attitudes and of privatisation of life models. This is made clear by the apparently contradictory involvement of openly lesbian office-holders in the AfD. Alice Weidel sees the »sexual pedagogics of diversity« as »an inadmissible intervention in the natural development of our children and in constitutionally guaranteed parental upbringing rights« (rundschau-online.de 2017). Jana Schneider (of Junge Alternative Thuringia) states that she does not presume »as a lesbian to replace a father.« Likewise, she rejects equality policies as »positive discrimination« (Boeselager 2016).

Finally, the opportunities for political engagement and being part of a community that the AfD at the grassroots offers women appears to be important and »pleasure at having been courted« has also been established (Hähnig 2017).

### 3. Counterstrategies: Between Realpolitik and Online Feminism

Alongside the increase in anti-feminist statements, progressive forces in society have recorded some achievements. Some trailblazing political decisions on gender and sexual diversity were made in the legislative periods from 2009 to 2017. The Federal Constitutional Court in 2011 again declared that parts of the country's Transsexual Act (Transsexuellengesetz, TSG) contravened the constitution. Now trans\* people must no longer undergo sex reassignment surgery in order to gain recognition in their felt gender under civil status law (see Prantl 2011). Finally, the Bundesrat in June 2017 called on the Bundestag to repeal the outdated TSG and replace it in order to strengthen self-determination of gender (see Bundesrat 2017).

In the same month the National Action Plan Against Racism, which diverse interest groups were

involved in developing, was expanded to include homophobia and transphobia as types of discrimination, and adopted by the German government (see BMFSFJ 2017).

Moreover, the feminist principle »No means no« made it into the Criminal Code in July 2016 when the Bundestag agreed to strengthen the criminal law governing sex offences. Anyone who against the discernible will of a third person now commits sexual acts on that person will be penalised (see Bundestag 2016). However, reform of the law governing sexual offences has shown how the feminist demand for women to be protected can also be instrumentalised by right-wing populists, who link it with racist resentments and stylise what they label as the Muslim man as the sole danger. Thus simultaneously with the new law governing sexual offences parliament also strengthened asylum law, so that in future asylum seekers who have committed an especially grave offence such as acts against sexual self-determination can be deported even if given a suspended sentence (see tagesschau.de 2017).

March 2017 brought a partial rehabilitation of homosexual men who had been convicted under §175 of the Criminal Code for sexual acts between men (see Warnecke 2017). This was followed by the legalisation of marriage to same-sex partners, which did away with a further form of institutionalised discrimination. Last, in November 2017 the Federal Constitutional Court ruled that the option to state a third gender should be included in the register of births (see Bertram 2017).

Even though these important decisions were taken by governments headed by a Chancellor from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the CDU as a party has no discernible standard strategy for opposing anti-feminism, or for gender justice and implementation of equal rights for homosexual and trans persons, while its Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union (CSU) has a clear affinity with right-wing populist views. In 2016 it included negatively loaded terms used by anti-feminist actors, such as »premature sexualisation« and »gender ideology,« in its Party Programme (see CSU-Landesleitung 2016: 10). Nor has the Free Democratic Party (FDP) clearly disassociated itself from anti-feminist positions. On the one hand, access to marriage for homosexual couples has been part of its

Party Programme since 2012, while on the other it rejects active equality policy measures such as quotas for women (see Oestreich 2017).

In contrast, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (the Greens) and Die Linke (the Left party) have adopted a clear position in opposition to right-wing populist and anti-feminist demands.

In the discussion on »marriage for all,« the SPD took a clear stand and in May 2017 made this a condition for participating in a further governing coalition (see dpa 2017). Yet »marriage for all« motions had previously come to nothing after being blocked by SPD members of the Bundestag who argued that as coalition partners with the CDU/CSU they were under an obligation to do so. The Greens and the Left party likewise support feminist attitudes and clearly disassociate themselves by adopting clear positions and demands in policy papers and in their practical political work. For example, the Green manifesto for the 2017 Bundestag election calls for »equal rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexual, intersex and queer people (see Bündnis 90/Die Grünen 2017). The Left Party spoke of »left feminism« and explicitly criticised the instrumentalisation of feminist concerns in racist slogans (see Die Linke 2017). Nonetheless, feminist issues played hardly any role in the 2017 Bundestag election campaign. In view of major gains by the AfD and the equally clear losses by the CDU and CSU, these parties' attempts to emulate AfD positions in order to win AfD voters can be deemed to have failed.

For the democratic parties, this raises the question of how to deal with the right-wing populist challenge. Here, researchers distinguish between three strategies: Ostracism /Sanctions, Ignoring and Confrontation/Disassociation (Schroeder et al. 2017: 52). Forms of ostracism and sanctioning were seen especially in state assemblies in western Germany, for example in the form of changes to rules of procedure and parliamentary processes. Thus in Baden-Württemberg the office of deputy vice-president of the state assembly was abolished so that the AfD could not hold it (see Otto Brenner Stiftung 2017: 50, Rieger 2016). At the federal level, too, in the run-up to the Bundestag election it was resolved that the »Father/Mother of the House« would no longer be the oldest member, but the member with the longest service (see Pokrakra 2017). After

the 24 September general election the AfD candidate for Vice-President of the Bundestag, Albrecht Glaser, failed three times to secure the necessary majority. The position has accordingly remained vacant until further notice (see dpa 2018). The limits to strategic exclusion of the AfD were apparent, however, in voting for Bundestag committee chairmen when several members of other parties decided to vote for the AfD candidates, presumably not to enable the party to claim that it was being victimised (see *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2018).

The Ignoring strategy was implemented *inter alia* by only one member of the other parliamentary parties responding to motions tabled by the AfD. This happened, for instance, in Hamburg and Bremen (see Machowecz 2016, Otto Brenner Stiftung 2017: 50, Schroeder et al. 2017: 52). However, both strategies result in enabling the AfD to portray themselves as »true democrats« and victims of the established parties, because they are being prevented from exercising their parliamentary rights. This gives the party a platform. Portraying oneself as a victim can also mobilise voters.

Members of state assemblies have previously had similar experience with members of right-wing extremist parties. Now, many state assemblies and political parties have a majority understanding that they should disassociate themselves from the AfD – while »simultaneously confronting it on content« (ibid 52). The SPD, CDU, Left and Greens have publicly stressed that they will not cooperate with the AfD (see Lehmann/Am Orde 2017). Parties such as the Left and the SPD have developed their own strategy papers for dealing with the AfD (see Die Linke 2017, Scholz 2016). However, not all members of the state assembly parties stick to the strategy. In Saxony-Anhalt some CDU members of the state assembly voted in favour of a motion tabled by the AfD. In the Berlin Senate, the CDU, FDP and AfD tabled a joint motion (see *Berliner Zeitung* 2017, *Wolfskämpf* 2017). However, there are also cross-party alliances that disassociate themselves from right-wing extremist and right-wing populist parties in terms of content. For example, before the elections to the Berlin House of Representatives in 2016 the CDU, SPD, Greens, Pirate Party and the FDP adopted the »Berlin Consensus.« This takes a stand against racism, right-wing extremism and populism, and stresses solidarity with victims of discrimination and violence. Noticeably,

neither the strategy papers of individual parties nor those of joint, cross-party alliances include any positions on diverse and democratic family and gender policies. Only the Left party mentions in its strategy paper that the AfD's anti-feminist positions are non-negotiable (see Die Linke 2016).

Occasional cross-party confrontations have taken place in relation to content and disassociation from anti-feminist motions. For example, the AfD in Brandenburg in 2017 proposed that funding for LGBT\*projects be discontinued. The democratic parties reacted unanimously with statements giving objective reasons for rejecting the motion. They declared their solidarity with the victims of homophobia and transphobia and voted together against the motion (see Falencyk 2017). In the Rhineland-Palatinate the AfD tabled several motions casting doubt on the work of Pro Familia (which among other things provides counselling for pregnant women in conflict), attacking it as an »abortion organisation.« The spokespersons for women's affairs of the FDP, the Greens and the SPD issued a joint statement declaring that women's right to self-determination was non-negotiable and defending the work of Pro Familia (see Lerch et al. 2016). The tone has grown rougher in the Bundestag too, where debates have become more heated. In debates the different parliamentary parties rely on substantive discussion and demarcation from the AfD. What happens, for instance, is that in plenary sessions the speeches of AfD members are critically compared with or corrected in the following speeches by members of other parties against AfD policy as stated in the party's manifesto. Members of the FDP, CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens and the Left frequently cross-reference and support each other's demarcation in their respective speeches. In addition to substantive discussion other forms of communication are in evidence as demarcating or supporting elements in the debating culture. They include interjections as expressions of outrage or objection to statements by AfD members or as applause for comments made by members of other parties. Both substantive discussion and other elements of communication are important as making it clear that basic democratic values and positions are not negotiable. Furthermore, they serve to counteract the normalisation tendency of inhuman statements and attitudes of

AfD members in the Bundestag (see Brunner/Ebitsch/Gierke/Schories 2018, Bundestag 2018).

Among queer feminists in civil society, widespread protest against right-wing populist trends and anti-emancipatory stories is developing. This finds expression especially under the label *Netzfeminismus* (Online Feminism). For example, under the hashtag #aufschrei thousands of persons in January 2013 broadcast their experience of everyday sexism on Twitter. Sixty thousand tweets in the first two weeks marked the start of a broad social debate on sexism (see Caspari 2014). In reaction to the debate around sexualised assaults on N2015/16<sup>14</sup>, which focused clearly on the perpetrators' origin, the #aufschrei initiator Anne Wizorek and other feminist activists founded the #ausnahmslos alliance. This criticised the fact that sexualised violence only became an issue when the perpetrators were supposedly »others« and feminist concerns were hijacked by populists and right-wing extremists<sup>15</sup>. The hashtag #metoo generated similar dynamics, with millions of people worldwide using it to report their experience of sexualised violence. With regard to Twitter posts, a new debate about sexualised violence in various fields of work has developed in Germany.<sup>16</sup>

Cross-group, queer feminist protest against this kind of hijacking of the New Year's Eve assaults took place outside the Internet, too. Adopting the slogan, »Our feminism will remain anti-racist – reclaim feminism,« more than 4,000 people in Cologne demonstrated against the way the debate on sexualised violence had been shifted and no longer focused on the victims, but was aimed at strengthening the Residence Act for refugees (see epd 2016). The action group »Demos for All [Demo für Alle], which mobilises in many towns and cities to oppose acceptance and diversity curricula (see Fedders 2016), meets with widespread counter-protest. The anti-feminist »March for

<sup>14</sup> On New Year's Eve 2015 there were assaults involving sexualised violence in several German cities. Since the majority of suspects were from North Africa and the Middle East, »New Year's Eve in Cologne« became a code for criticising sexualised violence on the one hand while on the other loading it with the racist, prejudiced image of the »molesting alien« on the other.

<sup>15</sup> The #ausnahmslos alliance in turn was criticised, inter alia by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation. Although the Foundation welcomed the campaign overall, it found it problematic that the campaign's initiators had shown insufficient sensitivity to the subject of antisemitism. This was linked with some of the initial signatories' support for anti-Israeli and antisemitic campaigns.

<sup>16</sup> See [www.twitter.com/hashtag/metoo?lang=de](http://www.twitter.com/hashtag/metoo?lang=de).

Life« has been accompanied since 2008 by counter-protests, as were the 2018 Women's Marches in Kandel and Berlin (see Götz 2016). Some are backed by the Feminist Network, a broad alliance of diverse feminist actors, groups and initiatives that was established with the idea of standing up for women's rights while simultaneously fighting against forms of group-related misanthropy.

In addition, one should mention the creative counter-protest by individual actors during the 2017 Bundestag election campaign. They included a poster campaign<sup>17</sup> by *Travesty for Germany* [Travestie für Deutschland] and a video campaign by »Women Against the AfD« [Frauen\* gegen die AfD] showing short video statements by people who consider the AfD unelectable because of its misogyny.<sup>18</sup> In the run-up to the Bundestag election the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany<sup>19</sup>, the Bundesvereinigung Trans\* (Federal Trans Association)<sup>20</sup>, the German Midwives' Association and the National Council of Women's Associations in Germany also adopted clear standpoints in opposition to the AfD's anti-feminist statements (Belltower News 2017). Previously, at the time of the elections to the Berlin Senate in 2016 many civil society and political actors adopted the Berlin Manifesto, which opposes the »instrumentalisation of LGBTI people by right-wing populists.«<sup>21</sup>

Overall it appears that both parties and the general public characterise and criticise the AfD primarily as a racist and Islamophobic party, whereas its anti-feminist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic statements are judged less harshly and in some cases even supported. Other parties seem less inclined to perceive anti-feminist positions as beyond the pale than they do racist and right extremist positions. This gives the AfD the opportunity to express its *völkisch* world view in the seemingly harmless context of gender and family policy in a way that is only called conservative. When progressive parties fail to criticise anti-feminist positions consistently and to call right-wing populist

<sup>17</sup> See [www.travestie-fuer-deutschland.org](http://www.travestie-fuer-deutschland.org).

<sup>18</sup> See [www.frauengegendieafd.org](http://www.frauengegendieafd.org).

<sup>19</sup> See [www.lsvd.de/politik/afd-eine-unberechenbare-alternative.html](http://www.lsvd.de/politik/afd-eine-unberechenbare-alternative.html).

<sup>20</sup> See [www.bv-trans.de/2017/07/31/du-hast-die-wahl-die-haltung-der-parteien-zu-trans-belangen-bei-der-bundestagswahl-2017/](http://www.bv-trans.de/2017/07/31/du-hast-die-wahl-die-haltung-der-parteien-zu-trans-belangen-bei-der-bundestagswahl-2017/).

<sup>21</sup> See [www.berliner-manifest.de](http://www.berliner-manifest.de).

lines of argument by their name, they open up spaces that right-wingers use to shift the »frontier of what can be said« and thereby normalise their inhuman positions.<sup>22</sup>

Strategies aimed at changing parliamentary processes and rules of procedure provide right-wing populists with a platform and an opportunity to portray themselves as victims. Cross-party alliances and the adoption of joint, content-related positions against right-wing extremist and right-wing populist forces are useful, however. They make it clear that fundamental and human rights and a diverse, open society are non-negotiable. This sends an important signal to voters and people living in Germany that democratic parties jointly stand up for and defend these values, and feel solidarity with victims of discrimination and violence. Likewise, they should support civil society actors and interest groups in their commitment to the rights of women and LGBTI people. Like that they will show that gender justice, anti-discrimination and equality policies and the (legal) achievements of the women's movements are fundamental values of democracy that are not up for discussion.

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<sup>22</sup> A special thank you to Olga Kedenburg for making this point.



**TABLE 1** AfD and SPD voters by sex (as of 15.05.2018)

State	Election date	AfD result	Percentage of AfD voters by sex	Percentage of female AfD voters	SPD result
Baden-Wuerttemberg	3/13/2016	15,10%	12% of women 18 % of men	39,70%	12,70%
Bavaria					
Berlin	9/18/2016	14,20%	11% of women 18% of men	38,70%	21,60%
Brandenburg	9/14/2014	12,20%	10% of women 15% of men	41%	31,90%
Bremen	5/10/2015	5,50%	4% of women 6% of men	36,40%	32,80%
Bundestag 2013		4,70%	4% of women 6% of men	40%	
Bundestag 2017	9/24/2017	12,60%	9% of women 15% of men	35,70%	20,50%
European elections	5/25/2014	7,10%	5% of women 9% of men	35,21%	27,30%
Hamburg	2/15/2015	6,10%	5% of women 7% of men	41%	45,70%
Hesse					
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	9/4/2016	20,80%	16% of women 25% of men	38,50%	30,60%
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania 2006	9/17/2006	7,3% NPD	4% of women 10% of men	20%	30,20%
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania 2011	9/4/2011	6% NPD	3% of women 7% of men	21,43%	35,60%
Lower Saxony	10/15/2017	6,20%	4% of women 8 % of men	32,26%	36,90%
North Rhine-Westphalia	5/14/2017	7,40%	5% of women 9% of men	33,80%	31,20%
Rhineland-Palatinate	3/13/2016	12,60%	9% of women 15% of men	35,70%	36,20%
Saarland	3/26/2017	6,20%	5% of women 8% of men	40,30%	29,60%
Saxony	8/31/2014	9,70%	8% of women 11% of men	41,20%	12,40%
Saxony 2004	9/19/2004	9,2% NPD	6% of women 12% of men	32,60%	9,80%
Saxony 2009	8/30/2009	5,6% NPD	4% of women 8% of men	35,71%	10,40%
Saxony-Anhalt	3/13/2016	24,30%	18% of women 27% of men	33%	10,60%
Thuringia	9/14/2014	10,60%	9% of women 13% of men	42,50%	12,40%

 Past legislative period

Percentage of SPD voters by sex	Turnout	Notes	Sources
13% of women 12 % of men	66% of women 74,2% of men	In previous state assembly elections the turnout of male and female voters was almost identical. So the AfD may mainly have mobilised male abstainers.	<a href="http://www.statistik-bw.de/Service/Veroeff/Monatshefte/PDF/Beitrag16_06_05.pdf">http://www.statistik-bw.de/Service/Veroeff/Monatshefte/PDF/Beitrag16_06_05.pdf</a> und <a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-BW/umfrage-werwas.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-BW/umfrage-werwas.shtml</a> Without AfD
23 % of women	66,90%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-09-18-LT-DE-BE/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-09-18-LT-DE-BE/index.shtml</a>
34% of women 29% of men	47,90%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-09-14-LT-DE-BB/umfrage-werwas.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-09-14-LT-DE-BB/umfrage-werwas.shtml</a>
34% of women 31% of men 20 % of men	50,10%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-05-10-LT-DE-HB/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-05-10-LT-DE-HB/index.shtml</a>
21% of women 20% of men	51,20%		<a href="http://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-09-24-BT-DE/umfrage-werwas.shtml">http://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-09-24-BT-DE/umfrage-werwas.shtml</a>
27% of men 27% of women	48,10%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-05-25-EP-DE/index-content.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-05-25-EP-DE/index-content.shtml</a>
47% of women 45% of men			<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-02-15-LT-DE-HH/umfrage-afd.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-02-15-LT-DE-HH/umfrage-afd.shtml</a> Without AfD
34% of women 27% of men	61,60%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-09-04-LT-DE-MV/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-09-04-LT-DE-MV/index.shtml</a>
33% of women 27% of men	59,10%		<a href="https://www.ipv.uni-rostock.de/fileadmin/uni-rostock/Alle_WSF/IPV/Forschung/Graue_Reihe/grauereihe27.pdf">https://www.ipv.uni-rostock.de/fileadmin/uni-rostock/Alle_WSF/IPV/Forschung/Graue_Reihe/grauereihe27.pdf</a>
39% of women 33% of men	51,50%		
37% of women 36% of men	63,10%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-10-15-LT-DE-NI/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-10-15-LT-DE-NI/index.shtml</a>
32% of women 30% of men	65,20%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-05-14-LT-DE-NW/umfrage-werwas.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-05-14-LT-DE-NW/umfrage-werwas.shtml</a>
40% of women 33% of men	70,40%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-RP/umfrage-werwas.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-RP/umfrage-werwas.shtml</a>
30% of women 29% of men	69,70%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-03-26-LT-DE-SL/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-03-26-LT-DE-SL/index.shtml</a>
13% of women 12% of men	49,10%	Saxony is the only federal state in which the proportion of female AfD voters is roughly the same as that of women members of the state assembly. Everywhere else a much larger percentage of women vote AfD than the percentage of female AfD members of the state assembly.	<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-03-26-LT-DE-SL/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2017-03-26-LT-DE-SL/index.shtml</a>
10% of women 10% of men	59,60%		<a href="http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_5343-544-1-30.pdf?070605133702">http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_5343-544-1-30.pdf?070605133702</a>
10% of women 10% of men	52,20%		<a href="https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/r/ls_uploads/pdfs/Themen/leftparties/pdfs/wahlen_090830/2009_SN_LTW_Wahlbericht.pdf">https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/r/ls_uploads/pdfs/Themen/leftparties/pdfs/wahlen_090830/2009_SN_LTW_Wahlbericht.pdf</a>
11% of women 10% of men	61,10%		AfD_Wahlanalyse 2016 in M:\AAS_Thema_AfD_PegidaWahlanalysen und <a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-ST/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2016-03-13-LT-DE-ST/index.shtml</a>
13% of women 11% of men	52,70%		<a href="https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-09-14-LT-DE-TH/index.shtml">https://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2014-09-14-LT-DE-TH/index.shtml</a>

TABLE 2

## Proportion of AfD female members in state assemblies (as of 15.05.2018)

State	Election date	Current proportion of female AfD assembly members in %	Female assembly members in numbers	Percentage share on election day	Number on election day	Parliamentary average	Names and Roles	Divergence from average
Saxony	8/31/2014	22,22%	2 out of 9	28,57%	4 out of 14	31,70%	Silke Grimm, Karin Wilke	-4,00%
Rhineland-Palatinate	3/13/2016	21,43%	3 out of 14	21,43%	3 out of 14	24,50%	Iris Nieland, Dr. Sylvia Groß, Gabriele Bublies-Leifert	-3,20%
Schleswig-Holstein	5/7/2017	20%	1 out of 5	20%	1 out of 5	30,10%	Doris von Sayn-Wittgenstein	-9,90%
North Rhine-Westphalia	5/14/2017	15,38%	2 out of 13	12,50%	2 out of 16	27,10%	Iris Dworeck-Danielowski, Gabriele Walger-Demolsky	-14,60%
Baden-Wuerttemberg	3/13/2016	10,00%	2 out of 20	13,64%	3 out of 23	24,50%	Christina Baum, Carola Wolle	-14,50%
Thuringia	9/14/2014	25%	2 out of 8	18,20%	2 out of 11	40,60%	Wiebke Muhsal, Corinna Herold	-15,60%
Brandenburg	9/14/2014	20%	2 out of 10	18,20%	2 out of 11	36,40%	Birgit Bessin (parlamentarische Geschäftsführerin), Christina Schade	-16,40%
Lower Saxony	10/15/2017	11%	1 out of 9	11,11%	1 out of 9	27,73%		-16,62%
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	9/4/2016	0,00%	0 out of 13	5,56%	1 out of 18	25,30%		-19,70%
Bundestag	9/24/2017	11%	10 out of 92	11,70%	11 out of 94	31,00%	Dr. Alice Weidel, Beatrix von Storch, Joana Cotar, Franziska Gminder, Mariana Harder-Kühnel, Verena Hartmann, Nicole Höchst, Dr. Birgit Malsack-Winkemann, Corinna Miazga, Ulrike Schielke-Ziesing	-20,00%
Berlin	9/18/2016	13%	3 out of 23	12,00%	3 out of 25	33,10%	Dr. Kristin Brinker, Jeannette Auricht, Jessica Bießmann	-20,10%
Saxony-Anhalt	3/13/2016	4,50%	1 out of 22	8%	2 out of 25	26,40%		-21,90%
Hamburg	2/15/2015	14,30%	1 out of 7	12,50%	1 out of 8	37,20%	Andrea Oelschläger	-22,90%
Bremen	5/10/2015	0%	0 out of 1	0%	0 out of 4	33,70%		-33,70%
Saarland	3/26/2017	0%	0 out of 3	0%		35,30%		-35,30%
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania 2006	9/17/2006	Legislative period ended	0 out of 7 NPD	0%				
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania 2011	9/4/2011	Legislative period ended	0 out of 5 NPD	0%				
Saxony 2004	9/19/2004	Legislative period ended	1 out of 12 NPD	8,33%				
Saxony 2009	8/30/2009	Legislative period ended	1 out of 8 NPD	12,50%				
European Parliament	5/25/2014	0%	0 out of 1	28,57%	2 out of 7		Beatrix von Storch	

NPD assembly members in previous legislative periods

## Notes

## Sources

Resignations from AfD group:

Stefan Dreher, resigned from group and state assembly for family reasons on 1 September 2015 --> succeeded by Karin Wilke

Frauke Petry, former group, federal and state leader, resigned from AfD group on 26 September 2017

Kirsten Muster, list place 11; former deputy AfD group leader, resigned from AfD group on 26 September 2017

Uwe Wurlitzer, list place 2; former general secretary and parliamentary business manager, resigned from AfD group on 26 September 2017.

Andrea Kersten list place 13; resigned from AfD group on 26 September 2017)[6]

Gunter Wild list place 6; resigned from AfD group on 13 Oktober 2017)

<http://www.landtag.sachsen.de/de/abgeordnete-fraktionen/statistik/geschlecht.cshtml>

<https://www.afd-fraktion.berlin/abgeordnete>

In September 2017 Alexander Langguth and Marcus Pretzell resigned from the AfD group, followed on 10 October 2017 by Frank Neppe.

[https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/Webmaster/GB\\_II.1/Abgeordnete/abg\\_ausgabe.jsp?typ=fraktion&k=AfD](https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/Webmaster/GB_II.1/Abgeordnete/abg_ausgabe.jsp?typ=fraktion&k=AfD)

Wolfgang Gedeon, resigned from AfD group on 5 Juni 2016

Claudia Martin, resigned from AfD group and party on 16 December 2016

Heinrich Kuhn, chairman by seniority, resigned from AfD group and state assembly on age grounds on 31 December 2016.

Succeeded by Klaus Dürr

<http://afd-fraktion-bw.de/abgeordnete>

Siegfried Gentele; resigned from AfD group on 15 April 2015 and from party on 7 July 2015

Oskar Helmerich, resigned from AfD group on 23 May 2015 and from party on 10 July 2015; member of SPD group in state assembly since 13 April 2016

Jens Krumpke, resigned from AfD group on 29 May 2015 and from party on 10 July 2015

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD\\_Th%C3%BCrtingen#Mitglieder\\_der\\_Landtagsfraktion](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD_Th%C3%BCrtingen#Mitglieder_der_Landtagsfraktion)

Stefan Hein, expelled from AfD group on 6 October 2014, Independent since then.

