Pontifícia Universidade Católica
do Rio de Janeiro

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Gender Social Movements and Transnational Feminist Networks Resistance in the Authoritarian/Conservative Turn – a Case Study of Hungary

Dissertação de Mestrado

Dissertation presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais of PUC-Rio in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Mestre em Relações Internacionais.

Advisor: Prof. Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann

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Abstract

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In the authoritarian/conservative turn, gender is in the core of both this new convergence of the Right – working as more than a 'symbolic glue'- and also in the resistance to this democratic dismantling. Hence, this research analyzes how Gender Social Movements and Transnational Feminist Networks (TFN) are resisting in this authoritarian/conservative turn, focusing on the Hungarian case study. Drawing on the concept of 'intersectional solidarity', this research argues that coalitions among gender grassroot groups and TFNs are an important form of resistance. Those coalitions enable gender movements survival in extreme cases of authoritarian/conservative governments, as Orbán´s regime, and develop transformative praxis through differences.

Keywords

International Relations; Social movements; Transnational Feminist Networks (TFN); Intersectional Solidarity; Hungary.

Resumo

Cruz, Amanda Mattos Souza; Hoffmann, Andrea Ribeiro (Orientadora). **Resistência de Movimentos Sociais de Gênero e de Redes Transnacionais Feministas na virada autoritária/conservadora – Um estudo de caso da Hungria**. Rio de Janeiro, 2023. 134p. Dissertação de Mestrado – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Na virada autoritária/conservadora, o gênero está no cerne tanto dessa nova convergência da direita – funcionando como mais do que uma 'cola simbólica' – quanto na resistência a esse desmonte democrático. Assim, esta pesquisa analisa como os Movimentos Sociais de Gênero e as Redes Feministas Transnacionais estão resistindo a essa virada autoritária/conservadora, com foco no estudo de caso húngaro. Através do conceito de 'solidariedade interseccional', esta tese argumenta que coalizões entre grupos populares de gênero e Redes Feministas Transnacionais são uma importante forma de resistência, permitindo a sobrevivência de movimentos de gênero em casos extremos de governo autoritário/conservador, como o regime de Orbán, e, adicionalmente, desenvolver coalizões transformadoras por meio das diferenças.

Palavras-chave

Relações Internacionais; Movimentos Sociais; Redes Transnacionais Feministas (RTF); Solidariedade Interseccional; Hungria.

Contents

1
Introduction

The authoritarian/conservative turn is not an isolated phenomenon, it is rather being perceived in multiple places in the world. The literature points to a series of elements to explain its roots, including common systemic structures and local particularities, which may vary from which actors articulate in a common cause to how radicalized the convergence may be. On the one hand, the New Right groups share similarities notwithstanding their location, which could lead to an understanding of a transnational phenomenon. On the other hand, there are many divergences between regions and leaderships, which show the paramount importance of analyzing the context (Mudde, 2019; Renton, 2019; Abrahamsen et al, 2020).

The connection of this authoritarian/conservative turn with the dismantling of democracy can be seen in Hungary. Since 2010 when Orbán became the Prime Minister and his party, FIDESZ, gained the super-majority (two-thirds) of the Parliament, the dismantling of the democratic institutions started, with threats to the independence of the judiciary, free media, and free and inclusive space for civic society. Part of the literature argues that the country is under a unique regime -neither an autocracy nor a democracy-; the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán himself declared, in 2014, that Hungary was an "Illiberal state"[1]-opposed to Western liberal ideologies. Disregarding the type of regime, what is most alarming in Hungary is that Orbán´s government has developed more and more authoritarian and conservative characteristics. (Scheppele, 2018; Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018)

Additionally, in this authoritarian/conservative turn, gender plays a central role in connecting different actors, acting more than a 'symbolic glue'. In this process, three aspects deserve attention: (1) the manipulation (and demonization) of gender has transformed it into a threatening concept, a big umbrella term that

[1] "the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization, but instead includes a different, special, national approach." - Orbán´s annual programmatic speech in 2014 (Kováts, 2000, p. 81, footnote 11).

reunited several contested issues; (2) the replacement of gender-based rhetoric –and public politics- by an agenda centered in the traditional family values (also connected to religion and the nation); (3) the presence of anti-gender groups, articulated transnationally and in alliance with new right-wing governments. (Grzebalska, Kováts and Petö, 2017; Graff and Korolczuk, 2022)