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD\\_Brandenburg#Landtagsfraktion\\_28seit\\_2014.29](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD_Brandenburg#Landtagsfraktion_28seit_2014.29)

Dana Guth (list place 1)

[http://www.landesfrauenrat-nds.de/files/pi\\_fauenanteil\\_im\\_landtag\\_16-10-2017.pdf](http://www.landesfrauenrat-nds.de/files/pi_fauenanteil_im_landtag_16-10-2017.pdf) and [http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/niedersachsen/landtagswahl\\_2017/Maenner-und-Frauen-im-neuen-Landtag,landtagswahl1506.html](http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/niedersachsen/landtagswahl_2017/Maenner-und-Frauen-im-neuen-Landtag,landtagswahl1506.html)

Holger Arppe, deputy AfD group leader (list place 3), resigned from party and AfD group on 31 August 2017 The following resigned from the AfD group on 25 September 2017: Matthias Manthei, Christel Weißig, Bernhard Wildt, Ralf Borschke

<http://afd-fraktion-mv.de/index.php/fraktion/>

Frauke Petry stated on 25.09.17 that she did not want to be a member of the parliamentary party, as did Mario Mieruch on 4 October 2017.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.de/2017/09/25/weniger-frauen-im-neuen-bundestag\\_n\\_18095616.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.de/2017/09/25/weniger-frauen-im-neuen-bundestag_n_18095616.html)

Kay Nerstheimer, stated in writing that he did not want to be a member of the AfD group.

Andreas Wild was expelled from the AfD group in July 2017.

<https://www.afd-fraktion.berlin/abgeordnete>

Sarah Sauermann, resigned from the AfD group on 28 May 2017.

Gottfried Backhaus, resigned from the AfD group on 2 June 2017.

Jens Diederichs, resigned from the AfD group and the party on 6 June 2017.

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD\\_Sachsen-Anhalt#Landtagsfraktion](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/AfD_Sachsen-Anhalt#Landtagsfraktion)

Bernd Baumann, resigned from the AfD group and the state assembly when he was elected to the Bundestag on 26 September 2017. Ludwig Flocken, resigned from the AfD group on 10 February 2016.

<https://alternative-hamburg.de/afd-in-der-buergerschaft/>

After the federal party conference in Essen in July 2015 Piet Leidreiter, Klaus Remkes and former state spokesman Christian Schäfer resigned from the party.

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_der\\_Mitglieder\\_der\\_Bremischen\\_B%C3%BCrgerschaft\\_\(19.\\_Wahlperiode\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Mitglieder_der_Bremischen_B%C3%BCrgerschaft_(19._Wahlperiode))

<https://www.landtag-saar.de/abgeordnete-und-fraktionen/fraktionen/afd>

<http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/mecklenburg-vorpommern/NPD-in-MV-Die-Herren-von-der-Fensterfront,npdverbot208.html>

[https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls\\_uploads/pdfs/2011\\_MV\\_LTW\\_Wahlbericht.pdf](https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/2011_MV_LTW_Wahlbericht.pdf)

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPD\\_Sachsen#Landtagsfraktion\\_Sachsen\\_von\\_2004\\_bis\\_2014](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPD_Sachsen#Landtagsfraktion_Sachsen_von_2004_bis_2014)

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPD\\_Sachsen#Landtagsfraktion\\_Sachsen\\_von\\_2004\\_bis\\_2014](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPD_Sachsen#Landtagsfraktion_Sachsen_von_2004_bis_2014)

Five AfD MEPs (Bernd Lucke, Hans-Olaf Henkel, Bernd Kölmel, Joachim Starbatty and Ulrike Trebesius) resigned in 2015 after split in the AfD, followed in 2017 by Markus Pretzell. Beatrix von Storch switched to the Bundestag.

<http://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/afd-im-europa-parlament-ist-die-afd-erledigt/13441760.html>

**TABLE 3** Proportion of women in AfD Executive Committee (as of 15.05.2018)

State	Percentage	Number	Names and Roles
Baden-Wuerttemberg	9%	1 out of 11	Anastasija Koren, Chair
Junge Alternative	15%	2 out of 13	Lydia von Wangenheim, member; Alischa Marczinczik, m
Saxony	7,69%	1 out of 13	Martina Jost, board member
NPD	0,00%	0 out of 10	
Rhineland-Palatinate	0%	0 out of 11	
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	0,00%	0 out of 6	
North Rhine-Westphalia	8,33%	1 out of 12	Heliane Ostwald, member
Hesse	11,11%	1 out of 9	Mary Khan, member
Hamburg	11,11%	1 out of 9	Elke Zimmermann, member
Saxony-Anhalt	11,11%	1 out of 9	Lisa Lehmann, Secretary
Saarland	5,00%	1 out of 20	Aline Schubert, member
Brandenburg	15,38%	2 out of 13	Birgit Bessin, MdL, Deputy Chair Kerstin Schotte, Secretary
Lower Saxony	15,38%	2 out of 13	Dana Guth, Landesvorsitzende; Evelyn Witerzens, Schatzmeisterin; Andrea Obeck, Geschäftsstelle
National Executive Committee	14,29%	2 out of 14	Beatrix von Storch (member), Alice Weidel (member)
Schleswig-Holstein	22,22%	2 out of 9	Doris v. Sayn-Wittgenstein, State Spokesman Barbara Janitzek, Deputy Treasurer
Berlin	27%	3 out of 11	Beatrix von Storch, Deputy State Chair Jeannette Auricht, Deputy State Chair Sarah-Emanuela Leins, member
Thuringia	16,67%	2 out of 12	Nadine Hoffmann, member Tosca Kniese, member Nadine Scheller, member
PRO NRW	28,57%	4 out of 14	Katja Engels, Deputy Chair Tina Öllig, Treasurer Susanne Kutzner, member Aganeta Jess, member
Bavaria	23,07%	3 out of 13	Katrin Ebner-Steiner, Deputy Chair Ingrid Maier-Kilian, Deputy Treasurer Iris Wassil, Deputy Secretary
Bremen	unknown		

Official designation of role (whether gendered or not)

	Notes	Source
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://afd-bw.de/partei/landesvorstand">https://afd-bw.de/partei/landesvorstand</a>
ember	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.jungealternative.com/vorstand/">https://www.jungealternative.com/vorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://www.afdsachsen.de/landesverband/landesvorstand-sachsen.html">http://www.afdsachsen.de/landesverband/landesvorstand-sachsen.html</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://npd.de/personen/">https://npd.de/personen/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.alternative-rlp.de/afd-in-rheinland-pfalz/vorstand">https://www.alternative-rlp.de/afd-in-rheinland-pfalz/vorstand</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.afd-mv.de/partei/vorstand/">https://www.afd-mv.de/partei/vorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://afd.nrw/partei/vorstand/">https://afd.nrw/partei/vorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.afd-hessen.org/vorstand/">https://www.afd-hessen.org/vorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://alternative-hamburg.de/afd-hamburg-landesvorstand/">https://alternative-hamburg.de/afd-hamburg-landesvorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://afd-lsa.de/partei/vorstand/">https://afd-lsa.de/partei/vorstand/</a>
	Former member Jeanette Ihme was convicted for incitement of the people, Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.merkur.de/politik/hetze-auf-facebook-afd-politikerin-jeanette-ihme-zu-geldstrafe-verurteilt-zr-9405632.html">https://www.merkur.de/politik/hetze-auf-facebook-afd-politikerin-jeanette-ihme-zu-geldstrafe-verurteilt-zr-9405632.html</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://www.afd-brandenburg.de/landesverband/vorstand/">http://www.afd-brandenburg.de/landesverband/vorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://afd-niedersachsen.de/partei/organisation">http://afd-niedersachsen.de/partei/organisation</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.afd.de/partei/bundesvorstand/">https://www.afd.de/partei/bundesvorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://www.afd-sh.de/index.php/landesverband/landesvorstand">http://www.afd-sh.de/index.php/landesverband/landesvorstand</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://afd.berlin/partei/landesvorstand/">http://afd.berlin/partei/landesvorstand/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="http://afd-thuringen.de/vorstand/">http://afd-thuringen.de/vorstand/</a>
	No reliable data at the moment	<a href="https://pro-nrw.net/pro/menschen-2/">https://pro-nrw.net/pro/menschen-2/</a>
	Data: 15.05.18	<a href="https://www.afdbayern.de/partei/landesvorstand/">https://www.afdbayern.de/partei/landesvorstand/</a>

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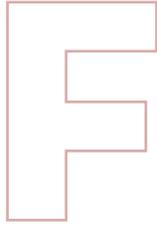


**FRANCE**

# 4.2 COUNTRY CASE STUDY FRANCE

BY CHRISTÈLE MARCHAND-LAGIER

This analysis of populism in France will focus specifically on the Front National (National Front party, and hereafter referred to as FN), a party firmly entrenched on the extreme right of the French political spectrum. The National Front has indeed successfully mustered in a highly irregular fashion a wide variety of support from far-right groups, such as *Ordre Nouveau* (New Order), *Œuvre française*, the new think-tank on the right *GRECE* (Research and Study Group for European Civilization), *le Club de l'Horloge*, *les Groupes nationalistes révolutionnaires* (Revolutionary Nationalist Groups), *l'Unité Radicale*, and the French far-right student grouping *Groupe Union Défense*, and in more recent times *Egalité et Réconciliation* (Equality and Reconciliation) and *Bloc Identitaire* (The Identitarians)<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the at times conflictual relationships, these groups could scarcely disregard the FN, which has been politically operative for more than four decades, representing a form of hegemony in this sphere of the political spectrum. This hegemony stems from an electoral ascent, albeit initially sluggish, but which then continued under the presidency of Jean-Marie Le Pen until the party split in 1998. This led to the departure of many party cadres in the wake of Bruno Mégret's departure from the party; this exodus, however, did not hinder Jean-Marie Le Pen from qualifying for the second round of the French presidential election in 2002.



Following a period of sharp decline in popularity, facing the pointed offensive from the Republican right focussed on the far-right's favoured themes, and the election of Nicolas Sarkozy as President of the French Republic in 2007, the FN has seen a steady increase in its electoral scores since 2010, especially in local and mid-term elections. This trend was confirmed after Marine Le Pen, daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, became party president in 2011. Marine Le Pen's arrival at the helm of the FN was followed by commentary on the supposed demonising or banalising of this party. This could be interpreted as one of the essential reasons for the recent rapprochement between women and this political grouping. Does this constitute the end of the radical right gender gap?<sup>2</sup> The conclusions of our research,<sup>3</sup> more specifically concerning the right-wing electorate in the south of France, are from this perspective more nuanced. Despite a tangible increase in vote share, the FN nevertheless came to a standstill in the 2017 presidential election and even more so in the legislative elections of that same year. These elections also led to an internal crisis within the party, culminating not only with the resignation of its vice-president, Florian Philippot, but also of several city councillors, who had been elected in 2014.

As a first step, we will focus on how the FN's electoral programs have not substantially shifted, especial-

<sup>1</sup> Lebourg, Nicolas, 2015. „Le Front national et la galaxie des extrêmes droites radicales”, in Crépon, Sylvain, Dezé, Alexandre, Mayer, Nonna, *Les Faux-semblants du Front national. Sociologie d'un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, pp. 121-139. Igounet, Valérie, 2014. *Le Front national de 1972 à nos jours. Le parti, les hommes, les idées*, Seuil.

<sup>2</sup> The radical right gender gap was theorized by Terry E. Givens (2004. "The Radical Right Gender Gap", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 37, no 1, p. 3054) and describes the least propensity by women to vote for extreme right-wing groups, compared to men.

<sup>3</sup> Marchand-Lagier, Christèle, 2017. *Le Vote FN. Pour une sociologie localisée des électors frontistes*, De Boeck supérieur.

ly with regard to women's rights and gender equality policies. The imperatives of communication and electoral marketing have largely dictated this lack of change. Then, after highlighting difficulties in fathoming the nature of the FN vote by means of declarative surveys, we will attempt to encapsulate the sociological profile of women who declared having voted for Marine Le Pen by dint of a questionnaire survey conducted at the exit to polling stations during the 2017 presidential elections. Finally, we will shed light on the reasons behind the FN vote by women we have been researching for over 15 years, drawing attention to how poorly the party's electoral proposals are understood by these women, as well as the rather insignificant role played by Marine Le Pen in their rapprochements with the party.

### 1. Programmatic Objectives in the Field of Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy

#### Between Modernised Program and Contradictory Political Statements:

Contrary to commentary about the advent of a renewed National Front, embodied by its "female leader," Marine Le Pen, the party's electoral program has scarcely evolved in terms of parity or equality between men and women. It has gradually abandoned out-dated measures such as the "family vote," "parental salary," or the "education cheque" that featured in Jean-Marie Le Pen "300 Proposals for France" in 1995. Among Marine Le Pen's presidential pledges in 2017, some 144 detailed measures appeared in a twenty-five-page document, stamped with an avowedly populist "In the Name of the People." And yet, no truly "anti-feminist" measure is to be noted among them. Just one single measure directly concerns women; it is to be found in the first part of the program, entitled "Free France," in the sub-section "Rebuilding France as a Land of Freedom." As such, no part of this program is dedicated to the issue of gender equality. This single measure consists of:

*Defend the rights of women: fight against Islamism that rescinds their [women's] fundamental liberties; implement a national plan for equal pay for men and women, and combat precarity both in the professional and social spheres. (Proposal n °9)*

In addition to the more than unlikely association between these two artificially juxtaposed measures, we note to what extent the kern of their proposal grapples with the question of radical Islamism, from which women ought to be protected, just as all other French citizens ought to be protected, rather than focus on gender equality and women's rights.

Nevertheless, against all expectations with regard to a far-right party, the FN candidate's more informal announcements in her speeches or across a variety of her media interventions made sure to give prominence to female symbols, even feminist ones:

- *30 June 2017: declaration and homage to the deceased Simone Veil, a leading advocate for legalizing abortion in France:*
- *2017 presidential campaign: distribution of a leaflet modelled on the "photo novel," depicting Marine Le Pen as an active woman and a mother*
- *8 March 2016: open letter to members of the National Front to advocate denouncing the rapes perpetrated during the New Year festivities in Cologne in 2016*
- *11 December 2015: Marine Le Pen depicts the FN's good electoral scores from the standpoint of a "glass ceiling" that has yielded.*

These indications, however, are largely contradictory with certain discursive developments articulated around the party's fundamentals, as this extract from a speech delivered during the tribute to Joan of Arc on 1 May 2015 attests to:

*In the National Front, we love Joan of Arc because she is a heroine who did not accept the fatalism of her condition. She went beyond the established framework of her gender, of her modest birth, to successfully fulfil her mission. She had no need for any grotesque theories such as cutting her hair and donning manly garments. She did not wait for gender equality to ride a horse and bear arms. She did not aspire for parity in order to command men and take over the leadership of an army. She did not wait for woman's liberation to sacrifice her own life for the liberation of France.*

The tenor of this speech is at once contemptuous and ironic regarding the many breakthroughs in women's rights: she denounces a "grotesque theory of gender," egalitarianism and the non-equality of the

sexes; parity (evoked but not condemned, probably because it would be quite difficult for the FN leader to do so); woman's liberation immediately disparaged by the grandeur of France's liberation. Marine Le Pen instrumentalizes her feminine attributes to play a modernity card that does not cede anything to the animosity that exists in principle toward feminist struggles, widely shared amongst the ranks of FN supporters, including among its younger generation of recruits. In this speech, she also refers to Olympe de Gouge, a feminist icon. She also extols the quality of discretion in women. So many ways of "blowing hot and cold," which, according to Sylvain Crépon, are compatible "from a nationalist perspective in that they lead to a form, certainly differentiated, of rejection of the other. Traditional nationalism rejected the other in the name of anti-universalist conceptions; the Jews, for example, were rejected because they were considered foreign to the French Catholic tradition (as per the Maurassian heritage). On the other hand, contemporary nationalism, as the Front National has redefined it, rejects the other on the grounds that it rejects universal forms of modern culture."<sup>4</sup>

#### Which Family Policy?

References to the family that feature in Marine Le Pen 2017's program are a far cry from those words uttered by Jean-Marie Le Pen, words that scarcely could be spoken in a contemporary context, and quoted by Pierre-André Taguieff in 1997: "We are suffering ... with regard to women from the demagoguery practiced by all [political] parties. It is not easy to say to a woman: 'To protect our societies and our future, our individual and collective lives, women need to bear children, to accept that these children will eventually serve and perhaps die to defend the freedom of their native soil; there is need for an authoritative figure and we believe that the most qualified authority in a household is the man.'"<sup>5</sup> We should note, however, that no chapter is exclusively dedicated to the theme of the family

<sup>4</sup> Crépon, Sylvain, 2015. "La politique des mœurs au Front national", in Crépon, Sylvain, Dezé, Alexandre, Mayer, Nonna, Les Faux-semblants du Front national. Sociologie d'un parti politique, Op. cit., p.p. 196.

<sup>5</sup> Taguieff, Pierre-André, 1998, "La métaphysique de Jean-Marie Le Pen", in Mayer (N), Perrineau (P) (dir.), Le Front national à découvert, 1996, p. 176.

in Marine Le Pen's 2017 electoral program, though she does refer to it throughout. The first three mentions appear in the sub-section "Guaranteeing Social Protection" in part III, "A Prosperous France":

- *Gradually raise the ceiling for the family quotient; restore the half-share for widows and widowers and the tax exemption for the increase in old-age pensions for parents of large families. (Proposal N° 54)*
- *Implement a truly pro-birth policy limited to French families, by restoring universal family allowances and maintaining their indexation to the cost of living. Restore the free allocation of parental leave between both parents. (Proposal No 55)*
- *Strengthen inter-generational solidarity by allowing each parent to transfer 100,000 euros to each child without taxation every five years (instead of the current fifteen years) and by increasing the threshold for donations without taxation to grandchildren to 50,000 euros, and this every five years as well. (Proposal No 56)*

In the sub-section "A Vigorous and Swift Penal Response" in part II "A Safe France":

- *Make parents responsible in combatting juvenile delinquency by eliminating social assistance payments to parents of persistent juveniles offenders in cases of a manifest lack of education (Proposal No 18)*

In the sub-section "Rebuilding Borders That Protect and End Uncontrolled Immigration" in part II "A Safe France":

- *Reduce legal immigration to an annual balance of 10,000. End the automatic right of family reunification and family regrouping, as well as the automatic acquisition of French nationality through marriage. Remove any measures that further encourage immigration. (Proposal No 26)*

In the sub-section "Rebuilding France as a Country of Freedom" in part I "A Free France":

- *Allow [parents] the freedom to educate their children according to their choices, all while strictly controlling the compatibility of teachings taught in non-contract private establishments with Republican values. (Proposal No 11)*

Aside from proposal No 55, the family itself is not the priority but rather tax adjustments, the withdrawal of social benefits, especially for those families with a migrant background, the questioning of the auto-

matic right to family reunification, and even the evaluation of private schools by safeguarding themselves against denominational schools, evidently non-Catholic ones. No mention, however, is made of the family in its traditional form. The ideal of the large family is accentuated but without any concrete injunctions. Just as in the sphere of women's rights, the FN limits its concrete proposals with regard to family affairs, and especially those that might irritate the younger generation. On this point we can observe a clear distinction from the offensive strategy conducted by Marion Maréchal Le Pen, niece of Marine Le Pen and a prominent FN figure in their heartland in south-eastern France, on the issue of the family, where she has adopted a much more traditionalist approach, closer to those small groups (Integrist or identity-based Catholics) affiliated with the FN.

Given the trajectory of its individual members, the Le Pen family has struggled to embody the traditional family (Marine Le Pen is divorced, as are her parents; Marion Maréchal le Pen, too, is separated from the father of her young child) and nothing in the measures or proposals announced are aimed at restoring a traditional order in this matter. If we observe the dissonances between a more traditional stance, as advocated by Marion Maréchal Le Pen, and the much more "modern" positions as championed by both Marine Le Pen and Florian Philippot, here again the political equilibrium is being recalibrated following the departure of Marion Maréchal Le Pen in the spring and Philippot in the autumn of 2017. Among the keywords that feature on Marine Le Pen's official website, only "homosexual marriage" is among those closely related to women's rights, family, or gender equality. On this matter FN leaders are playing the card of adapting to societal evolutions; they do not intend to advocate clear-cut positions on the theme of the family. Unlike in other European countries, social breakthroughs in France are such that it remains difficult for a party such as the FN, which purports to be accountable, to adopt overly reactionary positions on this issue.

### Difficult Attacks against Reproductive Rights and LGBTI in France

Here again, we can observe a fairly feeble offensive by the FN on these issues. Back in 2002, Marine Le Pen was

already shifting away from the party's official line, at that juncture led by her father who had been advocating the repeal of pro-abortion laws. In the party's 2002 program "For a French Future," he elaborated: "*Abortion, involving a third life, that of the unborn child, cannot be considered as legitimate; as for the Nation, it must provide for its continuity in time. The abortion laws shall be repealed, for they are against the common good of our country.*" As for Marine Le Pen, she has indicated on several occasions that she did not want changes made to access to abortion and reimbursement of medical expenses involved,<sup>6</sup> even though she has denounced "elective comfort abortion." The position of principle remains that of reduced access to elective abortion, without abrogating the law, however. In 2012, the National Front's program also included a section on this theme: "*A woman's free choice must also include the choice of not aborting: better prevention methods and information are essential, parental empowerment is necessary, the possibility of prenatal adoption must be proposed, an improvement in family benefits for large families must be introduced.*" To this day this subject still crystallizes antagonisms within the party, especially among supporters of Bruno Gollnisch.

Among the 144 proposals in the 2017 presidential program, we found reference to the issue of reproductive rights in the sub-section "Enable Everyone Find their Place" of part IV "A Fair France":

- *Faced with pressure from supra-national authorities, retain prohibition of GPA [Gestation pour Autrui/ Surrogacy] and reserve ART [assisted reproductive technology] as a medical response to sterility problems. (Proposal N° 87)*

Likewise, in the same proposal N° 87, Marine Le Pen proposed to "*Create a Civil Union (an enhanced PACS/ Civil Solidarity Pact), which will replace the provisions of the Taubira Law, without retroactive effect.*" Nevertheless, Marine Le Pen remained distinctly evasive about the conditions for this form of civil union, which is supposed to remain on offer for same-sex couples. She issued a statement, however, on her web-

site (dated 4 January 2013), on the occasion of announcing the *Manif pour tous* [March for All] on 13 January 2013, at which the Front National would not officially participate (Marion Maréchal Le Pen did attend under her own name, however):

- *On this occasion the National Front takes the opportunity to recall its opposition to marriage, adoption, and ART, as demanded by an ultra-minority, which, in the case of marriage is not even supported by the majority of homosexuals, and, in the case of adoption and ART consecrates the sense of entitlement to a child to the detriment of the sacred right of the child and to have a father and a mother in the first instance.*

### Gender Studies: a Secondary Problem outside the Media Agenda

On this point, it is also difficult to find written components (program or speeches) with regard to gender studies; they are somewhat overlooked. And yet, during the controversy in 2014 concerning the "ABCD of Equality" proposed by Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights, Marine Le Pen was instrumental in spreading rumours about interventions by LGBTI representatives in schools, and greatly overestimated the number of trial studies conducted by the government.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, some interventions by FN elected representatives, such as Nicolas Bay in the European Parliament on 12 March 2015 during his opposition to the Panzeri Report,<sup>8</sup> clearly denounced a "gender ideology" in the name of minority-focussed excesses that such an ideology can engender and thus harm democracy. We should also note that when accessing data on interventions by FN officials on this issue via Marine Le Pen's official website, suggestions appear on screen for links to other web-sites including Alain de Benoist's "The Ideology of Gender." This website is also a showcase for groups closely linked to the FN, such as the collective Racine, which issued a press release on 31 January 2014,<sup>9</sup> whose stated objective

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/2016/12/12/25001-20161212ARTFIG00210-comment-marine-le-pen-a-evolue-sur-l-avortement.php>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2014/02/04/theorie-du-genre-marine-le-pen-relaye-folle-rumeur\\_n\\_4721545.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2014/02/04/theorie-du-genre-marine-le-pen-relaye-folle-rumeur_n_4721545.html).

<sup>8</sup> The Panzeri Report, adopted by the European Parliament in March 2015, includes aspects aimed at promoting same-sex marriage throughout the European Union, as well as diverse propositions for a better recognition of gender identity.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.frontnational.com/2014/01/savoir-raison-garder/>

was to quell the rumour, but which in fact denounced the excesses of a Republican school system that professes to educate rather than to instruct.

### Misappropriating the Republican Symbol of Secularism

In recent years the National Front and its president have accorded a disproportionate role to a cognitive framework, namely the question of “secularism,” which has been marshalled to distort some feminist arguments. It was under the guise of secularism that Marine Le Pen was able to multiply the anti-communitarianist offensives that primarily targeted the Muslim community. We can read in part V, for example, of “A Proud France” in her 2017 presidential program:

Proposal N° 95 in the sub-section “Defend the Unity of France and its National Identity”:

- *Promote secularism and combat communitarianism. Enshrine in the Constitution the principle: “The Republic does not recognize any community.” Restore secularism to every sphere of life, extend it to the entire public space, and enshrine it in the Employment Code.*

Proposal No 102 in the sub-section “A France that Transmits and Hands Down Values”:

- *Make school an “inviolable refuge where people’s quarrels do not enter” (Jean Zay), thus imposing not only secularism, but also neutrality and security.*

Or again, Proposal N° 117 in the sub-section “A France that Creates and Radiates”:

- *Support small-scale sports-clubs so as to ensure the maximum presence of French players in professional clubs and to combat the financialization of professional sport. Reinforce actions against violence in amateur sport and impose strict respect for secularism and neutrality in all sports clubs.*

As on many other issues, Marine Le Pen has followed in the footsteps of prominent political figures, such as Jean Zay in this instance, who don’t belong to the extreme right’s historical heritage. This contributes to the blurring of political lines and legacies, which are also very poorly understood by the younger generation.

## 2. Women and Right-wing Populist Parties

### Women and Leadership within the Ranks of the National Front

Data concerning the number of FN party members is still very difficult to assess,<sup>10</sup> for they relate to both internal issues (designation of key management bodies) and external ones (show of force to the outside world). The FN asserted that they had 83,000 members in November 2014,<sup>11</sup> the greater number since its foundation, and more than three times greater than it was when Marine Le Pen was elected party leader in 2011 (22,000).

The National Front party is distinctive in that it is led by a woman, namely, Marine Le Pen; this is also the case, however, in other populist parties across Europe, such as Pia Kjaersgaard, president of the Danish People’s Party, or Siv Jensen, leader of the Progress Party in Norway. It is worth pointing out that no other major political party in France is led by a woman and that this fact indisputably offers Marine Le Pen media visibility. Her uniqueness is also due to the fact that she happens to be the daughter of the party’s legendary leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen. The father, after having supported his daughter’s accession to becoming head of the party, notwithstanding the long-standing loyalty of her direct rival Bruno Gollnisch, was to find himself in the minority and was even expelled from the party due to certain inflammatory statements he made. In fact, Marine Le Pen has vigorously sought to distance herself from her father’s hallmark utterances.

The remainder of the FN organization remains nevertheless pointedly masculine following the suspension of the party’s vice-president Marie-Christine Arnautu, who was in charge of the social affairs, due to her participation in the 1 May festivities organized by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2016. Marion Maréchal Le Pen, who was also a member of the party’s political bureau, executive bureau, and central committee, took leave of political life in spring 2017. The party’s governing bodies were redefined at the XVI Congress that took place in Lille on 10 and 11 March 2018. Marine Le Pen was re-elected President; aside from her the party’s executive governing body is exclusively male and the national bureau counts twelve women out of forty-three members.

<sup>10</sup> Igounet, Valérie, Op.cit, p. 408.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2014/10/30/front-national-83000-adherents-plus-haut-fondation\\_n\\_6077574.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2014/10/30/front-national-83000-adherents-plus-haut-fondation_n_6077574.html)

We should note that Martine Lehideux, a FN member since 1972 and founder of the National Women's Circle of Europe, affiliated to the FN and who has espoused a very conservative approach to the family, as well as avowedly anti-abortion and anti-PACS views, quit the FN to join Carl Lang's Parti de la France in the early 2010s.

#### Which Women opted for the Front National in 2017?<sup>12</sup>

Marine Le Pen, President of the National Front, thus was the only female candidate in a position to qualify for the run-off for the 2017 presidential election. Some commentators make a big point of the fact, at times essential, of the supposed rapprochement between women and this political grouping. We should recall that in the 2002 presidential election in which Jean-Marie Le Pen qualified for the run-off against Jacques Chirac, that Le Pen would not have been able to challenge Chirac had only women voted.<sup>13</sup> The erosion of the radical right gender gap has been evident ever since; "there was a seven-point difference between women and men in the presidential elections of 1988 and 1995, a six-point difference in 2002, and three in 2007. In 2012, there was probably a single point in the difference."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, irrespective of their "age, profession, educational qualifications, religious beliefs, ideological orientation, women voted just in equal numbers for her [Marine Le Pen] as men did."<sup>15</sup> If this erosion doesn't necessarily occur in the so-called secondary ballots, in which women vote less for the FN and are more likely to abstain, the initial analyses of the 2017 presidential election would seem to confirm that women's support for Marine Le Pen was proportionally equivalent to that of men.

<sup>12</sup> This part represents the preliminary version (provisional results and in the course of exploitation) of an article to appear in the journal *Travail, genre et société* in 2018. I rely here on a survey by questionnaires in the course of exploitation, carried out in various French municipalities (Paris, Amiens, Avignon in particular), during the second round of the 2017 presidential election, in the framework of the ANR ALCoV project (Comparative Localized Analyzes of Voting: mistrust, abstention, and political radicalization in contemporary France) led by Eric Agrikolianski at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research in Social Sciences (IRISSO - UMR 7170 - University Paris Dauphine/PSL).

<sup>13</sup> Sineau, Mariette, 2004, "Les paradoxes du gender gap à la française", dans Bruno Cautrès, Nonna Mayer (dir.), *Le nouveau désordre électoral*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, pp. 207-228.

<sup>14</sup> Sénéac Réjane, Parodi Maxime, 2013, "Gender gap à la française: recomposition ou dépassement? L'élection présidentielle 2012", *Revue française de science politique*, 2013/2 (Vol. 63), pp. 225-248.

<sup>15</sup> Mayer Nonna, 2016, "Les constantes du vote FN", *Revue Projet*, 5 (n° 354), pp.

We are relying here on a survey conducted at the exit of several polling stations during the run-off of the 2017 presidential election.<sup>16</sup> This type of survey is among the most reliable to delineate the composition of the electorate for each candidate. Nevertheless, this survey is based upon declared pieces of information by voters themselves and under-declarations remains very elevated for the FN vote (more than a half less than the true number of these votes, and highly variable depending on the environment in which the declaration was made, that is to say polling stations where NF scores are either very high or very low). Here, the analysis draws on the 3011 questionnaires collected, of which 2694 were usable concerning the question: "For whom have you come to vote?"

→ **Table No 1: Vote T2 P2017/ Gender:** We paid particular attention to the fact that despite the scope of the survey (and contrary to the picture conveyed by the proliferation of pre- and post-election opinion polls), it remains very difficult to collect representative samples from the FN electorate, and even more so from its female electorate. Very often samples are adjusted based upon the respondents; this is something we refused to do knowing the assumption — those who declare having voted FN is comparable to those who do not declare doing so — remains overused. Hence, we here provide an analysis of a sample of a little more than 200 voters who declared that they had voted for the FN, a figure that constitutes 7% of the usable answers of the total volume of questionnaires collected. This declarative data will be informed by analysis of the voting lists, enabling us to distinguish the profile of voters from those of non-voters.

We would, however, advise some caution in interpreting these results: those voters who declare having voted for Marine Le Pen in the run-off for the presidential election are not necessarily the same as in the first round. Our qualitative surveys would suggest the intermittent nature of this vote on the same basis as other electoral preferences. Our survey data helps to reconstruct the respondents' electoral trajectories between the first and second rounds of the presidential election:

<sup>16</sup> ALCoV research, cf. *Infra* note n° 12.

TABLE 1

## Gender

Vote T2 P2017

Gender	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Invalid %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR %	Total	Total%
Woman	186	57,4	1142	57,4	208	54,9	199	62,8	1735	57,6
Man	136	42,0	836	42,1	171	45,1	116	36,6	1259	41,8
No Reply	2	0,6	10	0,5	0	0,0	2	0,6	14	0,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>3011</b>	<b>100,0</b>

→ Table No 2: Vote T2 P2017: Among those who declared having voted for Marine Le Pen in the second round of the presidential election, 61.7% declared that they had voted for Marine Le Pen in the first round. This figure is 62% among women against only 50% among men, the former declaring a greater loyalty to their initial choice between the two rounds, as though once this choice had been made, it no longer seemed problematic for the women to reaffirm it. Only 6.6% declare that they had voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the first round, while 7.1% had abstained. A stockpile of votes is to be noted among François Fillon's electorate; 12.9% of whom transferred their vote to Marine Le Pen in the run-off. In reality, this figure was probably greater, because here again the effects of under-declaration are highly significant. Only 3.4% of Nicolas Dupont-Aignan's voters reported that they transferred their vote to Marine Le Pen. Hence, vote transfers in the run-off round drew upon additional fairly inhomogeneous electorates, which without doubt partially explains Marine Le Pen's difficulties in significantly improving her electoral score.

We must, however, remain cautious about these results, knowing that those individuals who responded prioritised consistency and more readily declared having voted for the FN in the first round if they declared having done so in the second round. Furthermore, the very fact that Marine Le Pen qualified for the run-off of the presidential election afforded her a form of legitimacy or recognition, thus boosting declarations of a vote in her favour. Lastly, more so than men, women have long under-reported this vote due to a stronger internalization of civic norms or a ten-

dency to opt for less extreme preferences.<sup>17</sup> This is unquestionably one of the reasons for which the "normalisation" effect of the FN may work more markedly on them. Nowadays, women declare having voted for the FN in similar proportions to men; this does not necessarily mean that they are voting in greater numbers for the FN than in the past, but only that they now are more likely to dare to publically declare having done so.

The variables employed in the remainder of the analysis are classic sociological variables used to describe the profile of these voters. The figures presented in the tables are gross figures and percentages.

→ Table No 3: Gender / Marital Status: A majority of married women and men declared having voted for Marine Le Pen, which would imply forms of social stability. This variable is closely coupled with the characteristics of those who vote as opposed to those who abstain; literature on the subject emphasises the importance of social isolation in analysing forms of civic abdication. Aside from marital status, and we will return to this issue when we identify the reasons for the choices made, the influence of the conjugal matrix needs to be questioned in the expression of preferences for the FN.

→ Table No 4: Age Groups: In the 18-29 age group, which includes "first-time" women voters, there is a preference for the FN that seems slightly more pronounced than amongst men. We should note that the divergence is observed especially between the young-

<sup>17</sup> On this question, reference can be made to the situation in France in the works of Janine Mossuz-Lavau, Mariette Sineau, or to Maurice Duverger.

TABELLE 2 Vote T2 P2017

Vote T1 P2017	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR %	Total	Total (%)
Enthaltung	24	7,4	102	5,1	27	7,1	17	5,4	170	5,7
Arthaud	3	0,9	3	0,2	3	0,8	1	0,3	10	0,3
Asselineau	4	1,2	3	0,2	2	0,5	0	0,0	9	0,3
Others	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,3	0	0,0	1	0,0
Blank or inval.	30	9,3	16	0,8	4	1,1	3	0,9	53	1,8
Cheminade	1	0,3	3	0,2	0	0,0	0	0,0	4	0,1
Dupont Aignan	11	3,4	26	1,3	13	3,4	6	1,9	56	1,9
Fillon	56	17,3	272	13,7	49	12,9	19	6,0	396	13,2
Ham on	14	4,3	227	11,4	3	0,8	4	1,3	248	8,3
Lassalle	3	0,9	11	0,6	2	0,5	2	0,6	18	0,6
Le Pen	8	2,5	7	0,4	234	61,7	6	1,9	255	8,5
Macron	4	1,2	704	35,5	8	2,1	12	3,8	728	24,2
Mélenchon	148	45,8	575	29,0	25	6,6	33	10,4	781	26,0
No reply	12	3,7	26	1,3	7	1,8	213	67,4	258	8,6
Poutou	5	1,5	10	0,5	1	0,3	0	0,0	16	0,5
<b>Gen. Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>3003</b>	<b>100,0</b>

est and oldest women, the latter group supporting Emmanuel Macron in more significant numbers. At least two rationales are playing out in this divergence. First, a lower vote for the FN in these older categories that would validate the hypothesis of a “gender generation gap” in the FN’s female electorate.<sup>18</sup> This may reflect a stronger form of reluctance to vote for a far-right party with controversial historic origins, for the youngest members of this group were born at the end of the Second World War. Moreover, we witness the abiding great difficulty among the eldest to disclose how they have voted, for they belong to a generation that remains attached to the secrecy of the ballot box.

Nevertheless, the working-age group (30-59 years) seemed to be the most susceptible to National Front’s alarm bells, in almost equal proportions among women (51,9% ) as men (53.8%).

→ Table No 5: PCS: To reduce bias related to the statistical analysis of small numbers, and taking into account the widespread deterioration of working conditions of the “worker” and “employee” categories,

but also the very strong porosity between the two, we proceeded to regroup both categories. Hence, we included “worker” declarants in the “employee” category, (i.e. 187 in the global sample and only 46 in the sample of Marine Le Pen voters, including 19 women). It is in this global category “employee” that the candidate Macron displays his poorest performance, nearly 1/3 of this category declared a vote in favour of Marine Le Pen.

Finally, in the series of surveys conducted over the past several years, the category that remained at the greatest distance from the FN vote was that of executive management staff. Is it not, however, a question that this group is most aware of the illegitimacy of this preference among their social peers? Did they actually vote less for the FN, or did they admit it less? Here again, the surveys’ declarative aspect is problematic. Beyond the sole socio-professional category, it is interesting to examine the professional status of those who declared having voted for the FN.

→ Table No 6: Professional Status: A majority of FN voters, both male and female, are in active employment, as are the vast majority of voters. 8.7% of women who declared having voted for the FN are unem-

<sup>18</sup> Norris, Pippa, 1999, “A Gender Generation Gap?” in Geoffrey Evans, Pippa Norris (eds), *Critical Elections : British Parties and Voters in Long-term Perspective*, London/Thousand Oaks Calif, Sage.

**TABLE 3** Gender / Marital Status  
T2 Vote P2017

Gender/ Marriage Status	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
<b>Woman</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1139</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>100</b>
Single or widow	86	46,2	533	46,8	88	42,3	106	53	813	46,9
Married or cohabitation	96	51,6	588	51,6	116	55,8	88	44	888	51,3
No reply	4	2,2	18	1,6	4	1,9	5	3	31	1,8
<b>Man</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>100</b>
Single or widower	61	44,9	274	32,8	69	40,4	45	39	449	35,7
Married or cohabitation	73	53,7	549	65,7	99	57,9	68	59	789	62,7
No reply	2	1,5	13	1,6	3	1,8	3	3	21	1,7
<b>General Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2991</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 4** Gender/Age  
T2 Vote P2017

Gender/age	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
<b>Woman</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1735</b>	<b>100,0</b>
18-29	42	22,6	264	23,1	53	25,5	23	11,6	382	22,0
30-59	93	50,0	569	49,8	108	51,9	91	45,7	861	49,6
60+	51	27,4	309	27,1	47	22,6	85	42,7	492	28,4
<b>Man</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>100,0</b>
18-29	34	25,0	195	23,3	40	23,4	18	15,5	287	22,8
30-59	72	52,9	459	54,9	92	53,8	55	47,4	678	53,9
60+	30	22,1	182	21,8	39	22,8	43	37,1	294	23,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2994</b>	<b>100,0</b>

ployed; the overall sample comprises 4.2% unemployed men. Hence, there is no actual over-representation of unemployed women who declared having voted for the FN. As for men, they are well below the respondents' average. It should be noted that these categories are those furthest from participating in voting in general, and that the FN doesn't rally them any more effectively than other political parties.

9.6% of women who declared having voted for the FN are high-school students; this figure is in the average of the responding sample. 4.1% of the men are in this category. Already in 2012, 10% of first-time voters opted for the FN. From this perspective, women made a significant contribution to the FN vote among the younger generation, doubtlessly to be differentiated according to their level of education.

TABLE 5

Gender/PCS 1  
T2 Vote P2017

PCS	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
Artisan, Trader, Company Director	39	92,9	3	7,1	5	10,6	47	100
Employee	181	72,7	68	27,3	39	13,5	288	100
Executive	279	95,9	12	4,1	26	8,2	317	100
Farmer	2	100	0	0	1	33,3	3	100
Intermediate Profession	162	89,5	19	10,5	30	14,2	211	100
Job Seeker	26	70,3	11	29,7	1	2,6	38	100
Retired	197	86,8	30	13,2	40	15,0	267	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>86,1</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>13,9</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>12,1</b>	<b>1171</b>	<b>100</b>

→ **Table No 7: Educational Status:** 27.4 % of women who voted FN hold a CAP-BEP. If we add those without a diploma, then more than 40% of women who declare having voted for the FN vote have a level V diploma, below the *baccalauréat* (Bac) level.

21.2% of women who declared having voted FN vote hold a Bac, while 27.4% a Bac +2 and 3. They largely outdo men in the latter category. There is, however, a lack of clear distinction between “Bac and *Bac Professionnel*,” and again between “Bac +2” and “Bac +3” levels, often referring to vocational degrees such as an Advanced Technician’s Certificate (BTS), a Technological University Degree (DUT), or a professional degree.

The proportion of Master holders, between 10% for women and 6 % for men, is well below those having declared voting for Emmanuel Macron (between 23.8 and 22.8%, respectively). Here again, we can question the level of under-declaration of a FN vote in these groups.

→ **Table No 8: Income Level:** The men who declare having voted FN have on average higher incomes than women who declare having done so. Yet, here again, we need to consider the couple variable that would suggest, on the basis of qualitative surveys, that the FN vote constitutes a vote by a couple; a couple, in which we know that the woman benefits from a less favourable situation on the labour market (where the trend is to be on lower incomes, more frequently working part-time ...). Only 9.1% of these women (as against 7 % for men) report a monthly income of less

than 800 euros, which once again confirms that the FN doesn’t over-mobilize the most economically weakened groups in society, who also happen to be those who participate less in elections.

To conclude on this point and provide some overview of the issue:

**Young people do not vote more for the FN than for other political parties, but abstain to a much greater degree.** Nearly 42% of 18-25 year olds did not vote in either round of the 2017 presidential election or the legislative elections at the four polling stations surveyed in Avignon. This abstention rate is aggravated by the social situation prevailing in the regions surveyed and by the type of election. This figure increased to 60% in this same age category at the 2015 regional elections at the most popular polling station surveyed. This local data has been confirmed by the latest National Institute of Statistic and Economic Studies (INSEE) survey on electoral turnout, which indicates that amongst 18-29 year olds, fewer than two out of ten voters voted in each round of the 2017 elections.<sup>19</sup> While the abstention rate benefitted the FN until the 2017 legislative elections, by increasing its media visibility, it cost them at the last election, for it lost more than half of its vote share between the presidential and legislative elections in the Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur region (PACA) alone, the party’s heartland, should there be such.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3138704#titre-bloc-4>

TABLE 6

## Gender/Professional Status

T2 Vote P2017

Professional Status/ Gender	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
<b>Woman</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1735</b>	<b>100,0</b>
At Home	8	4,3	47	4,1	14	6,7	14	7,0	83	4,8
Invalidity	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,5	0	0,0	1	0,1
No-reply	4	2,2	33	2,9	7	3,4	9	4,5	53	3,1
Retired	40	21,5	246	21,5	38	18,3	62	31,2	386	22,2
Student	20	10,8	117	10,2	20	9,6	11	5,5	168	9,7
Working	107	57,5	643	56,3	106	51,0	96	48,2	952	54,9
Unemployed	6	3,2	44	3,9	18	8,7	5	2,5	73	4,2
<b>Man</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>100,0</b>
At Home	0	0,00	2	0,2	1	0,6	1	0,9	4	0,3
Invalidity										
No-reply	1	0,7	21	2,5	8	4,7	5	4,3	35	2,8
Retired	28	20,6	136	16,3	26	15,2	33	28,4	223	17,7
Student	17	12,5	71	8,5	7	4,1	6	5,2	101	8,0
Working	81	59,6	567	67,8	116	67,8	63	54,3	827	65,7
Unemployed	9	6,6	33	3,9	10	5,8	7	6,0	59	4,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2994</b>	<b>100,0</b>

TABLE 7

## Gender /Educational Status

T2 Vote P2017

Educational Level/ Gender	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
<b>Woman</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1144</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100,0</b>
No Diploma	13	7,0	88	7,7	27	13,0	37	18,6	165	9,5
CAP / BEP	29	15,7	123	10,8	57	27,4	39	19,6	248	14,3
Bac	41	22,2	199	17,4	44	21,2	42	21,1	328	18,9
Bac+2/3	56	30,3	335	29,4	57	27,4	41	20,6	490	28,2
Masters	44	23,8	379	33,2	21	10,1	34	17,1	476	27,4
No reply	2	1,1	20	1,8	2	1,0	6	3,0	30	1,7
<b>Man</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100,7</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1260</b>	<b>100,0</b>
No Diploma	13	9,6	92	11,0	24	14,0	18	15,5	146	11,6
CAP / BEP	25	18,4	109	13,0	49	28,7	27	23,3	211	16,7
Bac	31	22,8	133	15,9	37	21,6	25	21,6	226	17,9
Bac+2/3	35	25,7	173	20,7	32	18,7	21	18,1	261	20,7
Masters	31	22,8	315	37,7	24	14,0	19	16,4	389	30,9
No reply	2	1,5	14	1,7	5	2,9	6	5,2	27	2,1
<b>General Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2997</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Young women (less than 30 years-old) who vote tend to vote more for the FN than men in the same age group.** This is undoubtedly the case for young women who are the most deprived professionally.

**Nevertheless, the categories most open to voting FN remain those more socially stabilized, for the most part employed, and in financial terms not necessarily the most insecure.** Contrary to the discourse disseminated by FN leaders, this party is not, and far from it, the party for the marginalised, for the working classes, or for those groups living precariously, groups that abstain to a much greater extent than vote FN.

### The Reasons Women Vote FN:<sup>20</sup>

The FN votes examined, for both men and women, reflect how low levels of political competence (scant interest in politics, relatively disengaged political commitment or none whatsoever, lack of political information, no knowledge about party programs and stakeholders in the political arena, difficulty in positioning themselves on the left-right spectrum). These votes were secured in environments more favourable to the FN and find expression in differing forms of delegation, to one's spouse, parents, children, and friends.... The delegation, however, is not systematic, and within the couple does not always operate from women to men. Spouses often share poor political competence. This is by no means unique to the FN electorate and is

<sup>20</sup> The hypothesis herein developed are based upon 15 years of qualitative surveys among FN voters. Cf. : Christèle Marchand-Lagier, "Le vote FN. Pour une sociologie localisée des électorats frontistes", De Boeck Supérieur, 2017)

**TABLE 8**

### Gender/Income

T2 Vote P2017

Gender/Monthly Income	Blank or Invalid	Blank or Inval. %	E. Macron	E. Macron (%)	M. Le Pen	M. Le Pen (%)	NR	NR (%)	Total	Total (%)
<b>Woman</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1735</b>	<b>100,0</b>
> 8000€ net	3	1,6	45	3,9	1	0,5	5	2,5	54	3,1
5000 and 8000€ net	16	8,6	89	7,8	7	3,4	2	1,0	114	6,6
2500 and 5000€ net	46	24,7	289	25,3	34	16,3	24	12,1	393	22,7
1600 and 2500€ net	42	22,6	271	23,7	47	22,6	44	22,1	404	23,3
800 and 1600€ net	46	24,7	252	22,1	80	38,5	63	31,7	441	25,4
< 800€ net	12	6,5	78	6,8	19	9,1	12	6,0	121	7,0
No reply	20	10,8	114	10,0	17	8,2	49	24,6	200	11,5
<b>Männer</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>100,0</b>
> 8000€ net	1	0,7	80	9,6	5	2,9	3	2,6	89	7,1
5000 and 8000€ net	12	8,8	101	12,1	11	6,4	8	6,9	132	10,5
2500 and 5000€ net	32	23,5	229	27,4	36	21,1	19	16,4	316	25,1
1600 and 2500€ net	35	25,7	179	21,4	54	31,6	34	29,3	302	24,0
800 and 1600€ net	31	22,8	143	17,1	47	27,5	23	19,8	244	19,4
< 800€ net	8	5,9	36	4,3	12	7,0	5	4,3	61	4,8
No reply	16	11,8	64	7,7	5	2,9	24	20,7	109	8,7
<b>Summe</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2994</b>	<b>100,0</b>

heavily contingent upon the influence of the marital matrix in making political choices, as has been analysed in particular by American researchers.<sup>21</sup> More so than differences in political skills between women and men, we can observe the permanent nature of differentiated relationships to politics according to gender. This difference is more a matter of the “balance of power between the sexes”<sup>22</sup> that lends legitimacy to a man’s utterances more so than to his broader political competence. We can, in fact, observe the internalizing of a division of roles according to gender,<sup>23</sup> as found in other political groupings, including amongst the most activist respondents. Unlike men, who I have also been able to study, women often appear to confine themselves more to passive forms of engagement and activism, which seem less resistant to the test of time, and perhaps are more subject to biographical vicissitudes than more active forms (candidate, election poster, and so on) that their partners or husbands tend to follow more.

These poor political skills enable us to observe more private usage of the FN vote. Voting FN can indeed represent an opportunity to assert one’s independence within a couple, or to convey a sense of comfort dependence, by playing the role of adjustment variable in a couple’s preservation strategies and/or family relationships. One can vote FN to have peace in one’s relationship, to be able to negotiate other things in others areas of one’s life, to maintain good relations with one’s parents, to make similar choices as one’s spouse or parents in conflicting relationships ... While the rationale involved may not be necessarily political, this type of behaviour is nevertheless no less rational.

Amongst younger voters, we observed how societal issues that were so critical for previous generations who had to fight for the recognition of minorities, forms of sexual freedom, and securing certain rights, are of secondary importance. This pattern seems similar as with the right to vote, which the younger generation is neglecting, as well as abortion rights, which

have been taken for granted, or even the death penalty, for which some young women voters we encountered were in favour, particularly in 2013. This detachment with regard to societal issues, which nowadays constitute the main point of differentiation between political parties, explains that this is no longer enough to motivate a vote in favour of progressive parties. The day-to-day situations experienced by the FN electors, both men and women, we encountered (but sometimes also those we anticipated) often weigh more heavily than the ideals conveyed by intellectuals groups from whom they feel very distant. There is, however, no question of ignorance here, but rather of confronting everyday situations in which priorities are ranked differently. In addition, there is the feeling amongst younger voters that should the FN come power, nothing substantial will change, for societal gains have become self-evident and are impossible to question in the contemporary context.

Poorly politically informed, stuck in the arcane mysteries of privacy, the FN vote-share also struggles to build upon a precise knowledge of the FN electoral program, and moreover it hardly relies on any “Marine Le Pen” effect. Indeed, in all the interviews we conducted, hardly any reference was made to the FN’s proposals (dis)favouring women: neither during our initial survey at the turn of the 2000s, where we could observe a lack of knowledge concerning measures such as parental salary, the education cheque payment, the family vote as outlined in the 1995 FN electoral program, nor during additional interviews conducted in 2010 and 2013.

As for the political figure Marine Le Pen, she was not first of all considered as a woman; it was her connection with the name “Le Pen” that seemed to count above all. We did not observe a more significant “Marine Le Pen” effect on women. This widely held idea is based on the hypothetical assumption that women would vote more for women candidates, an assumption not confirmed by any consequential empirical study and the data available to us tends rather to invalidate this hypothesis. With regard to the sample studied, Marine Le Pen’s positive image is primarily in reference to her father’s very negative image, but without any real underlying belief in her political effectiveness; these votes remain largely votes without any illusion.