In Hungary, gender has been used as a central issue rather than an additional element. In the case of the Istanbul Convention and the fight for ratification, gender was used both to contest and reinforce Orbán´s conservative regime. On the one hand, the fight for "gender equality" was framed as a democracy issue by social movements, feminist networks, and opposition parties. On the other hand, conservative parties and anti-gender campaigns started rallying against the Istanbul Convention, in a fight against "gender ideology" and in favor of the Hungarian nation (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

The specificity of the Hungarian regime and the centrality of gender used in the regime have affected drastically Hungarian women's movements. Since 2010 there has been an increasing hostility to values of democratic inclusion, forcing the resistance movements to change patterns, goals, and timing. Furthermore, Orbán´s government has aligned with conservative groups, strengthening their power of action while at the same time curtailing access of progressive groups to funding, advocacy space and political arena. As a result, the woman´s movements in Hungary were forced to struggle not just for immediate resistance but also for long-term survival. Due to this context of de-democratization and lack of funding, the Hungarian gender social movements explored other options, such as coalitions with other social movements and transnational feminist networks (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021; Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021).

The main objective of this research is to understand the resistance of gender social movements and transnational feminist networks in countries with conservative/authoritarian governments. More specifically, the research aims to: (1) understand how gender social movements and transnational networks frame 'gender equals democracy'; (2) understand how gender social movements resist the democratic crisis in Hungary; (3) understand how gender social movements make coalitions with other movements; (4) understand how Hungarian gender social movements articulate transnationally. Given these objectives, the main question addressed in this research is: "How do gender social movements and transnational

feminist networks resist in countries with conservative/authoritarian governments?"

The conceptual-analytical framework developed to address this question is based on the literatures of feminisms, social movements, and transnational networks, and applied in the case of Hungary under President Orbán´s government (2010-2022).

The selection of the case study of Hungary is justified in terms of its exceptionality in Europe and in the world. Viktor Orbán has been reelected three times as Prime Minister, in all terms his party Fidesz has hold the majority of the Parliament. In his government, Orbán and Fidesz have made authoritarian/conservative amendments in the constitution and changes in national laws so as to secure their control over the country, leading Hungary towards an authoritarian path[2]. The intensity of his government policies in the area of gender includes financial audits in the gender social movements, which made difficult for them to receive support from international donors; and deviation of the government´s financial support from gender movements to pro-family organizations favorable to Orbán. (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018; Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021)

Based on the literatures of feminisms, social movements and transnational networks, the analysis will make use of the concept of 'intersectional solidarity' developed by Ciccia and Roggeband (2021) and argues that 'intersectional solidarity' can be perceived in authoritarian/conservative contexts when social movements that mobilize different constituents of gender, race, sexuality etc., or movements that are located in different spheres, as national and transnational, cooperate in favor of a common objective. Hence, the case study will be developed by focusing on the 'intersectional solidarity' formed by Transnational Feminist Networks (TFNs) and Gender Social Movements in Hungary. Both the Hungarian social movements and the TFNs were selected based on the availability of sources. The focus on the case study is the violence against women, more precisely, the fight for the ratification of The Istanbul Convention in Hungary.

[2] Although criticizing Orbán´s regime, the European Union has had a major influence in the maintenance of his government due to the financial support to the country (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018).

In order to analyze the coalitions among Gender Social Movements and TFNs, the Hungarian movements selected are NANE[3] and PATENT[4]. It is important to point out that currently there are not many women´s organizations in Hungary, but the ones that survived are highly specialized in the support of victims. In addition, the Hungarian government funding is limited or non-existent in most cases, which makes the movements dependent on voluntary work and international funding (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021). NANE and PATENT are two grassroot organizations which provide essential support services for women victims of violence, not receiving any funding from the Hungarian government. Each organization works differently, many times in complementary form, when helping women in need. NANE is known for its voluntary helpline -since 1994- and work providing services and training in the field of combating violence against women. PATENT provides mostly legal aid to victims and support in the elaboration of drafts of law (law proposals) concerning violence against women and women´s reproductive rights.

Concerning the TFNs, the ones chosen are the Europeans Women´s Lobby (EWL), the biggest feminist umbrella network in the EU. The EWL is specialized in the institutional processes among states and transnational institutions and is responsible for connecting multiple women´s organizations all over Europe. WAVE is the only network which deals specifically with combating violence against women and domestic violence. They are also institutionalized in the EU, benefiting from the institution's financial support, but their focus is not on the institutional process but on the connections among grassroot groups.