<sup>21</sup> Zuckerman, Alan S., Dasovic, Josip and Fitzgerald, Jennifer, 2007. *Partisan Families. The Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship in Germany and Britain*, Cambridge University press.

<sup>22</sup> Elias, Norbert, *Les transformations de la balance des pouvoirs entre les sexes*, Politix, Vol. 13/n°51, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Fillieule, Olivier, Roux, Patricia, 2009. *Le sexe du militantisme*, Presses de Science Po.

Whenever voters enlist topics to justify voting for the FN, they cite “employment,” the building block of right-wing symbolic systems.<sup>24</sup> Aside from work, the other motive drawn upon is the tax rhetoric, which has also been borrowed from the political discourse on the right. On this point, the deep sense of mistrust felt by these voters, both men and women, with regard to exiting the Euro should be noted. While by no means foreseeable, Marine Le Pen’s recent about-turns on this issue may well be intended to dispel this sticking point. Obviously, voters also rally round on the theme of immigration, a subject on which the “self-proclaimed” Republican right haven’t hesitated to cloud the issue. And yet, this has never been the sole motivation and it often conceals problematic relationships with everyday situations. More so than “hatred of immigrants,” FN electors, both men and women, demonstrate concern about local or even infra-local issues (“my neighbourhood”, “my street”, “my individual circumstances” ...) or forms of inward-looking attitudes for which the FN offers a platform, the one likely to generate the most waves in the contemporary political landscape.

Marine Le Pen loosely embodies a revolutionary or anti-system stance that can attract voters on account of the weakening of primary and secondary political social activities. In fact, she attracts as a matter of priority those voters who have been de-ideologized, those who are not overly critical of the patchwork of contradictory references that she musters, as we pointed out earlier.

In essence, the argument on which the electoral rise of the FN is based is the one heard in a number of interviews with FN electors: “We’ve never given them a try.” This approach works successfully amongst those voters most removed from the political arena, but it has been considerably weakened due to the elimination of France’s two large established parties (the Socialist Party (PS) and *Les Républicains* (LR), the former Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), dubbed by the FN as the “UMPS” [Socialist Union for a Popular Movement]) in the 2017 presidential campaign and the relegation of the FN to the rank of “old parties” by

Emmanuel Macron’s *En Marche* movement, a political party about whose success or sustainability we cannot thus far comment on.

### 3. Counter-Movements and Strategies to combat Far-right Populism in France:

The last major political mobilizations against the FN’s rise to power in France dates from 2002 and did not relate specifically to women’s rights.<sup>25</sup> The latest as well as the most spectacular mobilizations are those organized by FEMEN. While Marine Le Pen’s qualification for the run-off to the presidential election was anticipated, it did not give rise to any sizable demonstrations; her opponents greeted her lower- than-expected electoral results with some relief.

The question of women’s right is not at the core of the political sparring between progressive parties and the FN except when it comes to setting the media agenda (“the ABCD of equality,” or questions relating to the “right to abortion,” or “surrogacy (GPA).” Other progressive parties have adopted two types of response to the National Front’s expansion, one as ineffective as the other from our standpoint:

- *On the Right: programmatic one-upmanship on the themes of immigration, insecurity, modelled on what Nicolas Sarkozy succeeded in doing in 2007, and which has considerably intensified in the prevailing climate of terrorist attacks. Although such a strategy was able to generate short-term electoral dividends, it turned out to be calamitous in terms of electoral rivalry between the Right and the Far-right.*
- *On the Left: a tendency to shift debates concerning immigration from the political sphere to the religious sphere. Some commentators speak of the growth of an “Islamism-leftism” that deeply has splintered the caucus on the Left (on this point see recent divergences between the media organizations Charlie Hebdo and Médiapart).*

<sup>24</sup> Michelat, Guy, Simon, Michel, “Déterminations socio-économiques, organisations symboliques et comportement électoral”, *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> Femen is a feminist group of Ukrainian origin founded in Kiev in 2008 by Anna Hutsol, Oksana Chatchko, and Alexandra Chevtchenko. The group organises radical and spectacular actions, essentially topless, using the female body to underpin its political messages. An example of the movement’s actions is to be seen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlThlRkkXWw>

In addition to this is the media overexposure enjoyed by the FN not only during the electoral period and the fact that those issues that it lays claims to (immigration, insecurity) are systematically placed at the heart of political debate, without that its political opponents succeed in shifting the debate onto other topics (education, culture ...).

**The FN first finds the means to expand in those areas where mass abstention is growing.**oters who continue to vote tend to do so more for the FN, especially in contexts where politicians have been strongly discredited (lawsuits, corruption ...). The party's regional implantation can thus be very disparate from one town or community to the next, and who yet border on each other.

Furthermore, and in view of that which has hitherto been established, we note the stronger trend to vote for the FN amongst those categories whose working conditions are deteriorating (middle-ranking professions, employees, and blue-collar workers). This ought to make us stop and think about how to secure rather than further weaken these job positions and to provide these affected groups with greater professional recognition.

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**GREECE**

# 4.3 COUNTRY CASE STUDY GREECE

BY ALEXANDROS SAKELLARIOU

It is only in the past three decades that the relationship between women and extreme right politics has generated any significant interest. Research conducted to date has been concerned primarily with historical fascism leading to well-elaborated studies focusing on the place and role of women in Italian Fascism (Gori 2004; de Grazia 1992; Pickering-Iazzi 1995), in Weimar and Nazi Germany (Bridenthal, Grossman and Kaplan 1984; Moser-Verrey 1991; Lower 2013) or in both (Durham 1998). These studies draw some common conclusions on how fascist regimes envisaged the role of women, establishing that motherhood was supported and promoted by these regimes in a way that mythologised and nationalised women's bodies (de Grazia 1992) in as much as women's purpose was to act as vessels of the nation.<sup>1</sup>



Research in the field of extreme right studies was until the end of the 2000s almost entirely focused on men. Women in the extreme right were overlooked or considered unimportant; certainly, they were not considered active agents in the construction of right-wing ideology or the mobilisation of right-wing movements or parties. The study of organised racism was deeply, but invisibly, gendered; the committed racist usually appeared as male, while female racists existed in the shadows, lurking behind husbands and partners (Blee 1996: 680). Over the past few years, blossoming literature on extreme right-wing women has demonstrated that rightist activism has almost never been the sole province of men (Blee and Deutsch 2012: 1; Bacchetta and Power 2002, Meret 2015, Kötting, Bitzan, Petö 2017). These studies appear to confirm that the key tenets of ideology on the role of women in society identified in the study of historical fascism are also found among contemporary extreme right groups and movements.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The connection between women and nation/nationalism is not new; it has been discussed and analysed by scholars and from a range of perspectives, feminist and other.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the obvious change in recent years existing studies demonstrate that not all such parties attract massive numbers of women as members and voters (Mudde 2007: 6). The British National Party, for example, it has been argued (Goodwin 2011: 87, 137, 180), tried unsuccessfully to attract women through the formation of a family circle.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly examine the place of women in Golden Dawn (hereafter GD), a Greek neo-Nazi political party,<sup>3</sup> in the party's ideology as well as in its political agenda. GD's electoral success since the 2010 local elections and its subsequent entry into the Greek Parliament after the 2012 national elections as the third political power has drawn attention on a phenomenon that had previously not been considered important. It has to be noted, though, that fascist ideas are not new and have deeper roots in Greek society (the Nazi occupation period; the civil war; the dictatorship of 1967-1974).<sup>4</sup> GD was established in the 1980s and is an organisation of neo-Nazi or fascist ideology (Psarras 2012; Koronaïou et al 2015; Koronaïou, Lagos, Sakellariou 2015). The party's arrival in mainstream politics since 2012 has led many researchers to examine inter alia its ideology, organisation and political agenda (Georgiadou 2013; Paraskeva-Veloudogianni 2015; Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Sakellariou 2015; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). Inevitably, a crucial aspect of such research is the role women have in the party's organisation and ideology, which this paper will attempt to cast light on.

## 1. Golden Dawn's Ideology and Political Agenda on Women

In finding a first approach to the question of GD's stance on women, the party's websites offer plenty of

<sup>3</sup> Although GD is usually included in the broader family of populist or extreme right parties, it can hardly be compared with parties like Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, the Front National in France or any other extreme right party, apart perhaps from the Hungarian Jobbik. Based on the concept of generic fascism used by R. Griffin, GD could be characterised as a party of fascist ideology targeting the paligenesis (rebirth) of the nation which is under decay, using symbols which are related to fascism, praising National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy and organised on the basis of the *Führerprinzip* and militant groups among others (Koronaïou et al 2015: 234-236).

<sup>4</sup> When discussing the rise of this issue we also need to take into consideration that in Greece there was a part of the population which collaborated with the Nazi occupation forces; that fascist political parties, although marginal, existed during the 20th century; and that these people were never punished and actually took part in the Greek civil war. In addition, many people have been supportive of the military dictatorship (1967-1974) some of them arguing in favour of the regime. These historical and sociological parameters are really important because there are people – even young ones – who were brought up in these kinds of ideological environment and today have found a fertile ground to express them within GD, although not exclusively. This means that the crisis which contributed to the change of the political field in Greece, with the two main political parties (the socialists and the conservatives) losing a large part of their electoral power, created the environment for the emergence and public expressions of views and ideas not so openly expressed in previous years.

material that provides insights into the party's ideology and political theses.<sup>5</sup> Additional information can be drawn from the party's parliamentary activity, such as written enquiries addressed to Ministers on a variety of social, political and financial issues as well as speeches during parliamentary assemblies.<sup>6</sup>

### Family, motherhood and the nation

In 1989, GD published a Greek translation of the book *National Socialism: The Biological World View* by the Danish neo-Nazi Povl Heinrich Riis-Knudsen, in which it was argued that there is no biological equality between men and women; that the idea of a woman fulfilling herself through her participation in the productive process and the labour market is criminal; and that female emancipation is foolish nonsense (Riis-Knudsen 1989: 21-22). Apart from the evidence of GD's National Socialist past, this also proves that the party's ideas about women, which are discussed in the following, are far from being original but draw on National Socialist ideology (Psarra 2014). One of the most important aspects of GD ideology regarding women and thus very dominant on its websites is motherhood. One of the first texts uploaded onto the Women's Front (WF) website highlights the low birth rate in Greek society as a key problem and praises the family:

*«Men will feel there is a meaning to their existence in this world by forming a family and the challenge of educating and covering the needs of their children. [On the other hand] women [through the formation of a family] will accept their nature, the only true liberation, to give birth and raise children» (WF 2007a).<sup>7</sup>*

The word »nature« is crucial in the above excerpt and sets the basis of GD ideology on women. Family, described as »home«, »refuge«, the »flame« and the »light«, is considered the first and most fundamental

link of any society in which the ideals of »blood and honour« dominate, according to GD. Family becomes the ultimate goal for people, especially women (WF 2011), and the family's values and role are discussed and praised frequently (Alexandrakis 2011). For GD this means that women are to be revered as reproductive vessels through which the reproduction of the race and nation is realised (WF 2008a). The following statement from the GD Youth Division's website, Antepithesi, exemplifies this position:

*«We, women, must be proud of our sex and of the gift nature gave us, to create life. [...] The greatest energy that a woman can offer to a national society and its people is her children. [...] We have to be worthy first as Wives and then as Mothers. For worthy husbands, better children and a healthy nation» (Antepithesi 2016).*

Again the word »nature« takes a central place. Not surprisingly, therefore, another key dimension of GD discourse is praising those who have more than three children (Skarlatou 2010) and linking low fertility rates with the rise in immigration not only into Greece but into Europe in general (WF 2010a). Motherhood has especially been at the centre of the party's discussion on occasions as International Women's Day, when the wife of the party's leader and GD Member of Parliament Eleni Zaroulia argued that »under nationalism women are respected and recognised« and that »motherhood is a holy obligation, a duty and an honour« (Golden Dawn 2016a).

As in other extreme-right parties and organisations (Lesselier 1991; Perry 2004; Litt 2004), the most important role ascribed to women is motherhood, since through motherhood women reproduce the Greek nation. This is a paradigm rooted in historical fascism, but which reframes motherhood within the public sphere through the »nationalisation of women« (de Grazia 1992, 1-16). In this sense, the formation of family and the birth of children are no longer purely private issues but play a crucial role for the protection of the nation. In this way, women are subjects of the nation destined for a supposed higher purpose. At the same time, the ideological narrative »Race-Family-Party-State« serves as an operative of a historically inherited fascism and a strong mechanism of normativity fuelled by the persistent denial of different forms of sexuality (Macciocchi, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> The material is drawn primarily from the website of the women's organisation of the party, Women's Front (WF) (<http://whitewomenfront.blogspot.gr/>), but also from GD's official webpage (<http://www.xryshaygh.com/>) and the website of the party's youth division (Antepithesi/ Counterattack) (<http://www.antepithesi.gr/>). All these sites carry articles regarding the role of women in GD ideology, their role in contemporary society and in a future ideal Nationalist Socialist society and their participation in the party's activities.

<sup>6</sup> As the material regarding the role of women in GD ideology is extensive this paper refers to a selected amount of it as representing the main positions and political theses of the party (see Koronaïou and Sakellariou 2016).

<sup>7</sup> All excerpts are translated by the author.

This ideology seems to be also internalised by GD women and becomes clear in interviews where they state that they regret to have worked too many hours and missed the opportunity to properly raise their children themselves (Golden Dawn 2016b), thus complying with GD ideology on female roles. This conforms with the GD argument that women should be mothers and wives first and then enter the labour market, implying that the social realities stemming out of the current system are against motherhood and, in consequence, against nature. This, of course, is GD's ideal for a future national socialist society in which the party will take power, but in contemporary societies women have to compromise without also putting aside their roles as mothers, according to GD. This means that in contemporary societies the combination of work and family, while it is supported by GD and represented by those women active in the party, simultaneously contradicts GD ideology, along with the women themselves complaining about this choice.

The role of a woman is that of a mother, a host, a partner and also a special member of society, having the capacity and the duty to defend in her own way her ideals, values, institutions and traditions that are disappearing and, according to GD, »this is the kind of women Greece used to produce, and not fake dolls without any content« (Anastasia S. 2012). This discourse demonstrates that fascist conceptions of female gender and body (health, motherhood, beauty) remain strong in the dominant ideas about women (Mosse 1997). Based on the above it could be argued that GD follows the paradigm of historical fascism regarding the role and place of women who are not equal to men but they are assigned a »special« role to play coming out of their nature and dedicate themselves mainly in the private sphere. Women are active but in spheres different than men and only exceptions to this rule are accepted.

### The threats to the woman-mother ideal

Having said the above, the next crucial issue is to find what threatens this ideal of motherhood. GD criticises the role of women in modern western societies. Criticism of feminism, consumption, advertising and homosexuality can be found in the party's narratives and can – once again – be exemplified by a passage from Antepithesi:

*»Unfortunately, mainly because of the western pattern, future mothers decide not to get fat and lose their figure, instead of reproducing their species. Couples are not willing on any account to reduce their uncontrollable consumer activity, nor are they willing to deprive themselves or put themselves out for the sake of a child. The financial situation has made things worse« (Antepithesi 2013a).*

Feminism is considered a major factor of the current demographic problem, not only in Greece, but, as GD sees it, throughout the »white race« by creating a fertile ground for women's emancipation, especially with regard to their bodies (dressing, abortion, having children, sexual relations, type of family, etc.). This explains their complete antipathy towards feminist ideas and movements (Antepithesi 2014a) and is also related to the extreme opposition to abortion. It becomes clear not only in rather ideological texts on the party's websites but also in various parliamentary questions concerning the demographic problem that Greece faces as well as the (large) number of abortions (Golden Dawn 2013). Consequently, one of GD's political positions is that motherhood under GD's rule will be financially supported and abortions forbidden (Golden Dawn n.d.).

The beauty industry and its influence on women's way of life is another point of discussion and criticism. According to GD, women have become a material product, interested only in their appearance. However, while for example the Women's Front website voices strong criticism of the cosmetics industry, there are also special references to recipes of beauty masks using natural products. This implies that women should look after their appearance, but through a supposedly anti-capitalist and non-mainstream paradigm. In addition, if one looks at press articles and the presentation of female candidates for the 2014 European elections (Golden Dawn 2014), for example, it becomes obvious that GD attempts to publicly present the party's female members as modern, young, good looking and taking care of themselves (e.g. using make-up, being well dressed, etc.). Another example of this rather ambivalent stance on women's appearance is the fact that in Northern Greece a former model who took part in a beauty contest of Playboy magazine in Greece and was photographed naked for several male magazines

became a candidate at the local elections of 2014 as well as a representative of the Women's Front. However, this is rather used as an argument of changing her way of life and following GD. On the whole, GD takes a critical stance against feminism and capitalism because they have both, according to the party's views, contributed to a kind of emancipation of women that made them forget their role as mothers and this as a consequence has serious implications for the nation.

Homosexuality is another issue that is discussed in direct relation to women and gender issues in the party's discourse. As has been argued (Lesselier 1991), for the extreme right gender is a biological fact, given by nature, rather than a social and cultural construction and belongs to the sphere of the natural or the divine order of the world. For GD gender is not socially constructed but »purely genetically and biologically predetermined, in the same way as race« (Antepithesi 2013b). This position was referred to as »the gender ideology« (Kováts and Pöimand 2015). In line with this position GD websites contributors take position against homosexuality and the rights of homosexuals in contemporary Greek society, arguing that the neutralisation of gender as well as political correctness and human rights are against the country's values (Antepithesi 2014b). As one contributor to the website argues:

*«I am heterosexual and I am proud of it. [...] I am proud that I don't suffer from psychosomatic problems [...] that I don't abuse my nature. [...] And I am not going to account or apologise for this to anyone. I am a woman and I am proud of the fact that I like men; normal men – rough ones. [...] Not half-gay men. [...]» (WF 2007b).*

But the above mentioned »problems« (feminism, consumerism, homosexuality) that, according to GD, women face in contemporary modern societies will be eliminated in the future National Socialist society because »nationalist woman together with nationalist man are the only healthy cells of a dying people« (Antepithesi 2015). As GD argues, in the ideal national socialist society of the future, women will have responsibilities and obligations due to their importance for the success of the nation and their virtues will be developed for the benefit of society, taking the place they deserve. A national socialist woman who rejects

the current model of women, meaning being only interested in fashion and entertainment, becomes by definition a heroine, as is stated by the Women's Front (Ioanna 2007). While motherhood, thus, is indeed the main role for women according to GD, it is not the only theme appearing in the party's ideology. Every issue that is considered by GD to be a threat to this female ideal is analysed in the party's ideological texts. In that sense a nexus of themes is constructed including feminism, consumerism, homosexuality which in one way or another influences the place and role of women within Greek society and puts the ideal type for women as mothers, which GD tries to establish, in danger.

## 2. Women Participating and Supporting Golden Dawn

In this part we will focus on how these ideals are reflected with regard to the place of women in GD. GD women are presented as educated, emancipated and capable of defending themselves without forgetting their role as mothers. They also participate in the everyday fight against those who are against the Greek nation and are proud of it (Anna K. 2012). They are presented as capable of managing their own lives, but at the same time they are men's supporters, partners and companions (WF 2008b):

*«We are neither stupid chicks nor prostitutes. We are women ready to be the rulers of our own lives and not to live in the shadow of our men. We are not anyone's puppet. We are, and we will always be, the other half of the sky. Our country needs us!» (WF 2008a).*

According to GD, women are not passive (WF 2007c) and will not be in a future national socialist society, but their energy will instead be directed towards what nature commands and this, as mentioned already, is motherhood and the formation of family with the additional support, ethical and financial, of the National Socialist state.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> As might be expected, National Socialist Germany is the main historical example discussed on the party's websites. National Socialism is characterised as a revolutionary ideology and is presented as a model regarding the place of women (WF 2010b). It is argued that current economic circumstances will lead to the rise of National Socialism and implied that women will once again take up their place as mothers of the nation against dominant feminist ideologies. Apart from the German paradigm, particular reference is made to the Meta-

One of GD's political theses is women's military service. GD argues that women should be free to enter the Greek army equally to men and that this is a parameter that could lead to their emancipation. According to the party's political theses, all men and women should do their military service for 14 months when they reach the age of 18, except for women with children. That said, all women should serve in urban areas, apart from those who voluntarily ask to go near the borders (Golden Dawn n.d.). The idea behind this is to fill administrative positions of the Greek army with women so that men can be placed in combatant military camps around Greece. Of course, women who want to be part of these camps should be able to do it, but this is certainly not their main purpose. This again illustrates how GD understands women's emancipation and the party's ideology promoting women to be active, although not taking men's roles and through a clear division of labour.

As has been argued about the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941), a nationalist regime, the freedom usually given to women during fascist regimes should not be seen as part of an emancipation policy or a feminist orientation on the part of the regime (Alvanou 2017). Opportunities were given to women to socialise, and even to contribute to the public sphere, but only in ways in conformity with the traditional role of Greek women and in no way contesting gender barriers. The assumption that women are somehow emancipated by nationalism (Ploumidis n.d cited in Alvanou 2017) is far from true. Such an impression may be given, but the reality is that women are only as active as the patriarchal authorities allow them to be within the scope of nationalism and in so far as it is in the interest of the regime (Alvanou 2017: 145). This is also the case when we refer to GD and its views and ideology on women. Although in other cases, for example Jobbik in Hungary (Felix 2017: 98-105), it has been argued that women in such parties follow alternative ways of emancipation or become so-called Femi-Nazis (Mushaben 1996), it should be underlined that when talking

about GD, women are free to act only as far as the party's ideology commands, thus in reality rather having to fulfil a specific role imposed on them based on an ideal directed by their roles as mothers.<sup>9</sup>

Bacchetta and Power (2002) have identified common elements in the role of women in right-wing extremist groups. These include gender essentialism as well as a dualistic sense of public and private spheres according to which women are associated with private, less visible, and often subordinated aspects of daily life and politics, while public, visible, and dominant spaces are reserved primarily for men. However, they also note that traditional structures of women's subordination and men's authority may be advanced although women sometimes pursue political goals in public, assertive, and aggressive ways that are antithetical to notions of women's »proper place«. Blee and Deutsch (2012: 3) also demonstrate through a series of case studies that the boundary between public and private, while an important dimension of women's right-wing politics, is far from constant; right-wing women can transgress, even erase, the borders between these spheres as well as uphold them. This is something that seems to take place in GD. Some women are more active and become candidates or elected MPs, they take part in the party's activities, but what is underlined by the party is that women should be mainly focused in the private sphere and leave the public sphere to men.

#### Women participating in Golden Dawn

One crucial question regarding women and GD is whether women participate as regular members, electoral candidates and/or MPs. An analysis of the female membership in the party remains difficult as it would require access to official party membership databases. Based on the existing knowledge such data is unknown. However, a closer scrutiny of the party's official websites offers some insights into women's participa-

as dictatorship (1936-1941), a nationalist regime, through a special text dedicated to the place of women in it, and through the usage of archival material (photos) from that time (WF 2007d). Ancient Sparta is also used as a historical model for the role of women in society (WF 2010c) and even described as the first National Socialist society (WF 2010b).

<sup>9</sup> The term "feminazi" emerged in the early 1990's fashioned by the political commentator Rush Limbaugh in the United States. The term referred to an imagined group of "extreme" feminists – in this case pro-choice activists. It soon gained traction and was adopted for all kinds of "transgressive" feminist actions inventing a stereotypical representation of feminists. Mushaben on the other hand uses the term for women in extreme-right movements who become more active, emancipated and who are influenced by feminism. <https://edge.ua.edu/chp2/what-is-a-feminazi/>

tion. The first observation is that women do indeed participate in GD activities, but they are clearly in the minority. For example, there are photos from local GD branches showing one woman among 20 to 25 men. The only occasion where women are by number higher presented than men seems to be in some of the meetings of the Women's Front, nevertheless, even here the number of male participants is high.

Moreover, in conformity with the party's stance on traditional gender roles, the party's activities illustrate a clear distribution of labour between men and women, with the latter being mainly involved in the distribution of food and collection of clothes for impoverished Greeks as well as the distribution of leaflets. It creates the impression that most women are doing the kind of work the GD considers to be »for women«. Of course, there are some counter-paradigms. For instance, some women have been arrested and have been accused of being members of a criminal organisation (Proto Thema 2013), among them a police officer, for participating in GD street squads and for attacking immigrants. According to some scarce existing data, out of 63 recorded individual cases of violent attacks, only two perpetrators of such assaults were women. Though, in violent acts committed by groups more women are referred to as being involved (Psarras 2012: 420). So it can hardly be argued that women play a central role in GD's violent activism, although they are not completely absent either.

Finally, on a closer look it becomes apparent that for those rather prominent women active in the party, the relation to leading male figures seems to play a crucial role. For example, one of the two female MPs and elected in all four elections since 2012 is the wife of the party's General Secretary, while his daughter also plays an important role in the party and the youth division. Another MP's wife is the editor of the nationalist newspaper *Empros* and also a party member, while another MP's wife was the founder of the Women's Front. Generally, the wives or partners of male members can also become GD members and take responsibilities within the party organisation. It becomes difficult in such cases to assess the main cause driving these women to support the party, whether it is based on family/personal reasons, their belief in the party's ideology, perhaps both, or including other rea-

sons. In this view it is important before reaching a conclusion that women are attracted by GD to look beneath the surface and examine possible influences of the family environment on their decision, without implying that women are manipulated by men.

Another aspect of women's participation in GD is as candidates in the elections and of course as members of the national (MP) or the European Parliament (MEP). Firstly, it should be noted that the criterion of female candidates is not sufficient to draw any conclusions. According to the existing legislation, participation in elections requires every political party to include up to at least one third of women candidates. Although it is interesting for one to see the background of GD's female candidates in the elections, who in many cases are young active women, it cannot be concluded that women in general feel close to GD's ideology and populate the party in mass numbers. In the 2014 European elections, for example, 14 out of 42 candidates were women (approx. 33%) just on the threshold of the quota. In the June 2012 national elections 88 out of 246 candidates were women (approx. 33%) and in the national elections of September 2015 117 out of 321 candidates were women (approx. 36%). From this data it remains difficult to determine whether the number of female candidates merely exists to fulfil the requirement to participate in the elections or if there just are not more female candidates, therefore a conclusion is difficult to make here. Although the number of women gets higher from election to election and this is important to mention, it is not a criterion to argue that GD manages to involve more women because the party always seeks to reach the required quota. As for the actual number of female MPs or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) GD has the lowest number of women compared to other Greek parties. In the National Parliament it is only two out of 18 MPs and in the European Parliament both MEPs are male. Of course, as has been argued elsewhere (Kamenou 2017), other Greek parties also have low number of female MPs, but since comparable data from previous years with regard to GD are not available it is difficult to conclude that a rise in female participation is observed.

The outcome of the above is that while women are indeed participating in GD as members, candidates

and MPs, GD is still a male dominated party. It is also interesting to note that in the media (television, radio, the press) that give GD the opportunity to present its views and political agenda, the party representatives who participate are almost exclusively men.

### Women voting for Golden Dawn

Another focus of analysis is on women voting for GD. In the existing literature it has been supported that in extreme-right parties there is a »gender gap« (Georgiadou 2008: 480-2; Hartevelde et al 2015), although in recent years it seems that women have started to support such parties at least in some cases (Mayer 2013; Spierings 2017) and that this gap – although it exists – is often overemphasised, meaning that extreme-right parties are when it comes to voter behaviour simply a more radical version of centre-right parties (Spierings and Zaslove 2015). According to the existing data available from the elections of 2012 onwards, the »gender gap« exists in the case of GD as shown in the following → Table 1. These findings were verified by another study of a large EU project on young people's socio-political engagement and participation<sup>10</sup> as well as by a web survey for the European Parliament elections of 2014 (Andreadis et al 2014).

From the above it can be concluded that when it comes to voting, despite what has been argued in some recent studies (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015: 37-49; Kamenou 2017), for GD gender still matters. Women do play an important role in GD, but we need to ask, among other questions, if now they are more visible compared to the past.

Considering the scant data on female participation in GD, it would be difficult to suggest any concrete explanatory model for this female participation. Furthermore, specific research into this particular issue is really scarce. Based on the findings of the MYPLACE project mentioned earlier, two possible explanations

10 MYPLACE is the acronym of Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement, an fp-7 research project (2011–2015). In Greece the project's partner was Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. The leader of the Greek team was Professor A. Koronaïou and the participant researchers were A. Sakellariou, E. Lagos, I. Chiotaki-Poulou and S. Kymionis. The project included a statistical survey of 1,207 participants in Athens, 60 semi-structured interviews, three ethnographic case studies (Golden Dawn, the Greek Indignant Movement and Young Greek Evangelicals) and a study of historical memory (intergenerational interviews and focus groups). For more details about this project visit <http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/> and <https://myplaceresearch.wordpress.com/>.

could be considered: First, as the analysis of the quantitative data showed, GD's young voters (male and female) were those who felt ideologically close to the party, scoring higher in this regard even than voters of the Greek Communist Party. This was followed by the higher scores in prejudices against Jews, immigrants, Roma, Muslims or in favour of authoritarian rule (Koronaïou et al 2014). Secondly, based on the MYPLACE qualitative findings<sup>11</sup> young female supporters when asked why they voted for GD expressed views similar to those of male supporters. One participant argued that she was actually furious with what was taking place regarding immigrants and refugees, even labelling herself a racist:

*«I have been forced over recent years to become a racist. They have forced me to become a racist because it can't be right that I'm afraid to move around in the country where I was born and in the neighbourhoods where I grew up».*

Furthermore, she proposed that immigrants should be exterminated: »Why don't they put them on a boat and sink it somewhere in the Aegean Sea?« The second interviewee argued that she voted for GD because the party is helping the poor and the needy Greek people, implying that all the other parties are interested only in immigrants. In addition, she was angry with the previous political parties that »destroyed Greece«, so she actually voted because of her rage and also for ideological reasons, although she disagreed with the violence perpetrated by GD. The third voter also argued that she voted for GD because of the party's charities helping only Greeks and because of the immigration issue, but also because GD has taken some clear positions regarding Greece's national issues, i.e. relations with Turkey, Albania and FYROM. So, it looks as though ideological affinity might be important for GD's support while current events, national and international, create a fertile ground for such ideologies to express themselves (Koronaïou et al. 2014).<sup>12</sup>

The existing research data we have is far too little to reach a conclusion on why people, especially young

11 From 10 semi-structured interviews with GD voters/supporters, only three were women aged 24-25.

12 All this data comes from the analysis of the survey conducted in the MYPLACE project.

people, become members or vote for GD. This applies more to female members, supporters and voters, since they are even fewer and more difficult to reach. From the MYPLACE findings mentioned above the main outcome is that young women voted for GD because they feel close to the party's ideology, because of the immigration issue and perhaps to a lesser extent because of the economic crisis. Nevertheless, additional research is needed in order to reach more concrete conclusions for female supporters in particular.

### 3. Countering Golden Dawn

The presence of the GD – both in parliament and in Greek society – has led to a wide array of discussions and activism. But, there is little engagement with GD in regard to gender and the role of women. In fact, there are no specific strategies and initiatives that address female participation in right wing parties in

Greece. Furthermore, since the party's political breakthrough, only wider strategies and reactions against the party's National Socialist views and racist practices have taken place. In that sense, particular strategies targeting female members, voters and supporters have yet to be designed and implemented. Very few narratives with regard to women are actually included in the general counter-narratives and activities.

Especially on TV shows and in Internet outlets there have been some reactions against GD's views and practices regarding women. Before the second election in June 2012, in a discussion on a television show, GD MP Ilias Kassidiaris, attacked two women, spilling water over the face of a SYRIZA party member, and slapping a Greek Communist Party MP (To Vima 2012). This raised huge reactions by political parties and organisations (e.g. from the Women's Union of Greece) but it is worth mentioning that some people explicitly

TABLE 1

Results from exit polls and surveys regarding gender

Exit polls Surveys/Parties	June 2012 national pre-election barometer	May 2014 European election exit poll/ and digital exit poll	January 2015 national election exit poll	September 2015 national election exit poll
<b>SYRIZA /</b> (Left Coalition)	Male: 25 Female: 29	26,0   29,0 28,2   28,0	35,0 37,9	32,2 39,2
<b>Nea Dimokratia / New</b> Democracy (Conservatives)	Male: 30 Female: 30	23,1   24,0 25,1   26,0	26,3 29,5	26,8 29,1
<b>Chrysi /</b> Golden Dawn	Male: 10 Female: 4	12,5   10 5,7   5,0	8,5 3,8	8,3 4,2
<b>KKE /</b> Greek Communist Party	Male: 5 Female: 4	6,3   6,0 5,6   6,0	5,6 5,4	7,1 5,6
<b>ANEL /</b> Independent Greeks	Male: 6 Female: 9	3,4   3,0 4,3   5,0	5,0 4,4	3,3 2,8
<b>DIMAR /</b> Democratic Left	Male: 5 Female: 8	- -	- -	- -
<b>PASOK /</b> Social Democrats	Male: 14 Female: 11	- -	5,1 4,2	- -
<b>To Potami (The River)</b>	Male: - Female: -	5,1   5,0 8,4   8,0	4,8 7,4	3,7 4,9
<b>ELIA (Olive Tree) /</b> Social Democrats	Male: - Female: -	8,9   9,0 8,0   6,0	- -	- -
<b>Dimokratiki Sympara-</b> <b>taksi / Social Democrats</b>	Male: - Female: -	- -	- -	6,9 5,3

Sources: Public Issue 2012, Metron Analysis 2014, Metron Analysis 2015a, Metron Analysis 2015b, MYPLACE survey (the percentages refer to those eligible for voting, not younger participants), European Panel Web Survey, European Elections 2014.

or implicitly said that he acted properly and that both women provoked him and deserved this assault.<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that Kassidiaris, although he was prosecuted for this, was not convicted by the court, which triggered reactions by some political parties (e.g. PASOK, the socialists and KKE, the Greek Communist Party) (Real News 2015). After this incident some articles were published in support of the women who openly opposed GD (Maragidou 2017), among them the above-mentioned Communist Party MP, Liana Kaneli, or the mother of Pavlos Fyssas, who was murdered by GD member Giorgos Roupakias in September 2013 (Kathimerini 2013; Baskakis 2015). Other articles by left-wing parties (e.g. SYRIZA and the Communist Party) (Pardali 2013; Haitouni 2013) and anti-racist groups (e.g. The Sunday School for Immigrants) (Makrides 2012) also exposed GD's position on women and their role in society, asking women to be fully aware of what they vote for in the elections.

Having all the above in mind, one could argue that these public reactions have not actually led to any successful results. In all the opinion polls GD remains the third political power in Greece. Moreover, its support by women remains stable at around 4 per cent according to all the above data from major polls in recent years. GD's endurance since 2010 leads us to search for other causes in order to explain the party's support in general and women's support and participation in particular. Explanations including sentiments, like rage, disappointment, grievances, resentment, or the economic crisis are pretexts and not so useful in order to explain this phenomenon. While supporters of GD are using this kind of arguments to explain their political choice, such explanations remain at the surface of the problem, ignoring issues like ideology and history. We always need to keep in mind that other European states faced severe financial crises (e.g. Spain, Portugal and Ireland) but did not see the rise and success of an extreme neo-Nazi party. Protest vote might be an 'easy' and convenient explanation because it implies that if the crisis ceases to exist, supporters of GD or other extreme-right parties or groups of fascist ideology will all of a sudden disappear. Under a socio-

logical prism such an explanation might be too simplistic. Racist ideas are not new in Greek society as studies have shown (Coenders et al., 1997), but in the 1990s GD was a marginal group of skinheads and such views were dispersed in other political parties. This also means that current immigration is not necessarily the only answer to the question what caused GD's rise either. Furthermore, as mentioned initially, fascist ideas are also not new and have deeper roots in Greek society. This means that a combination of reasons and explanations might be the answer to the question of GD's success. Therefore, a more thorough inquiry into the relationship between GD's ideology and those supporting and participating in its activities – to identify other causes of GD's rise – is required.

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<sup>13</sup> This was mentioned in interviews during the MYPLACE research, in which even a few young people of either gender defended the actions of the MP.

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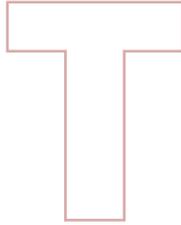


**POLAND**

# 4.4 COUNTRY CASE STUDY POLAND

BY WERONIKA GRZEBALSKA  
AND ELENA ZACHARENKO

As of 2017, eleven right-wing Polish political parties and one electoral committee are represented in the Polish or the European Parliament. Three of these formations dominate the scene and provide an entrance point into policy-making institutions for smaller parliamentary groups. This paper focuses mainly on the largest of these, the ruling illiberal Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, Law and Justice) which in 2016 began building what has been dubbed an «illiberal democracy» – a regime combining certain democratic procedures such as general elections and a multi-party system with a disregard for constitutional limits to power and limiting certain human rights and liberties (see e.g. Zakaria 1997). Bringing members of several smaller right-wing and fundamentalist parties into the Parliament under its banner,<sup>1</sup> the party has so far managed to consolidate power in the executive and legislative branches and is still leading the polls despite controversial laws dismantling the rule of law.<sup>1</sup>



The paper also looks closely at the catch-all political movement Kukiz'15 which is the second biggest populist right-wing parliamentary power with growing support. Kukiz'15 in turn allowed several members of the far-right Ruch Narodowy (RN, National Movement) to gain seats in the Parliament in 2015. Smaller right-wing parties – e.g. Janusz Korwin Mikke's Wolność (Liberty),<sup>2</sup> which is currently only active in the European Parliament, and the far-right Ruch Narodowy (RN, National Movement) several members of which gained seats in Parliament with Kukiz'15 – are mentioned when justified.

### 1. Objectives Regarding Women's and Gender Politics

With the war on ›gender ideology‹ orchestrated between 2012 and 2015 by the religious right which demonised gender studies and gender equality advocates (see e.g. Grzebalska 2015; Graff and Korolczuk 2017), attempts to further restrict reproductive rights in 2016, as well as the defunding of several women's rights NGOs, it has become clear that gender politics is one of the key tenets of the post-2016 illiberal »transformation of the transformation« (Krekó and Mayer 2015). The dominant narrative on women's rights in Poland has been that of backlash and retreat, with the illiberal right portrayed as misogynist and aiming to push women ›back into the kitchen‹. Yet a closer investigation of the policies and ideology of populist right-wing parties presents a more nuanced view of their gender politics and its role in their broader political project. In the following section we first present the policies and discourses targeting gender equality and minority rights; we then discuss the function

served by an opposition to ›gender ideology‹ in the right-wing counter-proposal to liberal democracy; and finish by reflecting on the social policies introduced by the illiberal government which have benefitted many groups of women on at least some level or other.

#### Attacks on women's rights

All illiberal right-wing political forces in Poland openly denounce feminism and the liberal equality paradigm. Of the above mentioned parties, only PiS and RN have dedicated considerable space to ›gender ideology‹ and the postulated ›traditional‹ gender order in their programmes and centred much of their demands around supporting ›traditional family‹ values. In both PiS and RN programmes from 2014 ›gender ideology‹ is presented as a Western-imposed threat to national sovereignty and the well-being of families.<sup>3</sup> While Kukiz'15 and Wolność did not engage with gender and sexual minority issues in their programmes, they have on numerous occasions criticised progressive equality politics in their public speeches. For example, in May 2016 Kukiz'15 MP and RN member Tomasz Rzymkowski submitted a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Education concerning anti-discrimination workshops held in one of the state universities, famously stating that homosexuality is morally and socially harmful.

Reproductive rights have been another site of hegemonic conflict.<sup>4</sup> In 2016, an anti-choice citizens' initiative proposed legislation further restricting access to abortion and including penalties of up to five years in prison for both women accessing the procedure and abortion providers. Supported by PiS leaders, the bill was approved for further work in commissions by the Parliament. While the wave of mass protests forced PiS to withdraw its support from this legislative proposal, attempts to widen the ban on abortion have been accompanied by other successful restrictions on reproductive rights. In 2017, the government ended prescription-free access to emergency contraception and introduced a new ›Family Life‹ education programme in schools that demonises contraception.

<sup>1</sup> These parties included Polska Razem Zjednoczona Prawica, Solidarna Polska, Wolni i Solidarni, Prawica Rzeczypospolitej and Ruch Katolicko-Narodowy.

<sup>2</sup> The party ran in the 2015 elections as KORWiN, and changed its name to Wolność in October 2016.

<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough analysis of the Polish campaign see Grzebalska (2015) as well as Graff and Korolczuk (2017).

<sup>4</sup> See Kubisa (2017) and Zacharenko (2017) for more on the recent anti-choice campaign in Poland.

Moreover, the few reproductive rights of women that are currently protected by law are seldom respected by doctors and pharmacists, who often invoke conscientious objection clauses.

Simultaneously, the government began targeting rights-based civil society, framing it as a foreign-steered enterprise promoting the interests of Western donors and a threat to national sovereignty. In fact, Polish right-wing actors increasingly resort to securitize human rights and pro-democratic struggles, that is, attempt to discursively move these topics beyond normal politics and frame them not as socio-economic or politico-ideological issues but rather as security threats that place the well-being of the nation in danger (Grzebalska and Pető 2017). Alongside framing human rights advocates as enemies rather than as political adversaries, the government also turned to financial measures to weaken women's rights organisations. In 2016, the Ministry of Justice denied funding to the Centre for Women's Rights, BABA Association and Nobody's Children Foundation which help victims of different types of violence; in October 2016 the Centre for Women's Rights and the BABA Foundation's offices were raided by the police on grounds of investigating financial malfeasance (tokfm.pl 2017). Funding previously allocated to these NGOs was given to religious and traditionalist organisations. Moreover, the government is currently implementing a new National Plan for Civil Society Development that aims to build a parallel pro-government civil society sector in place of the currently existing one through government funding.

### Gender as ›symbolic glue‹

Seeing how populist right-wing parties in Poland continue to mobilise public support through attacks on the liberal equality paradigm, it can be argued that gender has played a crucial role in establishing this new illiberal type of governance by acting as ›symbolic glue‹ (Pető 2015; Grzebalska, Kováts and Pető 2017). Firstly, the war on ›gender ideology‹ has allowed right-wing actors to build broad alliances between groups that would not necessarily join forces otherwise, e.g. mainstream conservatives and far-right activists or Christian fundamentalists and pan-Slavic circles. Secondly, using the concept of ›gender ideology‹ as an

enemy figure has allowed illiberal actors to glue together different issues attributed to the liberal equality paradigm and present them as part of a global conspiracy, and despite fierce conflicts between different strands of feminism, e.g. those accentuating gender as an identity and those seeing it as a construct signifying power relations. ›Gender ideology‹ became the metaphor for all the failures of the neoliberal order: crisis of representation, supremacy of identity politics over material injustice, or growing insecurity. Thirdly, the demonization and rejection of ›gender ideology‹ allowed the right to build a new positive counter-proposal to the liberal order. This proposal stems from the real failures of the neoliberal project and its unfulfilled promise of emancipation, and offers security and community to a clearly delineated collective of those who share the same national, religious and family values.

### Support for mothers and women's socio-economic rights

Attacks on the liberal gender equality paradigm and infrastructure have been accompanied by a simultaneous legislative offensive on the social and economic rights front. Immediately after coming to power, PiS launched its flagship programme, Family 500+, which offers families an unconditional monthly cash transfer of 500 PLN (120 EUR) for every second and subsequent child until it reaches 18 years of age; and for the first child in the case of families with a monthly income below 190 EUR per family member (see e.g. Beradi 2016). As the most expensive and wide-scale redistribution policy in post-1989 Poland, the programme has already resulted in a substantial reduction of poverty among families with children (IBS 2016) and is viewed favourably by the majority of society (77 per cent in 2017, according to CBOS 2017). Moreover, to offset the success of the 2016 women's black protests, the party swiftly introduced a one-off benefit of 1,000 EUR granted to women who give birth to a seriously disabled or terminally ill child. As of January 2017, PiS has also increased the minimum wage and tax exemption as well as reduced retirement age to 60 for women and 65 for men. The party also introduced new regulations tightening alimony laws which have greatly benefitted single mothers, by prompting many debtors to make long overdue payments. On top of that, at a

party conference in April 2018, PiS announced a new program, *Mother+*, which is designed to encourage women to have more children. A woman who bears at least four children can now receive a guaranteed state pension, regardless of whether she has worked or not. Pregnant women can get remission of fees for medicines. Mothers who give birth to a second child soon after the first will receive a special monetary bonus and mothers who are university students are furthermore eligible to receive scholarships (TVN24 2018).

All these changes happen amidst a rhetoric rewriting human rights as primarily socio-economic rights of families and substituting family mainstreaming for gender mainstreaming (Grzebalska and Pető 2017). In line with these principles, during the 2016 Fundamental Human Rights Forum in Vienna, the Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and founder of the fundamentalist organisation *Ordo Iuris*, Aleksander Sękowski, informed the public that the Polish government adheres to rights-based government and implementing fundamental rights by advancing the economic and social participation of families that have been negatively affected by the post-1989 transition (EU FRA 2016).

All the social policy measures introduced by PiS have stirred heated debates and inspired justified criticism for their focus on heterosexual families and ignoring other care relationships, as well as possible negative consequences for women: no incentives for men to participate in care work and no investment in public childcare may push women out of the labour market,<sup>5</sup> and the lowering of retirement age for women will certainly put them in a disadvantaged financial position. Yet the social significance of these policies taken together – rewriting the post-1989 neoliberal social contract between citizens and the state – should not be underestimated. In fact, the relatively high and stable women's support for PiS, despite its serious attacks on their reproductive rights, suggests that framing the party as unequivocally anti-women and working against women's interests might not have much explanatory power. Instead, it would make more sense

to distinguish between what Maxine Molyneux (1985) called ›practical gender interests‹ – the interests which ›arise from the concrete conditions to which women have been subjected within the gender division of labour, but that generally do not entail a strategic goal‹ (ibid.:183) – and ›strategic gender interests‹ which are theoretically formulated from the analysis of female subordination. While PiS certainly fights the (liberal) feminist concept of women's strategic gender interests, the party also does advance some of the practical gender interests that women have, such as those linked to household welfare and children's wellbeing. And traditionally it has been the latter that granted populist and even extremist forces across the globe the support and loyalty of women (see e.g. Blee 2012).

## 2. Women and Right-Wing Populist Parties

This section will analyse the role of women in the functioning and providing support to the populist right-wing political parties which have entered the Polish parliament in 2015 and 2011 (if applicable) – PiS and Kukiz'15. It will therefore focus on the presence and role played by women in leadership positions within the party, their presence as rank party members and the importance placed upon their participation by the party hierarchy. We will further analyse the support granted by women to these parties in the 2011 and 2015 parliamentary elections and zoom in on the socio-economic profile of the average female supporter. This will allow us to better conclude why women join these parties as members or lend support to them as voters.

### Women in leadership positions and as rank-and-file party members

Despite its manifest opposition to ›gender ideology‹ and overt promotion of traditional gender roles, PiS has benefitted from spearheading its 2015 electoral campaign with a female candidate for the office of prime minister, Beata Szydło. Her elevation to the role of prime minister-designate was somewhat unexpected given the low-key role she had previously played on the party's board and should primarily be interpreted as an attempt to modernise and humanise the image of the party ahead of a highly polarised election.

Contrary to predictions that Szydło would be quick-

<sup>5</sup> While women's labour force participation decreased at first, recent data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland show that this negative trend is slowly being reversed and women are returning to the labour market (Gazeta Prawna 2017).

ly cast aside as prime minister in favour of Jarosław Kaczyński, the party's leader and architect behind all its policies, she remained in the position for just over two years until her relegation to the post of deputy prime minister in the government of Mateusz Morawiecki in December 2017. While her role in the policy and decision-making process was, anecdotally, marginal, time will show if the new prime minister is perceived to be more independent than Szydło was. Indeed, it is expected that the reins not only of the party leadership but also of the government will remain firmly with Kaczyński, with any prime minister simply executing his decisions. In the case of Beata Szydło, this was manifested in her avoiding making policy decisions or sharing her position on specific topics without prior consultation with her party's leader. Nor did Szydło's choice of ministers for her government (who remained in place in the recent reshuffle) suggest progress in terms of the party's approach to gender equality: out of 19 ministries, only three had originally been allocated to women. Two of these allocations were made to policy areas already considered ›feminised‹: education and family, work and social policy; the third female minister was allocated the ministry of digitalisation (ISP 2015: 21-22).

On the other hand, PiS has provided a platform for several hard-line and controversial female politicians such as Krystyna Pawłowicz (MP and former judge on the State Tribunal), Beata Kempa (MP and Head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister) or Anna Zalewska (MP and Minister for Education). The party has also facilitated several fast-track careers for women in pro-government media outlets, e.g. by appointing the anti-gender author Barbara Stanisławczyk as President of the Board of Directors of Polish Radio, and nominating Marzena Paczuska as editor-in-chief of the TV news program *Wiadomości*. The party leadership also has a long history of cooperating with and promoting right-wing female public intellectuals such as sociologists Barbara Fedyszak-Radziejowska or anti-feminist conservative historian Magdalena Gawin, who was appointed Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Culture.

The Kukiz'15 electoral committee did not attempt to conceal its paternalistic tone in its election campaign or its subsequent parliamentary activities. Women as

subjects were not visibly included into campaigning material (ISP 2015: 14) and policies relevant to women's rights or gender equality were not included into the movement's manifesto (Kukiz'15 2015). The association, in any case centred entirely around its single charismatic leader, has a ten-member board which seats only two women in low-ranking roles – there is therefore no inclusion of women in leadership positions to speak of.

The role of women in the lower ranks of the party hierarchy in right-wing populist parties, as well as their perceived importance to the party hierarchy, can be analysed on the basis of the number of women registered as candidates in the 2015 election to the lower house of the parliament, the Sejm. As of 2011, the electoral law obliges each party presenting a voting list in a district (elections to the Sejm follow the proportional representation system) to ensure that the list is composed of 35 per cent of the underrepresented gender (ISP 2015: 7). While all parties must comply with this minimum quota to be able to present candidates in a district, they are free to surpass it, presenting more women on their list. What is also left to their discretion is the placement of the individual candidates on the list – as a general rule of thumb, the closer to the top of the list, the higher the chances of being elected, and chances drop sharply below the third spot on the list.

Among the parties which crossed the electoral threshold, PiS and Kukiz'15 were the ones with the lowest overall female representation among the candidates to the Sejm, each having registered 40 per cent of women candidates (ISP 2015, PKW 2015), only surpassing the legal quota by an extra five per cent. In addition, only 21 per cent of the women candidates were allocated one of the top three spots in electoral lists by Kukiz'15 (PKW 2015); 24 per cent in the case of PiS (ISP 2015: 12). This data may suggest that women within the ranks of these two parties are primarily used as ›fillers‹, presented in lower places of the list in order to fulfil the quota. However, for data from the 2011 election, this was true of all Polish political parties (Jankowski and Marcinkiewicz 2016: 8). Furthermore, the behaviour of right-wing voters seems to demonstrate that a candidate's gender does not always impact on his or her electability: two of the top five

parliamentary candidates who polled the most votes in the 2015 election were Beata Szydło and Małgorzata Wasserman from PiS (Onet.pl 2015).

The 2015 electoral success of PiS has resulted in its group being composed of 23 per cent women parliamentarians, nearly reflecting the overall Sejm levels of 27 per cent belonging to female MPs (ISP 2015: 18), and a marked increase on the 2011 proportion of 17.2 per cent (Jankowski and Marcinkiewicz 2016: 3). The list composition of Kukiz' 15 has however meant that its parliamentary group included only 14 per cent of women immediately after the election (ISP 2015:19). Furthermore, three female members of the group chose to leave it, as well as the Kukiz' 15 association, to start their own groups in the Parliament, and two subsequently joined the PiS parliamentary group in 2017 (Gazeta.pl 2017). As of September 2017, the Kukiz' 15 parliamentary group is composed of only three women out of a total of 32 members, around 9 per cent. This again suggests that women's influence on internal group dynamics within Kukiz' 15 is marginal.

While in the past ten years, right-wing parties have generally brought fewer women into Parliament than the left wing or liberals, it is important to note that the difference has not always been that pronounced (e.g. in 2007 there were 21 per cent women in the PiS parliamentary group compared to 22 per cent in the liberal Platforma Obywatelska/Civic Platform, PO, which was in power from 2007 to 2015), and the Social Democrats (SLD) hold the record for including an even lower percentage of women than the right (e.g. 16 per cent in 2007 and 18.5 per cent in 2011) (Gądek 2011).

### Women's electoral support

PiS won the 2015 parliamentary election with an overall share of the vote of 37.6 per cent (PKW 2015b). However, exit polls demonstrated that the party's support among women was higher than the overall result and somewhat higher than among men: 39.7 per cent versus 38.5 per cent (TVN24 2015).<sup>6</sup> This was similar to the situation which occurred in the 2011 election,

<sup>6</sup> The breakdown of data on votes by gender is not available from official sources – the numbers included refer to exit poll results and therefore may not always correlate exactly to data on the overall share of the vote, which refers to official data from the national electoral committee.

when PiS came second to PO with 29.9 per cent of the vote; it was still more popular with women than with the population at large: 30.7 per cent of female voters cast their vote for PiS (Wprost.pl 2011). It is important to highlight that according to the same polls, women were also more likely than men to vote for Civic Platform (PO) – 42.4 per cent compared to the overall 39.2 per cent in 2011 and 26.4 per cent compared to 24.1 per cent overall in 2015. At the same time, they were not likely to be more supportive of the social democratic parties presenting in the elections. These preferences could speak to the dominance of the centre-right/right wing political discourse in Poland and the left's inability to counter it; however, the analysis of exact reasons for this phenomenon fall outside of the scope of this paper.

Research into the political preferences of Polish voters suggests that the predominant socio-economic profile of a female PiS supporter is as follows: married (57.5 per cent), over 55 (50.9 per cent), has a technical-level education (48.1 per cent), is either a housewife (36.8 per cent) or in regular employment (31.1 per cent), lives in the countryside (38.7 per cent) and describes her material situation as average (59.4 per cent) (Political Preferences, 2016). This description can be argued as fitting women who have not been the primary beneficiaries of the advance of the liberal feminist agenda such as increased career opportunities or representation in public life. The background described would therefore appear consistent with the profile of voters more interested in taking forward pragmatic than strategic gender interests, such as ensuring better social welfare indicators for themselves and their families, while placing secondary importance on symbolic and rhetorical arguments over women's rights and gender equality formulated within the liberal equality paradigm.

Kukiz' 15 was not formed until 2015 and therefore did not compete in the 2011 elections. Its 2015 electoral results came in at 8.8 per cent overall (PKW 2015b) and 7.2 per cent among women, compared to a markedly higher 10.3 per cent among men (TVN24 2015). Data on Kukiz' 15 supporters was too small to draw meaningful conclusions on their socio-economic profile (Political Preferences 2016).

### Why do Polish women support right-wing populists?

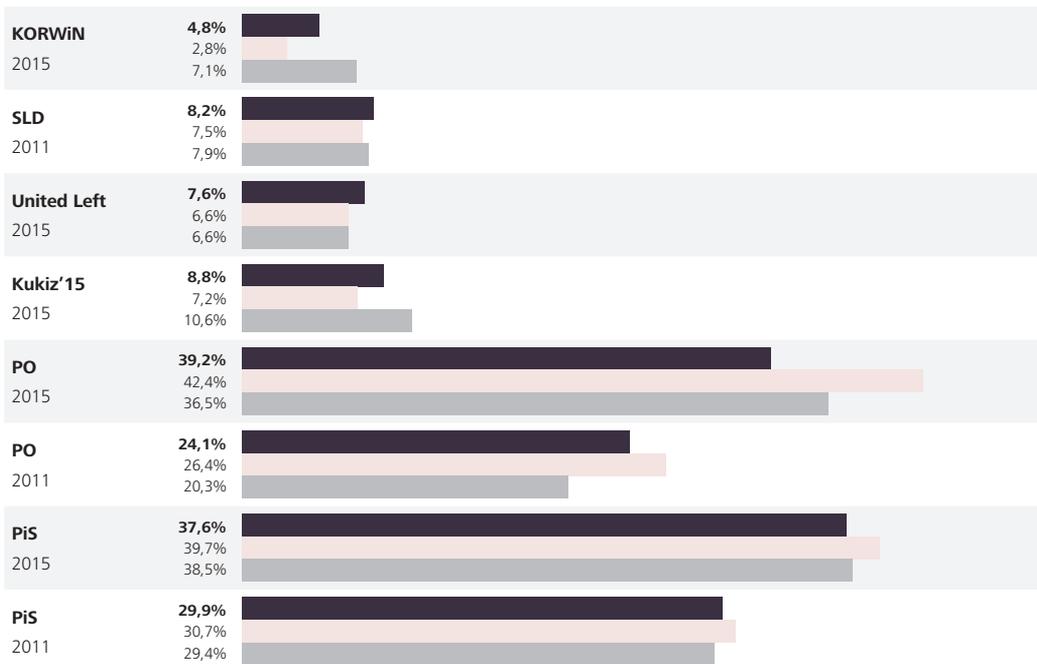
While PiS fares better than Kukiz' 15 in the inclusion and promotion of women within the ranks of the party and in leadership positions, both entities perform worse in these categories than the liberal parties PO and Nowoczesna or the left-wing Razem. When women are present in leadership roles, such as Barbara Szydło, they are often toeing the party line rather than genuinely engaged in policy-making decisions. Moreover, the female members of the current PiS government are assigned to portfolios traditionally considered as being in the ›feminine‹ interest (ISP 2015: 21-22) and women running for election on both PiS and Kukiz' 15 electoral lists are placed at a disadvantage compared to their male colleagues.

Nonetheless, in a marked improvement from the previous legislature, nearly a quarter of the members of the PiS parliamentary party are women, proving that there is considerable scope for female political participation in this party. Moreover, while PiS does not

systemically support women's advancement within the ranks and is critical towards gender mainstreaming as a policy tool, it has also enabled numerous women to build a strong position for themselves within the party, the party-controlled institutions, as well as the broader illiberal right-wing civil society. This is currently not the case within Kukiz' 15, where female participation is marginal, and the few more active female MPs have left the group. At the ballot box, female voters' support for PiS and Kukiz' 15 diverges widely. Indeed, women seem to be significantly less likely to vote Kukiz' 15 than men, while more likely to vote PiS. The same is true for KORWiN/Wolność (see Table 1). This may suggest that women are more attracted to the socio-economic and welfare-related proposals made by PiS than to its populist right-wing rhetoric.

Indeed, in the light of the previous section discussing how PiS advances women's practical gender interests and the data presented in this section which sheds light on how this party continues to receive support from female voters and provide a platform for wom-

**TABELLE 1** Percentage of women's votes in favour of KORWiN, Kukiz'15, PiS, PO, SLD and United Left and compared with the overall voting outcome in 2011 (if data is available) and 2015 parliamentary elections.



en's political careers, it is no longer feasible to ignore the empowering effects participation in the right-wing project can have for women. In fact, it can be argued that women's support for right-wing projects can serve as an alternative model of empowerment and advancement for women who do not find the neoliberal feminist proposal appealing (see e.g. Félix 2016). As observed by American sociologist Kathleen Blee (2012), binary and value-loaded terms such as ›right wing populism‹ can be misleading as they conceal the ideological complexity of the political movements in question (see e.g. Gagyí 2016 on false dichotomies); similarly, labelling these proposals as ›anti-women‹ simply because they come from extremist actors does not help understand women's support for them. Likewise, in the realm of women's participation in right-wing parties as politicians and activists, Hungarian historian Andrea Petó argues that »women's power can be born in a situation where allegedly there is no women's power« and that »as part of the dominant group, even women – the relatively and not absolutely weaker partners – also get their share« (Gelnarová and Petó 2016: 77).

Taking women's growing support for right-wing political projects and the increasing number of female right-wing leaders and politicians seriously can point out the weaknesses of the progressive alternative. One interpretation is offered by Nancy Fraser (2017), who argues that coopting of feminist politics by neoliberalism has led to the emergence of ›progressive neoliberalism‹ which prioritises identity politics at the cost of identifying common roots of injustice and social insecurity faced by different groups in financialised capitalism (see Gregor and Grzebalska 2016 for similar argumentation on East Central Europe). What follows is that to regain women's mass support at a time when right-wing proposals cater for women's practical gender interests, successful progressive policies need to go beyond market-oriented feminism and identity politics.

### 3. Counter-Movements and (Successful) Strategies

Despite its high rates of popular support, the PiS government has faced widespread social opposition in reaction to attempts to further narrow down Poland's already restrictive abortion law. The opposition culminated in what became known as the Black Protest

on 3 October 2016, when hundreds of thousands of women and men wore black, went on strike and demonstrated across the country to oppose a draft law designed to completely ban abortion under any circumstances. In response, the government withdrew its support for the bill and parliamentary work on it was soon dropped – an outcome largely hailed as a success both domestically and internationally.

However, while the Black Protest was certainly a successful strategy for mobilising social support to oppose a specific legislative initiative, it does not present a long-term solution to PiS's anti-gender and anti-reproductive rights initiatives. Indeed, several draft bills designed to restrict access to reproductive health services have been tabled in Parliament since October 2016 and some have been successfully introduced, such as removing access to over-the-counter emergency contraception in July 2017. Protest movements are difficult to sustain in the long run, nonetheless the mobilising success of the October 2016 Black Protest has been replicated in response to these developments as seen recently in March 2018 when an estimated 55.000 people gathered for the second Black Protest.

While the Black Protest movement succeeded in placing women's rights and access to reproductive health services on the political agenda in Poland, there is reason for concern that these issues could be used instrumentally by opposition parties that have never previously expressed interest in these topics. Given that the strongest party in opposition, PO, could at best be considered centre-right, there is little hope that its approach to women's rights will entail rethinking its policies beyond the introduction of some notions of progressive neoliberalism. As demonstrated by the findings in the previous sections of this paper, this would be woefully inadequate to address the practical gender concerns of the women currently supporting PiS and to attract their votes.

What is needed to challenge the policies on gender equality and reproductive rights of the PiS government, as well as the popular support it continues to enjoy, is an opposition that both questions the processes which propelled it into power and proposes an agenda simultaneously addressing women's practical and strategic gender interests. There is also a need to critically reassess the dominant framework for transforming

the gender order and formulate strategic gender interests outside of the (neoliberal) paradigm. Without a political agenda that addresses the persisting socio-economic disparities in Polish society as well as proposes extensive and inclusive social safety nets, political actors in Poland will not be able counter the illiberal but socially-minded policies of the populist right-wing

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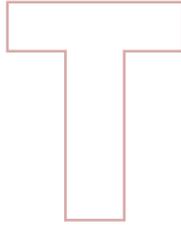


**SWEDEN  
NEEDS**

# 4.5 COUNTRY CASE STUDY SWEDEN

BY ANN-CATHRINE JUNGAR

Until the parliamentary breakthrough of the Sweden Democrats (SD) in 2010 Sweden was one of a few European exceptions. The absence of a party of the populist radical right (PRR) with parliamentary representation in Sweden has been described as a European »deviation« (Demker 2012), »negative case« (Rydgren 2002) or »failure« (Art 2011). The extreme racist and neo-Nazi origin of the SD, in combination with the low political salience of anti-immigration in the political debate and competition between political parties, is the main explanation for the late parliamentary debut (Jungar 2017).



The SD belongs to the family of PRR parties that combine nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007, Jungar and Jupskås 2014). It was founded in 1988 and originates from neo-Nazi subcultures as well as the neo-populist nationalist and anti-immigration mobilisation of the 1980s. Nationalism was always at the core of the SD's ideology, but from the start the party also made authoritarian appeals for stricter criminal policies (re-introduction of the death penalty), traditional family values (restricted abortion rights), but also animal rights in addition to socio-economic issues targeting pensioners and families with children. Social conservatism was added as a second core ideological principle of the SD at the party congress in 2011.

Its electoral fortunes were meagre until 2010 when the SD passed the four per cent electoral threshold. With 5.7 per cent of the vote, the SD could claim 20 parliamentary seats. In 2014, the party first received 9.7 per cent of the votes in the European parliamentary elections before winning 12.9 per cent of the votes in the national parliamentary elections later that year. The SD is presently the third largest group in the Swedish parliament after the Social Democrats and the conservative *Moderaterna*. The next general election will be held in September 2018 and SD support is around 17 per cent according to the weighted opinion polls of October 2017 (Dagens Samhälle 2018). This rapid growth in electoral support can be attributed to ideological moderation and the recent formation of a highly structured and centralised nationwide party organisation. The increased saliency of immigration has impacted positively on the SD vote growth (Jungar 2017). The SD has been treated as a »pariah party« by the other parties as a strategy to limit its influence (Jungar 2012, 2015).

### 1. Women and Gender Politics

Gender equality has been a prioritised issue in Swedish politics and can be considered a central part of Swedish political culture and identity. Without formal political quotas, women's representation in the national parliament has exceeded 40 per cent since the 1990s. About 50 per cent of cabinet ministers have been women. The present minority government, consisting of Social Democrats and the Environmental party, has labelled itself from the start »the first feminist government« and declared gender equality a priority in policy making. The Swedish welfare state is usually described, and globally perceived, as being gender friendly, enabling men and women to reconcile parenthood with working life by providing extensive public child care, generous and partly shared parental leave, and individual taxation. Moreover, gender equality has been mainstreamed into other policy areas, for instance education and research.

Parties of the radical right traditionally embrace essentialist conceptions of gender and conservative family values while opposing feminism as well as equal marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. The Sweden Democrats thus find themselves in a situation of cross-pressure in a society where gender equality is a widely accepted social norm as is the case in Sweden. The SD is torn between competing narratives: traditionalist moral conservatism and the »gender exceptionalist« narrative, the latter portraying progressive gender equality as a fundamental part of »Swedish values« (Townsend et al 2014 and Mulinari 2016). On the one hand, such a context can provide an opportunity for a radical right party to present itself as an anti-establishment alternative to public gender equality policies and state feminist perspectives. On the other, it can also claim to be the defender of liberal values such as gender equality from the Islamisation of Western societies in the face of massive immigration, which is increasingly perceived as a problem. Moreover, since SD voters are more liberal than their party on issues like gender equality and equal marriage, it may be strategically rewarding to take more liberal positions (Backlund and Jungar 2016).

### »Equal, but different«

Nationalism and social conservatism are the two main ideological pillars of the SD. The SD formulates its nationalism as »open and non-racist« and adheres to democratic nationalism. The nation is defined ethnoculturally as »culture, language, identity and loyalty« (Sweden Democrats 2011) and not in terms of a common history of national identity or in terms of race. This implies that one can become part of the Swedish nation by assimilation. Social conservatism was added to the SD party programme in 2011 and reflects the party leadership's efforts to ideologically moderate the party. This move was hotly debated and met with opposition from more extremist factions within the party as they perceived this to be a weakening as well as a means to moderate the SD's nationalist appeal. Social conservatism as defined by the SD combines tradition, community and law and order with social consciousness. The SD supports the Nordic welfare state system based on tax based redistribution, but embraces a welfare chauvinist position since public welfare should be prioritised to the native inhabitants, and immigration is considered of a threat to the maintenance of the welfare state (Sweden Democrats 2011).

Since the SD combines nationalism and social conservatism, quite unsurprisingly the nation and the family are seen as fundamental institutions for the preservation of a stable and well-functioning society. Whereas the nation is threatened by immigration and multicultural practices, the family is considered the backbone for the national community in its function of care, reproduction, cultural upbringing and education. The gender equality and family policies of the SD depart from the assumption that there are essential differences between men and women in certain respects. The biological differences, which are not specified, should according to the SD not translate into inequality, as women and men should have equal rights. However, the state should not interfere and take measures to modify men's and women's ways of life and the life choices they may make on the basis of biological differences or social norms. The SD defines this position as »formal gender equality« (SD 2011).

This social conservatism is formulated in a liberal vocabulary as non-interference. The SD opposes affirmative action, gender quotas, norm-critical and

gender-aware pedagogics. According to the SD, it is important that women are represented in different spheres of society precisely due to the gender differences. However, a more balanced representation in politics or in corporations should not come about by positive discrimination or gender quotas since they, according to the SD, discriminate against men. Moreover, the SD supposes that other factors such as personal characteristics and interests are more decisive than gender for the different life choices that men and women make. The SD is not negative about women having careers in traditional male professions, such as making a career in the military and serving in the fire brigade. However, the same requirements should apply to men and women as to physical strength, something that indirectly will have a discriminatory effect. Whereas wage differences between men and women are not presented as a problem due the different professional choices men and women make, the SD problematises the fact that boys perform worse in school than girls in terms of grades, and describes it as a »failure of the school's mission to prepare children for the future«.

### Family: the cornerstone of the nation

The heterosexual family is for the SD the cornerstone of the nation in terms of both biological and cultural reproduction and survival (Townes 2015, Norocel 2013). In this respect the SD shares with other European PRR parties a moral conservative heteronormative view of family relations (Akkerman 2015). This heteronormativity can be clearly seen in the SD's definition of »family«:

*»[...] the nuclear family is the form of cohabitation that offers the best preconditions to give children a stable and safe environment. At the same time, we are aware that this form of cohabitation does not work for everyone and of course we want to work for full societal support to all forms of cohabitation which include children [...] Our view is that male and female characteristics in many cases complement each other and that is one of the reasons that all children should have the right to both a mother and a father in their lives. The least complicated, and thereby the best for most children, is in our assessment to grow up with one's biological parents as mother and father figures« (SD 2011).*

For the SD the most fundamental unit in the nation is the heterosexual family model because it is the best environment for taking care of and bringing up children. As a consequence of the assumption of essential differences between men and women that »complement« one another, children should have the right to a mother and a father. The state should support single parents, but single parents and same-sex couples should not have adoption rights (SD 2011). Moreover, the state should not interfere in how the family organises the care of children, but rather support the freedom of choice as to who – the mother or the father – and how the children are taken care of. This position is formulated in SD policies on taxation and childcare. The SD has proposed the introduction of voluntary family taxation similar to the German model as a family and marriage-supporting institution (SD Motion 2011/12 SK 411). Individual taxation was introduced in Sweden in 1971 and was crucial for increasing female participation in the labour market. The previous progressive family taxation was a disincentive for women to work because their contribution to the family income was heavily taxed. The idea of individual taxation was also in line with women's rights claim that a proper income, and later a pension, was the means to freedom of choice and equality.

The state should, according to the SD, support different forms of childcare, including family care. The present government terminated the possibility for municipalities to economically subsidise childcare at home, partly because an overwhelming majority of the caregivers were women and thereby indirectly contributed to greater gender inequality in family responsibilities. Nor should the state, according to the SD, prescribe how parental leave is divided between the parents – currently 90 days of the total 240 days are reserved for each parent (often referred to as »daddy months«). The SD does not consider the fact that women take 78 per cent of the parental leave and men 22 per cent (Statistiska Centralbyrån 2016) to be a problem. Nor does it problematise the effects of the uneven distribution of parental leave resulting in differences in wages and pensions between men and women later in their lives.

The SD wants fewer abortions and the introduction of more restrictive legislation due to medical progress in neonatal care. Sweden introduced free abortion in

1975 until the 18th week of the pregnancy. According to the SD, abortion is not an unquestioned right of the woman, but a more balanced view of the ethical dilemma between the rights of the unborn life and women's rights is needed that balances the conflict between the two better. The SD supports the introduction of a »right of conscience« for midwives to refuse to undertake abortions (Bieler 2013).

### Feminism and feminists

Several studies on the SD have emphasised the role of »traditional« masculinity ideals and a nostalgic desire to redefine a patriarchal and heteronormative gender order that is perceived as being threatened by feminism (Mulinari and Nergaard 2014; Norocel 2013). Feminism and feminists have been frequent targets in the SD's anti-establishment discourse – and in somewhat ambiguous ways. Despite the different rhetorical formulations party representatives take on gender they can be defined as clearly anti-feminist. The party leader Jimmy Åkesson has repeatedly distanced himself from feminism by stating that it is an unnecessary term (Åkesson 2014). The SD spokesperson for gender equality, Paula Bieler, defines herself as a »biological essentialist« feminist (*särartsfeminist*), meaning that men and women are different and should despite their differences be treated equally. However, the state should not interfere in the choices men and women make, regarding for example the subjects they study, their occupation and the distribution of family responsibilities in order to achieve gender balance. This »biological essentialist« type of feminism corresponds to the SD's ideas and policies on gender equality, affirmative action and quotas. Resistance to feminism has most clearly been articulated by the party's youth organisation, The Young Swedes, which describes itself as a »non-feminist association« working for a society where »no person is given any advantages or disadvantages based on gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation« (Edenborg and Jungar 2017). The women's association SD-Women has criticised what it calls »extreme feminism« in an advertisement used during the 2014 European parliamentary elections. The message in the advertisement, which was copied from a political ad by the FPÖ, was that women can be strong and self-determining without being so-called feminists (Nyheter 24, 2014).

Feminists are accused by the SD of not defending what had been accomplished with regard to gender equality in Sweden by turning a blind eye to the consequences of immigration. The SD has had violence against women and what it defines as »Swedish-inimical« (*sverigefientligt*) violence, that is gender-related violence committed by foreigners (rape, honour-related violence) on its party platform since the early 2000s (Sverigedemokraterna 2013). According to SD rhetoric, immigration is the basic reason why the frequency of sexualised violence has increased and this fact is kept silent by the establishment. Moreover, the SD is critical of the government and feminists in general because they do not discriminate between different types of violence against women. So-called honour-related violence requires particular measures as it is embedded in »cultural and religious norms and traditions« (SD 2011).

Feminists are furthermore criticised for exclusively representing middle-class, highly-educated and liberal-minded women, and not taking into consideration the concerns of the so-called »ordinary« women employed in the public sector with low wages or females with low pensions. Unlike the feminists, the SD claims to address the »ordinary« women who want to live according to traditional gender roles and are opposed to public regulation of balanced division between the father and mother for child care, educational programmes for raising gender awareness and quotas for women in public and private companies. Party leader Jimmy Åkesson has paid attention to women employed in the public sector (health and childcare) and referred to them as the »everyday heroes«: »We cannot accept that the everyday heroes employed in the public health care are consumed prematurely only because Anders Borg [the Swedish finance minister between 2006-2014; A.J.] is greedy and prefers to invest money in increasing mass immigration and cheap hamburgers« (Åkesson 2013). The SD's targeting of women, particularly from the working class, is electorally motivated and driven by the attempt to increase women's share of the SD male-dominated vote. An opposition between the interests of the female workers in the public welfare sector and public expenditure in connection with immigration is constructed, and the SD has proposed reforms for improved working condi-

tions, e. g. the right to full-time work, since many employees are only employed part-time with no opportunity to extending their working hours (Åkesson 2013).

### LGBTQ issues

PRR parties have been – as a consequence of their heteronormative family views – hostile to gay, lesbian and transgender rights. The Sweden Democrats have opposed all reforms extending rights to same-sex couples, such as the 1995 law on registered partnership, the 2003 law on adoption by same-sex couples and the 2009 law on equal marriage.

In the party programmes of the late 1990s, the SD still described homosexuals as »sexually deviant people«, but the SD has repositioned itself during the past decade. Other openly hostile anti-LGBTQ rhetoric has been replaced with an emphasis on sexuality as a »private matter« (Edenborg and Jungar 2017). The SD considers sexual orientation to be congenital as »no person chooses his or her sexual orientation«. Harassment and discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation should therefore not be accepted and legally protected. The party's essentialist views on gender differences guides its positions on transgender issues. The SD has opposed recent legislative reforms strengthening the rights of transgender people. It was the only party to vote against removing the sterilisation requirement for legal gender change in 2013, and opposed the inclusion of transgender people in hate speech legislation in 2016 (Edenborg and Jungar 2017). Whereas the SD has reformulated its position in relation to homosexuality in a more liberal direction, this does not apply to transgender.

PRR parties' commitment to liberal principles in the domain of sexuality politics is most prevalent when articulated within a »clash of civilisations« framework and opposed to the presumed illiberal attitudes of Islam (Akkerman 2015, Betz and Meret 2009). There are only a few instances when the representatives from the SD have positioned themselves as defenders of gay rights against a perceived threat from allegedly homophobic Muslim immigrants (Edenborg and Jungar 2017). In an opinion article published in *Aftonbladet* in 2010, party leader Jimmy Åkesson and second vice chairperson Carina Herrstedt wrote:

*The fact that more and more openly bi- and homosexual people in recent years have joined the Sweden Democrats proves that, despite current stereotypes [about the SD being homophobic; A.J.] it is entirely possible to combine a value-conservative and Sweden-friendly position with a fundamental respect for sexual minorities. It is also a clear indication on the strong worry that many homosexuals feel about mass immigration and the homo hatred that comes with growing Islamisation [...] [H]omosexuals are looking for a defender of Western, democratic fundamental values. Here, the Sweden Democrats fulfil a unique and very important role in society (Åkesson and Herrstedt 2010).*

However, PRR parties' pro-gay rhetoric is rarely combined with concrete proposals for increasing LGBT rights, and this applies to the SD as well.

## 2. Women in the party and voting for the SD

Like other radical right populist parties, the SD is male dominated. Men are in a majority in the party leadership and they constitute the majority of parliamentary representatives, party members and SD voters. The SD has had four party leaders since it was founded in 1988. The present party leader Jimmy Åkesson was elected by the SD party congress 2005; his two predecessors were men. However, when the SD was founded in 1988, the party leadership adopted a dual male/female leadership model it had copied from the Swedish Environmental party. The idea was that party leadership should be shared and time-limited to differentiate from »ordinary« parties and the »mainstream« in general. A spokeswoman and a spokesman shared the SD party leadership between 1988 and 1991. The model was not considered effective enough and the party adopted a traditional single party leadership model in 1991.

### Party leadership, parliamentary group and party membership

The SD party board is the highest decision-making organ of the party and is elected by the party congress for two years. Roughly one out of three party board representatives has been a woman over the past six years. At present (in late 2017), five of the 17 board members are women (SD verksamhetsberättelser 2013, 2015 and 2017).

Compared to the party board the share of women in the parliamentary group is considerably lower. Only three out of 20 SD representatives were women when the SD entered parliament the first time in 2010, that is, a 15 per cent share. In the 2014 parliamentary elections the share of SD female representatives increased slightly to 22.5 per cent: 11 out of the 49 SD parliamentarians were women. The SD has the lowest share of female parliamentarians of all the parliamentary parties in the present parliament elected in 2014.

This also had an impact on the overall gender ratio in the parliament. With the parliamentary breakthrough of the SD the share of female parliamentary representatives has decreased in two consecutive elections. Sweden is well known for its high female representation, which is partly explained by the fact that several parties since the 1990s have used informal »zebra-stripe party quotas for their party lists, and have formulated recommendations and guidelines for how to increase the share of women. After the national elections in 2006 the share of women was 47 per cent and decreased to 45 per cent in 2010 when the SD received its first seats. In the 2014 parliamentary elections the share of women fell further to 43.6 per cent.

The Sweden Democrats are the only parliamentary party that has not formulated specific goals, recommendations or quotas for gender-balanced representation. This is not surprising given the SD's principled position against what it defines as positive discrimination.

At present nine out of 46 SD parliamentary representatives are women (20 per cent). As a matter of fact, the European Parliament is the only representative assembly in which the SD is gender balanced. The SD is a member of Europe of Direct Democracy and Freedom and has had two representatives in the EP political group since 2014.

The SD is the fastest growing political party in Sweden both electorally and organisationally. The SD has increased its membership during the past decade from around 1,000 members in 2003 to more than 30,000 in 2018. In 2013, 79 per cent of members were male (of a total of 10,471 members), whereas 76 per cent were male in 2015 (out of a total of 21,083 members) (Jungar 2017). There is little research on SD members, but as the SD has been conceived as a pariah party

and been isolated by the mainstream political parties, a social stigma has been attached to those who sympathise or engage with the SD. Since SD party membership is known to cause problems for employment and in social life in general, it is estimated that the party previously had more activists than formal party members (Jungar 2017). The cost of voting or being a member of the SD seem to have decreased with the party's electoral growth, but being a member of the SD can still cause difficulties socially or in working life. The women's organisation of the SD was formed after the parliamentary debut in 2010. Its aim has been to attract more female voters and members to the male-dominated party as well as to gain access to public funding available in this connection. As a matter of fact, a women's organisation, *Kvinnor för Sverige* (Women for Sweden), was planned in 1988 when the SD was founded. Although a programme was formulated, eventually this project failed. The present women's association »SD-Kvinnor« (*SD Women*) is presented as a »complement to the Sweden Democrats by clarifying, deepening and developing the party policies from a women's perspective« (SD Kvinnor <http://sdkvinnor.se/om-sd-kvinnor/>).

### Women voting for SD

There is also significant male dominance among the SD supporters: 60 per cent are men and 40 per cent are women (Sannerstedt 2015). The SD voters are similar to other European PRR voters. They are critical of immigration, integration, multiculturalism and the EU, and are more distrustful of politicians and dissatisfied with how democracy works than the supporters of other political parties (ibid). Various explanations have been given in scholarly literature for the gender imbalance among PRR party voters. Women do not generally differ from men in their level of nativism, authoritarianism and discontent with democracy, but it has been suggested that anti-immigration and anti-EU attitudes are more salient for male voters and that women are reluctant to vote for parties that are male-dominated to the extent PRR parties are (Haartevelde et al. 2015).

The gender ratio, that is, the proportion of men and women casting their votes for individual political parties varies between political parties. The gender gap is largest

in the Swedish Democrats and the conservative Moderaterna. In the 2010 general election five per cent of Swedish males and two per cent of females voted for the SD. The SD's electoral growth in the subsequent parliamentary elections of 2014 is reflected in the fact that 10 per cent of Swedish male and six per cent of female voters supported the SD. A similar imbalance is discernible in the Moderaterna. In 2010 the ratio between male and female voters was 35/27 and in 2014 it was 24/20. The Social Democrats have traditionally had a female-dominated electorate, which was still the case in the 2010 general election when 33 per cent of the female compared to 29 per cent of the male voters supported the party. In the 2014 general election the gender ratio was balanced, with the proportion of male and female voters the same at 28 per cent. The Christian Democrats and the Liberals similarly had balanced gender ratios in the two most recent parliamentary elections. The gender ratio is female-dominated for the Centre and the Environmental party. Nine per cent of Swedish females and four per cent of males voted for the Centre party in 2010, but the difference declined in the 2014 elections to seven per cent of females and six per cent of males.

TABLE 1

### The number of female parliamentarians by political party after the 2014 elections.

	Number of women/total	Per cent
<b>Vänsterpartiet</b> (The Left party)	12/21	57
<b>Socialdemokraterna</b> (Social Democrats)	52/113	46
<b>Miljöpartiet</b> (Environmental party)	12/25	48
<b>Moderaterna</b> (Conservative party)	44/84	52
<b>Centern</b> (Center party)	9/22	41
<b>Liberalerna</b> (Liberals)	5/19	26
<b>Kristdemokraterna</b> (Christian Democrats)	6/16	38
<b>Sverigedemokraterna</b> (Sweden Democrats)	11/49*	22*

\*Three parliamentarians – two women and one man – have left the SD during the present legislature (2014-2018).

### 3. Responses and counter-strategies

Sweden is an illustrative case of how established political parties try to influence a challenger party by means of a strategy of isolation. The isolation of the SD has been expressed in terms of ignorance followed by confrontation of the party in relation to its most important questions (Meguid 2005, Downs 2001, Jungar 2017). The purpose of this ignorance strategy is to prevent the policy area/question from becoming politically salient/dominant. Until 2006, this strategy was used against the SD. Representatives from the other political parties refused to debate with the SD in public, but several political parties switched to a strategy of confrontation after the 2006 general election when the SD received 2.9 per cent of the vote and was entitled to public party funding. The SD's radical immigration position was challenged by defending Sweden's generous migration policies and multiculturalism at the same time as a distance was taken from the SD on its racism and its extremist neo-Nazi origins. In 2006 Mona Sahlin of the Social Democrats was the first top politician to debate with the SD, and representatives of the other political parties followed. However, when all the mainstream political parties take a strongly diverging position, there is the risk of the issue becoming more salient and the unique position (and main selling point) of the challenger party being strengthened, which actually has been the case for the SD.

An effect of the mainstream political parties taking more liberal immigration positions was that the SD was given the exclusive right to represent positions critical of immigration and migration. The isolationist strategy in terms of a »cordon sanitaire« pursued by the other political parties in terms of not negotiating or cooperating with the SD due to its extreme positions made it difficult to take more restrictive positions on immigration and migration without being criticised – by other political parties and the media – for adapting to the SD (Jungar 2017). That is, the change in strategy was costly as the political parties had invested heavily in isolating the SD as a way of defending fundamental democratic values. The refugee situation 2015 was a turning point as it could be used rhetorically as a necessity to modify the policies, which was the case. The government closed the borders in the

autumn of 2015, permanent residence permits were replaced by temporary ones, and the political parties have since debated and held more restrictive views on immigration, integration, begging and security in the suburbs. The expectation was to stop the flow of voters to the SD, and bring them back to the mainstream political parties. This has so far not occurred and proves that the SD has obtained issue ownership of immigration policies. Moreover, the adjustment by the mainstream political parties may also have contributed to legitimising the SD (Arzheimer and Van der Brug 2007). This is not the case as the SD's isolation has contributed to the party's moderation in terms of ideology and acceptance of extremism within the SD. There has been pressure on the SD to moderate in order to break the isolation and obtain credibility among voters as well as with other political parties. The leadership's efforts to moderate the party has probably even more to do with the electoral arena and with increasing the vote. This is in line with the hypothesis that electoral success and a stronger parliamentary presence explain the moderation of PRR parties (Minkenberg 2001, Meret 2011).

TABLE 2

Gender Ratio in General Elections

Parties		2010	2014
Sweden Democrats	Male:	5	10
	Female:	2	6
Social Democrats	Male:	29	28
	Female:	33	28
Left Party	Male:	6	8
	Female:	5	8
Greens	Male:	8	7
	Female:	10	10
Moderaterna	Male:	35	24
	Female:	27	20
Liberals	Male:	8	7
	Female:	7	6
Centre party	Male:	4	6
	Female:	9	7
Christian Democrats	Male:	5	5
	Female:	5	5

Sources: For 2010 SCB 2010, and for 2014 Valu. 2014 ([https://www.svt.se/svts/article2323667.svt/binary/SVT\\_ValuResultat\\_riksdagsval\\_2014\\_PK\\_0914.pdf](https://www.svt.se/svts/article2323667.svt/binary/SVT_ValuResultat_riksdagsval_2014_PK_0914.pdf))

In Western Europe, and in the Nordic countries especially, the socioeconomic left-right axis has been dominant in structuring party-political conflict; however, the so-called liberal-authoritarian dimension has become more important. The prominence of the latter dimension has grown in connection with the success of Green parties and especially with the emergence of right-wing populist parties. The core issues of the two types of parties – cosmopolitanism and the environment on the one hand and opposition to immigration and defence of the national culture on the other – figure prominently in the liberal-authoritarian dimension. Obviously, gender equality and feminism are at the liberal end of the value-based political dimension, whereas support for traditional family values and opposition to LGBTQ rights correlates with an authoritarian stand. This line of political conflict is predominantly mobilised in relation to the issues of immigration and migration, which are the most salient for PRR parties.

However, there are some cases in which the other political parties have confronted the SD on gender equality in Sweden. The present government defines itself as feminist, and has repeatedly criticised the SD by declaring that the SD opposes everything that has been and still is fundamental for Swedish gender equality. The Minister for Gender Equality, Åsa Regner, stated in an opinion article in 2016 that »the reason Sweden does better than other countries on employment, political power and education is the result of political decisions that have been taken over a long period, and where the women’s movement has been influential« (Regner 2016). She names free abortion, individual taxation, anti-discrimination legislation, policies that further employment irrespective of gender and publicly financed care of children and elderly explicitly as measures taken in this regard. The SD would turn the clock back by restricting abortion rights, proposing family-based taxation and opposing political quotas and policies that support a more equal sharing of family responsibilities. Representatives of the women’s organisation of the Liberal party have, quite similarly, described the SD as a »social conservative and patriarchal party« that will restrict freedom of choice and the empowerment of women (Avci et al. 2016). The main goal of the SD, according to its critics, is to push the women back into the home.

The breakthrough of the Feminist Initiative party (FI) in the 2014 European parliamentary elections could be seen as a reaction to the SD. The feminist party gained its first seat in the European parliamentary assembly at the same time as the SD got their first two mandates in the EP. The Feminist Initiative was founded in 2005 and its policy interests are based on feminism, anti-racism, and intersectionality. The establishment of the party was based primarily on dissatisfaction with the established political parties and their perceived lack of engagement with progressive gender equality and feminist policies. The fact that the former party leader of the Left party (*Vänsterpartiet*) Gudrun Schyman has led the party since 2005 is indicative of its protest-based beginnings. However, in the 2014 EP parliamentary campaign, the racism and anti-feminism of the Sweden Democrats were targets in the electoral campaign of the feminist party. The party has no seats in the Swedish parliament. To conclude, the response to the Sweden Democrats has predominantly been one of contestation.

Overall it can be concluded that the SD as a populist radical right party operating in a political environment where a liberal gender regime is widely supported and conceived of as part of the national political identity, as in Sweden, finds itself in a particular situation. In the introduction this was described in terms of the SD being torn between competing narratives: the traditionalist moral conservatism on the one hand and the »gender exceptionalist« narrative of gender equality as a fundamental part of »Swedish values« on the other (Townsend et al. 2014, Mulinari 2016). Two possible scenarios were formulated: firstly, that such an environment is a fertile ground for a radical right party to present itself as an anti-establishment alternative to the public gender equality policies and state feminist perspectives. Or secondly, that the populist radical right party embraces liberal gender equality as part of how it defines Swedish identity and makes use of this narrative against »foreign« cultures and religions, i.e. against Islam. The analysis in this paper shows that for the SD the first approach dominates. The party presents itself as an alternative to the Swedish gender equality regime and state feminism. Like other European populist right-wing political parties, the SD represents conservative family policies and is in favour of

restrictive abortion rights. The party opposes quotas and other forms of affirmative action aimed at more gender-balanced outcomes in politics, business and education.

Liberal appeals have been formulated solely in respect of anti-Islam appeals, and in these cases in terms of legal protection for homosexuality. The SD has consistently opposed equal marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. Since the SD is not representative of its voters on gender equality, abortion rights and equal marriage, it is surprising that the party has so far not moved in a more liberal direction (Backlund and Jungar 2016). A possible explanation for this incongruence between the SD's party policy and its voters' positions is that gender equality is not a salient question for those voting SD.

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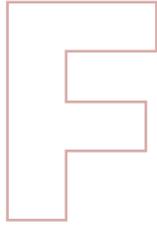


**HUNGARY**

# 4.6 COUNTRY CASE STUDY HUNGARY

BY ANIKÓ FÉLIX

The past decade has brought a remarkable right-wing populist turn in Hungarian politics, just as it has in many other European countries. The new political landscape has inevitably influenced policies on women and gender as well. The negative connotation of feminism in Hungary – partly due to historical reasons, partly due to the lack of a tradition of gender equality – already impedes the implementation of gender equality measures. In addition, right-wing actors recently started to use »gender« as an umbrella term to cover different measures directed towards more equality, branding it altogether with a negative connotation and working towards discrediting these measures.



Following the definition of populism by Mudde and Kaltwasser, who distinguish between material, political and symbolic dimensions of populism, I have identified three relevant political parties in the Hungarian political scene that can be classified as exclusionary populists on the right of the political spectrum (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). Two of them are the ruling coalition, Fidesz and its much smaller coalition partner, the Christian Democrats (KDNP). The third actor is the far right party Jobbik, Movement for a Better Hungary. Fidesz, the Hungarian Civic Alliance, was founded in 1988 and won the national elections for the first time in 1998, forming a coalition with two smaller right-wing parties. In 2010 in 2014 and also in 2018 it again emerged from the elections as the biggest party and, in coalition with KDNP, was able to form a two-thirds majority government each time. The leader of Fidesz has been Viktor Orbán since 2003;<sup>1</sup> he is still Prime Minister in 2018. The KDNP had been in Parliament from 1990 to 1998 and, since 2010 has been part of the Hungarian government as a minor coalition partner of Fidesz. The party has a very small supporter group, but in questions regarding women and gender the KDNP sometimes has a significant voice, as will be shown in this paper. Jobbik was founded in 2003 as a far right party. Its ideology was based on anti-establishment, nationalist, anti-Semitic and anti-Roma attitudes, but in recent years the party has made great efforts to be seen as less radical, presumably owing to some electoral calculation. Jobbik made its electoral breakthrough in 2009 when it entered the European Parliament and in 2010 by entering the Hungarian Parliament.

<sup>1</sup> Viktor Orbán had already been party leader from 1993 to 2000.

This study aims to examine gender and (anti-)feminist policies of these actors in the past 10 years. The first part analyses the most significant initiatives, measures and frames of their women and gender policies, while the second part reviews women's participation on both the supply and the demand sides of the right-wing populist parties dealt with in this study. It will therefore not only look into the role of women within and women's support for the party, but also into feminist counter-measures to these parties' policies. This inquiry seeks to give an overview and possibly a better understanding of both the role of gender in the parties' policies and the role of women in (and support for) the party and in opposition to it.

### 1. Objectives on Women's and Gender Politics

The new Hungarian constitution, which was adopted in 2011 and came into force in 2012, guarantees the equality of men and women. Nevertheless, the ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition follows this norm in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, it is strongly against feminism and gender at the rhetorical level. Though here it is important to note that the words »gender« and »feminism« are primarily used by the ruling coalition as an expression of their critiques of the (opposing) leftist and liberal parties and towards the EU. Nonetheless, the government lived up to its rhetoric when it disbanded the Gender Equality Department<sup>2</sup> and merged it into the Equal Opportunities Major Department in 2010. Two years later this department was also closed down (Juhász 2012). Since 2010, the tripartite Gender Equality Council<sup>3</sup> has not been reconvened (Fodor 2013) and the Hungarian National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which was adopted by the leftist government before the 2010 elections, remained in force, though merely on paper (Juhász 2012). These measures practically dismantled the previously built institutional background of governmental work towards gender equality, although, on the other hand, the ruling parties have a strong focus

<sup>2</sup> The Department was initiated by the leftist government under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in order to achieve gender equality in society.

<sup>3</sup> The council was a consultative body founded by the leftist government in 2009 to involve women NGOs and gender experts in the legislative work in order to help gender mainstreaming.

on families, mothers and potential mothers (Fidesz 2010) and in this regard the government has had some essentially pro-women initiatives.

The consequence of this ambiguity is that even if some measures are actually advancing gender equality, they are still labelled completely differently. Fidesz-KDNP defined their politics as »family mainstreaming« instead of »gender mainstreaming« (Juhász 2012). The meaning of family mainstreaming was illustrated well when Orbán named the family as one of the five basic values at the launch of the election manifesto of *Fidesz* in 2010 (Origo 2010).<sup>4</sup> Before the election in 2014, he also highlighted the importance of families when he described a »magic triangle« of work, performance and family that must be supported (Félix 2015). But the meaning of family was also officially defined in the new constitution in an exclusive way, as a union between man and woman. It also states that family ties are based on marriage, which therefore excludes same-sex spouses as well as other forms of cohabiting families (Juhász 2012).

#### Not »Gender« but »Family Mainstreaming«

On the policy level the family-friendliness of the government focused almost only on increasing birth rates. In the programme of Fidesz issued in 2010, merely one of the very few sentences dedicated to women was concerned with putting an end to gender discrimination in the labour market. And even this sentence focused entirely on mothers. The party promised to support the return of mothers to work with flexible and family-friendly workplaces, part-time jobs, atypical forms of work and with more nurseries and kindergartens (Fidesz 2010). One of the first measures of the government was the restoration of three-year parental leave that the leftist-liberal government reduced to two years and they also implemented the GYED (child-care benefit) to re-integrate mothers better into the labour market (Kováts 2016).

The other goal accomplished was the country-wide expansion of kindergartens, with further investments promised for the next election in 2018 (Szikra 2017). It is important to mention that during the present era many more kindergartens have been established than

by the previous socialist and liberal governments. Another measure implemented shortly after the 2010 elections was the introduction of a new pension law which allows women to retire after 40 years of work. Although this seems to acknowledge the more difficult position of women in the labour market, this was never explicitly stated by the government. Instead, the introduction of the law was accompanied by the argument that retired women are needed as grandmothers to take care of the children while their parents are working. It was also accompanied with rather sexist arguments, such as the statement that the reason behind the law was that »we like women more« (Füstös 2010).

The government also applies demographic criteria to economic decisions such as low taxes to support the formation of more families. However, the tax regulation favours middle- or upper-class families rather than the less well-off ones, which means that in its policies the government indirectly supports the reproduction of middle- or upper-class families more (Szikra 2017). Building on the »official« definition, the ruling coalition aims to promote families that are compatible with this definition rather than to base its support on individual rights. The government has also declared 2018 the »Year of Families« and set up the Family Research Institute<sup>5</sup> at the end of 2017. This institute will likely base its activity on the same definition (Magyar Közlöny 2017:142). However, the government in a rather symbolic move to signal support for single-parent families recently announced that it will also fund a centre for the Egyedülálló Szülők Klubja Alapítvány (Single Parents Club Foundation) to help single parents (MTI 2017).

Similarly to Fidesz, according to Jobbik's 2010 election manifesto (and this part was almost identical in the 2014 election programme), equality measures should be focused almost exclusively on mothers. The party promised to support family-friendly workplaces and help mothers return to the labour market by providing part-time jobs and more childcare institutions. Furthermore, Jobbik stated in its programme that it

<sup>4</sup> The other four values that Orbán mentioned were the work, home, health and order.

<sup>5</sup> The Institute will aim to better understand the demographical and social effects of the governmental decisions and to survey the demographical state of the Hungarians in and outside of the Hungarian borders (Magyar Közlöny 2017:142).

would stand up for equality between men and women and opposes unequal pay (Jobbik 2010). In 2014, the party programme even included a separate chapter about policies on women, stating: »men and women are equal humans, but this does not mean similarity« (Jobbik 2014: 38; translated by A.F.). According to its conception there is no biological determinism that women have to work only in the household, yet it still refers to motherhood as the most beautiful job (Jobbik 2014).

Two married party members, Előd Novák<sup>6</sup> and Dóra Dúró, illustrated another ambiguity of the party's policies for years. Novák was among the most racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic voices in and outside Parliament. So a somewhat patriarchal behaviour as father and husband was to be expected. But Novák and Dúró portrayed themselves as a couple who share household duties and childcare equally. In conclusion, to some extent gender equality norms have not been completely neglected by the party as a whole. However, even if some statements and acts of Jobbik looked more equality-oriented than those of Fidesz-KDNP, the party clearly refused to call it gender equality. Dúró, who is mostly responsible for gender topics in the party, openly rejects anything that has connection with »gender« or »forced equality« in her rhetoric. This is also the case with the implementation of quota of any kind in politics. Along party lines, she argues that it is natural that more men are involved in politics because the profession fits their gender better (Dúró 2012). However, on the question of quotas differing opinions were voiced in the party. In 2011, a former Jobbik lawmaker, Tamás Gaudi Nagy, tabled in an amendment to the new election bill together with an MP of the Green Party (LMP) in order to double the number of women in Parliament although the entire party disagreed with him (Dúró 2013).

Similarly to Fidesz-KDNP, Jobbik also defines family as partnership between a man and a woman and their children (Jobbik 2010). Jobbik agreed with the implementation of the Family Protection Act, though it proposed including cohabiting heterosexual partner-

ships in the definition (Sneider et al. 2011). It also supported the family tax allowance, but unlike Fidesz-KDNP wanted to include families with lower incomes as well. This is remarkable considering the tradition of racism against Roma that Jobbik has stood for previously and was combined and transported through gender stereotypes, concluded in a gendered racism for years. For example, Jobbik constantly worried about the »overpopulation« of Roma, defined it as one of the most important »problems« connected to the demographic decline (Jobbik 2010). It promised to stop this »tendency to have children for benefits«, which was an explicit message directed to the Roma community. Measures brought forth by the party to reach this goal have been not giving any allowance to mothers younger than eighteen years old as well as giving the family allowance in cash only until the third child, and then in tax credits. The party aimed to stop the alleged »tendency to give birth for money« which occurs more among Roma – according to Jobbik (Jobbik 2014). This explicitly racist tone against Roma has decreased recently in the party's communications in an effort to move closer to the political mainstream. However, its rhetoric against migrants remained as radical as before or has become even stronger.

Despite minor differences, all right-wing populist parties analysed have a rather strong »pro-life« position. They consider the demographic decline to be one of the most serious problems of the Hungarian state. In 2011, the Hungarian Secretary of State for Family and Youth, Miklós Soltész, KDNP, introduced an anti-abortion billboard campaign as part of a project about work-life balance. Paradoxically, this was funded by the EU *PROGRESS* programme, which seeks to support employment and social solidarity (Grzebalska and Pető 2016). The campaign showed a foetus in an advanced age on the billboard addressing the mother with the following: »I understand that you are not yet ready for me, but give me up to the adoption agency, LET ME LIVE!« The clear position of the governing parties was illustrated well by the fact that by using their two-thirds majority in Parliament, they added the protection of the fundamental human right to life from the moment of conception to the General Principles Guiding Hungary's Constitution. Since then no changes to the abortion law have been made by the govern-

<sup>6</sup> Előd Novák was forced to quit the leadership of Jobbik in 2016 by the leader of the party. After that he resigned as an MP. At the beginning of December 2017, he openly criticised the leadership of Jobbik for the mainstream image and for changing its opinions on some issues.

ment. So this addition in the constitution is rather a symbolic gesture towards the more conservative electorate. Jobbik issued the abortion topic already in its founding declaration and has kept it on its agenda since then. Before Jobbik decided to support ratification of the Istanbul Convention<sup>7</sup> at the end of 2016, it rejected it, arguing that it »does not deal with the most frequent and brutal form of domestic violence, and that is abortion« (Dúró 2015).

### LGBTI\*

Although homophobia has somewhat declined in Hungarian society in recent years, homosexuals are still not an accepted group in society (Závecz Research 2016). The respective parties' position on LGBTI\* rights on the other hand are more varied. In 2009, when Ilona Ékes, a former Fidesz member of Parliament, stated that homosexuality was an illness that needs to be cured (MTI 2009), the party clarified that this was her own opinion, not the official party line. Just three years later, in 2012, some Fidesz MPs, including the mayor of Budapest, István Tarlós, proposed an amendment to relocate the Budapest Pride March to the outskirts of the city. At the legislative level, the constitution excludes sexual orientation from the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination (Országgyűlés Hivatala 2011).

Apart from the legislation, there are other instances in which the government has acted in a homophobic way. In 2015, on the day after the International Day Against Homophobia, Viktor Orbán was asked by a journalist what message he wanted to send to homosexuals and homophobes and what the government will do for non-heterosexual couples. The prime minister answered that Hungary was based on traditional values and it has been a tolerant country. He welcomed the Hungarian homosexual community for not behaving provocatively, adding that »if they would start to do so or we [the government, A.F.] would start to introduce stricter legislation, this peaceful coexistence will be ended« (Orbán 2015). The very controversial annual conference of the World Congress of

Families<sup>8</sup> took place in Hungary in 2017, where – among radical politicians from around the world – representatives of the Hungarian government took part and even provided financial and organisational support for the meeting (Budapest Family Summit 2017). Zoltán Balog, Minister for Human Capacities, commented on the role of the government that the cabinet does not participate in anything that is homophobic or hate-oriented (Balog 2017a).

While many Western European far right parties use »the protection of gay rights« to express their anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant stances, Jobbik seems to have stuck to a homophobic position from the beginning until the time when this paper was written. Jobbik also submitted a proposal to the General Assembly of Budapest in 2012 to make »gay propaganda« punishable, by which the party would protect the »public moral and the young generations« (Politics 2012). But some local Jobbik leaders went even further: two mayors banned »LGBTI propaganda« in their towns. At Ásotthalom the mayor, vice-president of the party, banned »homosexuality« together with prohibition on mosque building, burka wearing and the call to prayer. The party has expressed its homophobia year-by-year in connection with Gay Pride marches. Although on some topics the party started to use less radical rhetoric, this is only true to a certain extent with regard to homophobia. One illustration for this is that party leader of Jobbik, Gábor Vona, when he was confronted with the local initiative of the mayor of Ásotthalom, commented that he does not agree, but in a »people's party different opinions are not problematic« (Vona 2016). In 2016, Dóra Dúró said that moving the party to the political mainstream means that »we give up our basic values«, defining Gay Pride as something that is »against life and society« (Dúró 2016).

### Framing the (Gendered) Enemy

Apart from some marginal manifestations, anti-gender-related topics were not at the centre of the Hungarian right-wing parties' rhetoric for years. The first appearance of so-called »gender ideology« was

<sup>7</sup> The Istanbul Convention is a Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

<sup>8</sup> The World Congress of Families is an American Christian organisation with a strongly homophobic and anti-abortion agenda promoting the concept of the »natural family«. The Congress also has direct connections with the Russian government of which some members attended the Summit in Budapest in 2017 (Tait 2017).

in 2008 in a controversy surrounding a textbook for secondary schools about the gendered history of Hungary that some right-wing politicians opposed (Félix 2015). In the following years, the anti-gender discourse emerged around issues like the Estrela and Lunacek reports<sup>9</sup>, but it did not gain traction until 2017, when the communication of the entire government about the »gender« question changed entirely. As a symbolic dimension of populism, »feminists« and »gender ideologists« have been characterised by the government as aliens who threaten the people and the nation. The trigger act was the introduction of Gender Studies at the Eötvös Lóránd Science University (ELTE) in the beginning of 2017 that the KDNP said should be abolished immediately.<sup>10</sup> The party sent an open letter to the leadership of ELTE stating amongst other things that only the biological sexes exist (KDNP 2017a). Furthermore, the government stated that Family Studies would be launched as a counter-programme at another university. The Minister for Human Capacities said that the government rejects theories about gender and would seek to understand social roles instead (Balog 2017b). For the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention the government also played the gender card. In 2017, after Fidesz-KDNP announced the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (Fidesz 2017b) they stepped back and began to argue that the convention is not about domestic violence, but gender ideology and the politics behind it; a »Trojan horse« of the gender ideologists that cannot be accepted (SZP 2017).

In 2017 a massive campaign against George Soros was launched by the right-wing government that is also fuelled by anti-gender rhetoric. According to his opponents, Soros is planning to resettle migrants to Hungary and his secret plan to do so is implemented by the bureaucrats of Brussels (Orbán 2017). Apart from its anti-Semitic connotation<sup>11</sup>, the use of Soros

<sup>9</sup> The Estrela report was written by Edite Estrela in 2013 on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Union. The Lunacek report of the European Parliament initiated by Ulrike Lunacek aimed to foster steps against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Gender studies at the ELTE is the second gender studies degree course in Hungary and started in the autumn semester in 2017; the first one was established in the Central European University (CEU).

<sup>11</sup> George Soros is an American-Hungarian multimillionaire of Jewish origin, the target of many conspiracy theories and frequently used as a stereotypical Jew who wants to dominate the world.

as an enemy number 1 includes the framing of gender issues in at least two ways. Soros founded the Central European University (CEU) that was also targeted recently by the government, where gender studies was first established as a degree course at a university in Hungary. Secondly, the other main target of the propaganda in recent years is the »Soros-funded and financed« NGOs, including women's organisations. Therefore, gender as »symbolic glue« is used to unite different issues attributed to the progressive agenda under one term (Grzebalska et al. 2017). The government successfully frames these topics under the term »gender« and thereby owns its further framing.

This is less true of Jobbik, which wants to use every opportunity to be in opposition to the government. As a consequence, although Soros symbolises »deviant culture« according to the party, it cannot be as outspoken as the government in this regard (e.g. Szávay 2017). So the party had to be against the government's standpoint on the legitimacy of the CEU, which is why it supported the control of Lex CEU – the amendments to the Higher Education Act obviously directly targeting the CEU – by the Constitutional Court. The argument stated that although they do not support Soros, they cannot support the dictatorship built in Hungary by Fidesz either.

Jobbik shared the government's opinion that there is some lobby interest behind Gender Studies, but its voice was less strident during the debate (e.g. Vona 2017). This ambivalent position of the party was also a consequence of its changing rhetoric, with which it seeks to position itself as a mainstream party against Fidesz, where the latter became more radical in these questions than before.

Both parties use the »freedom fighter« rhetoric against the »dictates« of the EU and for preserving the sovereignty of the country. Pető and Grzebalska described it as using the »language of security« (Grzebalska and Pető 2016). In 2017, the main theme of this security language has been the »migrant question«. Accordingly, the government protects the country; especially Hungarian women, who are supposedly endangered most by male migrants. This is the symbolic dimension of populism, with the male migrant symbolically and literally described as the »rapist of the

nation«, while the female migrant is portrayed as the parasite who reproduces the racialised other (Mulinari and Neergaard 2017). For the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention, apart from the gender card another typical argumentation was that the »real dangers are the migrants« (Fidesz 2017a). Jobbik also uses migrants as racialised others, and replaced its anti-Roma rhetoric with anti-immigrant discourse simultaneously in its national-level politics. In the case of Jobbik the same accusation patterns appear against migrants that were formerly used against Roma, like the threat of »overpopulation« or »the utilisation of social benefits«.

## 2. Women and Populist Right-Wing Parties

Women have extremely low political representation in Hungarian politics and this is the case for every party in the Parliament (OCHR 2016). Furthermore, right-wing parties have even lower scores in this regard. With only 10 women among the 176 candidates, Fidesz had the lowest number of female candidates in the 2010 elections. From 2010, there was only one woman in the Fidesz-KDNP government, while in 2017 there is not one female minister. The percentage of women in the Fidesz parliamentary group between 2010 and 2014 was 8.8 per cent and 5.4 per cent in the KDNP parliamentary party in 2010 – compared to an overall average of 9.1 per cent in the Hungarian Parliament. After the 2014 national elections the figure for Fidesz decreased to 6.8 per cent, for the KDNP the percentage was 6.2 per cent – while the overall average slightly increased to 9.5 per cent. Notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that in 2014 only Fidesz-KDNP and Jobbik sent female politicians to the European Parliament, while none of the other parties did.

### Women in Leading Positions

One prominent female politician active in Fidesz for many years is Ildikó Pelczné Gáll. She was the vice president of the National Assembly and, from 2014, the only Hungarian vice president of the European Parliament for years. In 2017, she was elected a member of the European Court of Auditors. Fidesz-KDNP delegated Lívia Járóka to replace her as vice president, who became the first Roma vice president in the history of the European Parliament (Járóka 2017). In several instances, the actions of Pelczné were not in line

with the positions of her party, as in 2015 when she did not agree with the official Fidesz policy on (non-) ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Her opinions are, however, in line with the party on questions concerning refugees. For example, she voted against the report on the situation of female refugees and asylum-seekers in the EU in the European Parliament (Kocsis 2015). Another significant female Fidesz politician is Katalin Novák, State Secretary for Family, Youth and International Affairs at the Ministry of Human Capacities. In late 2017 she was elected one of the vice presidents of Fidesz, replacing Pelczné Gáll, and she was very active during the election campaign in 2018. In most of her statements and behaviour, she consistently supports the governing parties' standpoints, and is mostly responsible for women's issues. In this context, she stated for example that more women should be in decision-making positions and that women's politics is the common responsibility of men and women (Novák 2016). These two women are also representatives of newly-founded women's organisations at the national level. These organisations formulate women's issues in line with the government's policy (Fidesz 2016).

When Jobbik was founded in 1999, women were not in leading positions for over a decade. However, when the party became popular nationwide, a few women appeared at the top of the hierarchy, although they remained few in number. In 2010, 14 out of the 176 individual candidates were female, and since the elections three women have been part of the Jobbik parliamentary party of 47 MPs, a percentage of 6.4 and, again, less than average (Ilonszki – Kurtán, 2011:110). The party's most prominent female MP, Dóra Dúró, started her political career at the national level as spokesperson for the party. Although her husband Előd Novák was expelled from Jobbik by party leader Vona in 2016, his wife is still active in the party with a relative stable position. An analysis of the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik MPs showed that there was a clear distinction between male and female MPs on the discussion about Roma. Whereas female MPs were talking more about »socialisation of gypsies« and about their education, male members put more of a focus on topics related to »gypsy crime« (Félix-Fokasz-Tóth 2014). Dóra Dúró represents the female face

of the party. She appears in women's magazines, reaching out not only to the party voters but beyond, trying to gather more female supporters (Dúró 2017). Krisztina Morvai had a significantly different profile. Although she was never a party member, she was the Jobbik candidate in the presidential election in 2009 and in 2014 as head of list for the elections to the European Parliament election. Since she entered the EP, she has been one of the most outspoken and most radical Eurosceptic voices. Meanwhile, she is the only Hungarian member of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the European Parliament. Her radicalism was beneficial for the party before, but in 2017, when Jobbik started working towards a less radical profile, her activity seems to have become less convenient for the party<sup>12</sup>. As a result of her conflicts with the party at the end of 2017 Morvai declared that she will not continue her political career after 2019 when her mandate in the European Parliament expires. In the interim period she will continue as an independent member of the EP (Morvai 2017b). However, Morvai is not the only woman in Jobbik who is less welcomed by the party leadership today. Another female MP who belongs to the more radical wing of the party, Hegedűs Lorántné, was also asked not to run for party leadership in 2016. Therefore, at the time when this paper was written, there was no woman in the Jobbik leadership.

As for the motivation of these women to the get involved in right-wing populist and far right parties, every story seems to be different, although in the case of Jobbik two patterns occur that are familiar from research on gender and the far right. One common way of involvement is through male relatives. This is partly true for Hegedűs Lorántné, whose husband is a prominent leading figure in the far right-scene, was also an MP of the previous far right party, the Hungarian Right and Justice Party, MIÉP. The husband of Dóra Dúró was also a prominent Jobbik MP for years, but she commenced her career earlier and independently. Both were party members from the very early stages, which is why they were able to build their careers on the basis of their membership. Another common way

<sup>12</sup> In 2016 a conflict arose between Morvai and the party leadership after she openly criticised Vona for his leadership style being non-democratic (Morvai 2016).

of joining is where women connect their involvement to »dramatic turns« in their life (Blee 1996). This was the case with Krisztina Morvai, whose radicalisation started after a demonstration against the prime minister of the centre-left coalition was violently suppressed in 2006. As she explained later on, this experience resulted in her finding her right place in the »national radical scene« (Félix 2010). In the case of women in Fidesz-KDNP the reason for involvement tends more to be due to identification with conservative values and belief in the traditional family on the one hand. On the other, the women in power today have a long history and successful careers in the party. Back then, when they joined Fidesz, the party used less anti-gender rhetoric and fewer anti-gender measures.

#### Voting Behaviour and Motivation

The only party in Hungary in which men are over-represented among supporters is Jobbik, fitting a pattern of many other far right parties in Europe (Krekó and Kovács 2017). In 2010, the ratio of women among Jobbik supporters was 35 per cent. This share only increased slightly, by three per cent in 2015. The Green Party LMP had the largest share of women supporters in 2010 with 68 per cent, while the Socialist Party<sup>13</sup> and Fidesz-KDNP both scored in the middle ground with 59 and 57 per cent of women supporters respectively (→ Table 1).

In the 2010 general election, Jobbik had the youngest voter group, with an average age of 38, while the Socialist Party was backed mainly by older people, with an average voter age of 55. In 2017, Fidesz went through some significant changes in its supporter group. The party lost support among higher-educated groups and those who live in the capital, Budapest (Integrity Lab 2017). However, Fidesz is still the most strongly supported party according to every poll, commanding about 27 per cent of the votes in September 2017 (Závecz Research 2017).

Most Jobbik supporters are from the middle class, well educated with a higher social status (Bernát et al. 2013). However, the party's supporter group has also undergone some changes in recent years. The gender

<sup>13</sup> In 2014 the Socialist party formed an election coalition with other leftist parties, that is why they were counted together in 2015.

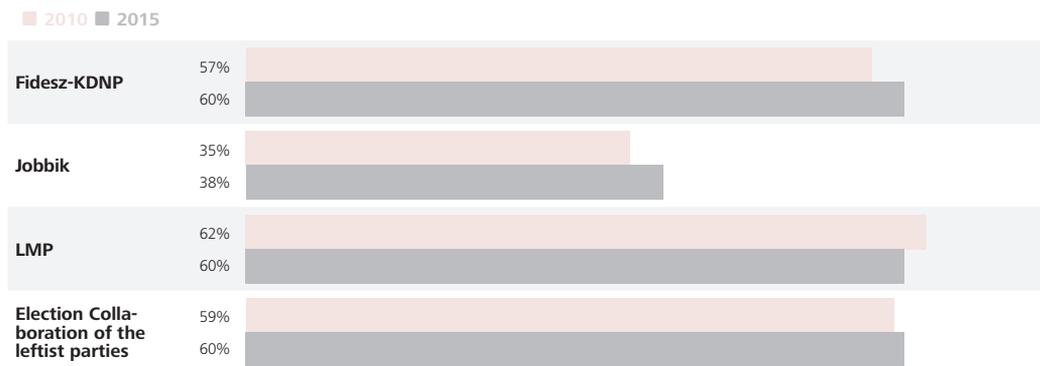
gap decreased from April to August 2017 from nine per cent to six per cent, which can be explained by a mainstream party profile that might allow the party to reach out to new (female) voters, most probably from the left-wing or liberal parties. Furthermore, its youth profile also went through some consolidation: Jobbik's popularity decreased in the youngest, but increased among older supporter groups. Furthermore, it was able to gain much more support from the capital than before (Závecz Research 2017).

Looking at the criteria for success and the motivation of Fidesz voters, it appears that one strong common ground is rejection of the leftist parties (Republikon 2015). In the case of Jobbik anti-establishment and non-conformist attitudes were seen as the strongest character of the party, which decreased in the past year, as did anti-Roma attitudes (Kovács and Krekó 2017). A recent poll revealed that 34 per cent of Jobbik voters are strongly nationalist, 26 per cent support order and stability, but there are also 11 per cent with liberal views and 10 per cent conservatives. The relatively high percentage of liberals is probably an effect that can be attributed to the party's new image campaign. Among Fidesz voters, 20 per cent support order and stability and 17 per cent are strongly nationalist, while the largest group are the conservatives with 26 per cent (Republikon 2017a). Another recent poll revealed that in 2017 there is no significant difference in the self-identification of Jobbik and Fidesz supporters if they have to place themselves in the left-right scale, although Fidesz supporters are slightly more right-wing (Republikon 2017b). Therefore, it can easily happen that the supporters will switch between the two parties. The tendency of the changing supporter profile continued with both parties until April 2018, when the next elections were held in Hungary. In this process Jobbik continued to lose the support of the more radical voters and gain from other parties like Fidesz as well as leftist parties, while Fidesz tried to attract the supporters Jobbik left behind with its less radical profile.

According to most opinion polls, there is no significant difference between women and men in the acceptance of authoritarianism, pro-order attitudes or populism (Montgomery 2015). As a result, women and men are drawn equally to populist parties. However,

other surveys proved that women are more »right-wing orientated« in values than men (Krekó and Kovács 2017). In the case of Fidesz-KDNP, the measures that help mothers and families can have a significant impact on women, whose lives are supported by these initiatives. In the case of Jobbik the situation is more complex. Despite the party being labelled a men's party, Jobbik was surrounded by an extensive subculture that offered opportunities to groups that had no previous opportunity to make themselves heard. Thus, it also offered new opportunities for certain groups of women as well. Quantitative research conducted in 2012 on the 15-29 age group found that young males and females supporting Jobbik have very similar profiles with just minor differences. Two findings were just relevant for young women though. First, those girls who feel more adult are more likely to support Jobbik, which can be interpreted in a way that some sub-group of young women saw the far right as a field of possibility where they can behave as adult (Félix and Gregor 2014). The second included statements about being proud of the nation but without adding exclusive, chauvinistic arguments. This attitude was termed »positive nationalism«. »Positively nationalist« women are less likely to vote for Jobbik and more likely to support Fidesz.

In qualitative research about women on the far right three types of women who joined the far right subculture around Jobbik in recent years were identified (Félix 2017). These women were usually not members of the women's division of Jobbik and not involved in the official party politics. The first type is the »Culture keeper«, whose activity was based on the growing consumer ethnocentrism and some even had rather impressive careers as businesswomen in the subculture. The second type is the »Fighter«, who joined the far right military organisations. Despite their masculine identity, women can join these organisations and thereby feel treated as equals in the movement. The third type was termed »Spiritual women«. These women use the far right ideology and mix it with spiritualism to create a feeling of female superiority (Félix 2017). All three types had important roles in spreading the propaganda and in recruiting new female members and voters. These results show that, paradoxically, the far right party, with its subculture-like

**TABLE 1** Ratio of woman supporters in 2010 and in 2015


Sources: According to Kovács and Krekó 2017 based on ESS survey

structure, offered more room for identification and engagement for women than the established right-wing parties, even though women make up a rather small supporter group. As Jobbik aims to be seen as less radical in 2017, this subculture becomes less vivid and less close to the party. This might also result in a change of the women supporting the party but its effect cannot be measured yet.

### 3. Counter-Movements and Strategies

Feminist social movements have been protesting against the anti-abortion campaign and there are ongoing protests for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, but their impact is generally low. The relative weakness of feminist organisations in Hungary, though, has several causes. Firstly, the limited success in mobilisation is connected to the generally weak civil society in Hungary. The recent campaign of the government against NGOs labelling them »enemies« does not strengthen civil society either. Furthermore, the negative connotation of feminism is partly caused by its affiliation with communism, which is also combined with the recent anti-gender mobilisation. Simultaneously, a number of conservative women's organisations and other NGOs that focus on the family and discuss the gender questions in conformity with the current official course are growing with the support of the government (Pető 2017).

Many politicians of the leftist and liberal parties appear from time to time in the protests against domestic violence or make their voice heard on specific

issues. Most of the time these actions are reactions to the measures and/or rhetoric of the ruling parties. The loudest and most visible acts are mostly against domestic violence and sexism. In 2013, when it turned out that an ex-Fidesz MP had beaten up his wife, every leftist and liberal party had a statement or action to protest against domestic violence. For instance, female MPs of the small leftist party, Democratic Coalition, appeared in the Parliament with monocles which aimed to be the metaphors of domestic violence, two small liberal parties (Együtt and PM) gave prizes to the most »brutish and jerk« politicians. The main prize went to the MP who had beaten up his wife (Nagy 2013). Moreover, the leftist and liberal parties often stand together with common statements in favour of ratifying the Istanbul Convention.

Another focal point of protest was the sexist statements of some right-wing politicians in Parliament. One of the most effective reactions came from Bernadett Szél, co-chair of the LMP, female prime minister candidate for the upcoming 2018 elections (LMP 2017). She openly talked about sexism in Parliament and afterwards in many other forums as well as about the positive effects the quota system has in the party (e.g. Szél 2016). Furthermore, the LMP has some recommendations that are not only reactions to right-wing parties, but individual initiatives for gender equality, for instance the proposal to reduce the pay gap between men and women (Országgyűlés Hivatala 2015). Therefore it can be argued that the clearest stance against the right-wing parties' anti-feminist

rhetoric is taken by the LMP. This probably links to the fact that the LMP is not seen in the tradition of the previous communist regime and its state feminist politics as is the Socialist Party.

A significant problem is that most of the politicians who stand up for gender equality are women. Finally, sometimes similar anti-women statements can be heard from the so-called progressive side. The most recent example came from the leader of the Socialist Party, who compared the former male prime minister candidate of the Socialist Party with the female candidate of the LMP, stating that the Socialist Party ex-candidate had some advantages: he was from the countryside, he led his town successfully, and moreover, he was tall (Molnár 2017). This argumentation which compares the two candidates not by their qualification or skills, but base on their sizes has some sexist connotation if we consider that the LMP candidate was the only woman among the prime minister candidates.

In recent years, almost every rhetorical and legislative act of the ruling right-wing populist Fidesz-KDNP government has been defined by the idea that women's politics equates with family politics and womanhood with motherhood. However, in this regard the government had some pro-women measures. Jobbik, like Fidesz-KDNP, also rejects labels like progressive or feminist, yet some of its initiatives could be defined as such. So the assumption »the more radical, the greater anti-feminist« does not apply here. Moreover, since Jobbik has made great efforts to be seen as less radical and at the same time positions itself in opposition with the government, it could not position itself as clearly on the recently emerged »gender issues« as the government. Nevertheless, in some other regards, such as LGBTI\* rights, it remains almost as radical as it used to be.

In the case of both parties, the number of female politicians in leading positions is extremely low. Nevertheless, it is important to note that those who are in the leadership have significant roles in the parties' politics and are not only »decoration«. They are mainly responsible for policies on women and through them it can be promoted more successfully to women voters. These female leaders mostly follow the directions of the parties' agendas, but sometimes they argue with their own party, for instance on the legislation of do-

mestic violence. These acts can make them appear even more independent and credible for women voters.

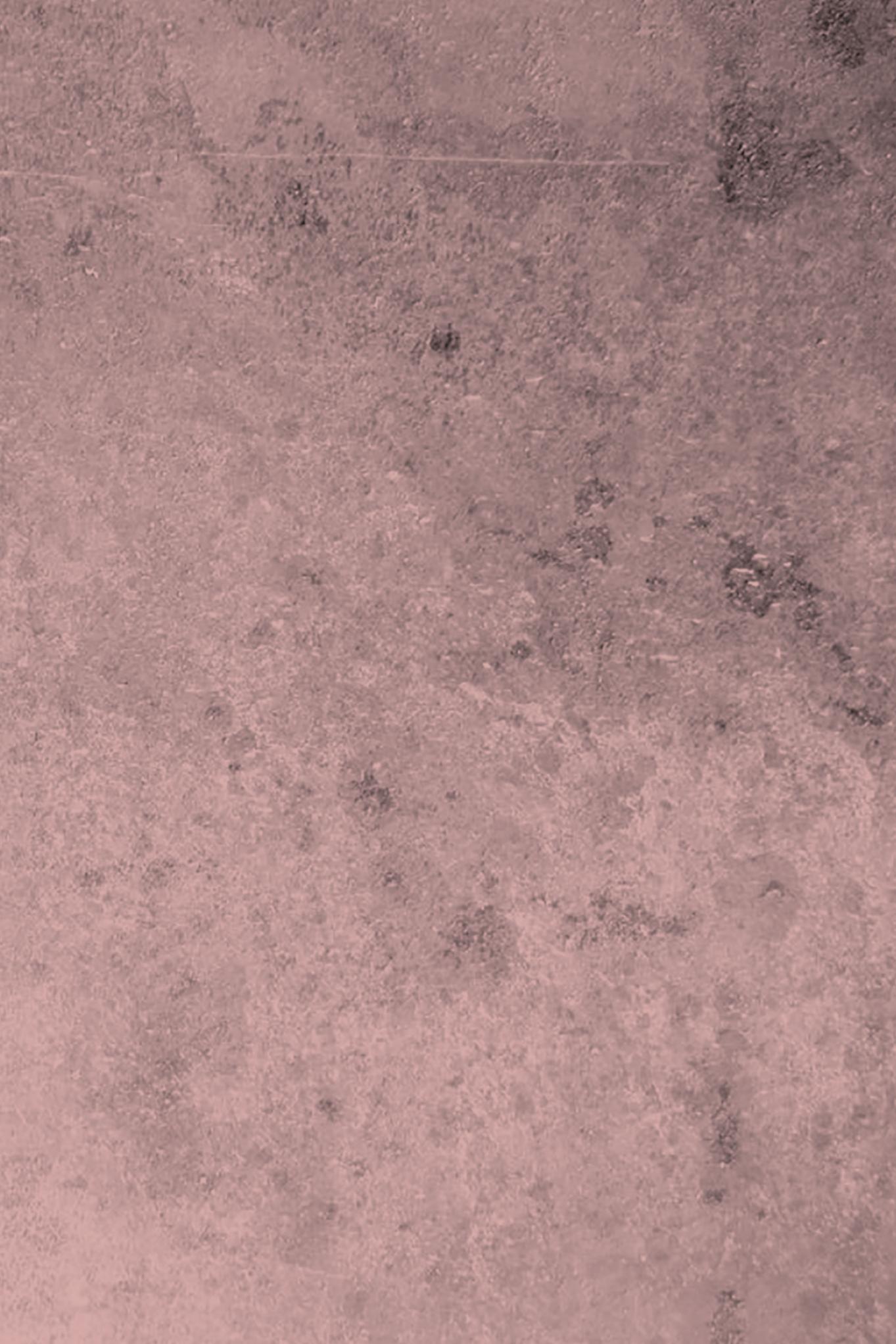
Notwithstanding, it must also be taken into account that votes are not only based on rational calculations, but are also motivated by other factors, such as rejection of leftist parties or the same exclusionist attitudes as men. Therefore, women might end up voting for a party that uses sexist rhetoric. The limited success of the feminist movements and counter-strategies of the left-wing parties are partly due to the bad connotation of being leftist and feminist in Hungary. This basically means rejection of the term »feminism«, which most people associate with leftist-liberal parties or even Communism, even if they agree with some of the measures that feminists represent. A further problem is that the progressive parties and feminist movements do not have a coherent agenda on women's policies, but they mostly just react to the steps of the rightist parties. This has become even more of a problem recently since the government propaganda started to target »gender« as one of the top enemies.



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5



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