Drawing on the concept of 'intersectional solidarity', this research argues that coalitions between gender grassroots groups and transnational feminist networks are an important form of resistance in authoritarian/conservative contexts. In order to understand 'what resistance is', one should look at the context: avoid looking at the actions of women's groups as either co-optation/subordination or resistance, but rather look at women's agency and power relations. In the case of Hungary - an authoritarian/conservative government - the resistance of women's movements is seen in their struggle to survive as a group. In the face of a regime that has harassed

[3] www.nane.hu - Accessed on 30.06.2022 at 9:15 am
[4] www.patent.org.hu - Accessed on 30.06.2022 at 9:15 am

the movements and their members, created barriers to access funding, and closed their channels of action, keeping the groups working and fighting gender violence-even if on the margins-is an important form of resistance to pay attention to.

Regarding the Istanbul Convention in Hungary, this work argues that the fight of the women's movements together with the TFNs for the ratification of the Convention - and all their actions not to let the importance of the IC be forgotten - worked as a crucial form of women's resistance, one that brought a transformative praxis to both the groups involved and the political context of the country. This transformative praxis occurred through the framing of 'gender equals democracy', in which a gender issue-violence against women-was considered equal to a democratic issue, such as free and fair elections. Thus, fighting violence against women, which in this context meant ratifying the Istanbul Convention, was fighting for democracy.

In addition, this work argues that the seeds of the 'gender equals democracy' frame, later articulated in the Hungarian parliament, were seen in the coalitions of grassroots groups. An alliance of diverse groups - both feminist and non-feminist - called for a political alliance, independent of parties, to ratify the IC, framing a gender issue as a democratic one. In parliament, the 'gender equals democracy' frame created coalitions among different parties (far right, center, and socialist parties) to fight for the ratification of the IC. These coalitions not only worked in favor of the Convention, but also influenced the political context of the country. Despite the failure of ratification, the new coalition formed in parliament continued to work in favor of democracy, and for the 2022 elections, the opposition parties presented only one candidate together in a coalition to oppose Orbán's authoritarian regime.

Given that this research draws on the literatures of feminisms, social movements, and transnational networks, it will employ multiple methods. As pointed out by Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) "[d]ifferent methods contribute different types of evidence and theoretical insights that add to the collective enterprise" (p. xv). This is also in line with Ackerley, Stern & True (2006, p. 6) in their approach in the edited volume *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, when they claim that "[t]he volume resists the seduction of giving a fixed, substantive definition of feminist methodology. Instead, it offers an entry point from which to consider collectively many different feminist

methodologies engaged by scholars who are interested in studying global politics from a stance that gender matters."

Regarding the sources, this project draws on: (1) secondary sources (academic literature, reports by movements organizations, think tanks, media, etc.); (2) primary sources such as official documents and interviews. In terms of the interviews, only one interview with an expert[5], Andrea Krizsán, was made to triangulate the information obtained via other sources, therefore, it was not deemed necessary to send it to the Ethics Committee from PUC-Rio (Câmara de Ética), but the interview was given with free and written consent. (Moré, 2015; Zamora, 2020)

In what concerns the chapter structure, Chapter 1 is the introduction. Chapter 2 presents the revision of the literature of the fields Feminisms, Social Movements and Transnational Networks. Chapter 3 is divided in two parts, in the first part, it analyzes the convergence of the right and the global phenomenon of the New Right, exploring their similarities and divergences. Next, those concepts are used to understand the situation in Hungary in Orbán´s regime. In Chapter 4, it analyzes the gender resistance, with a focus on what is the role of gender both in the articulation of the right and in the resistance groups. The concept of 'intersectional solidarity' is used to analyze the coalitions among grassroot groups and transnational feminist networks in the process of ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Hungary. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of this research and points to other research agendas.

2
Feminisms, Social Movements and Transnational Networks

The first chapter develops a conceptual-analytical framework exploring how gender social movements and transnational feminist networks resist in countries with conservative authoritarian governments, based on the literatures of feminisms, social movements, and transnational networks. Although the chapter is divided into three parts there is no implication that the three fields of studies -feminisms, social

[5] (Interview #1) – Online videocall interview conducted with the expert Prof. Andrea Krizsán on the 06.09.2023.

movements, and transnational network- are separated or unrelated, quite the opposite, it is argued that their origins are connected.

This chapter starts with the field of Feminisms, presenting its distinctions, how this name has been used (or avoided) in different contexts and for different purposes. In addition, I will explain how a feminist lenses impact in the research -theorical approach, methods, and methodologies- and the choice of object and study case. The second part of the chapter focuses on the field of Social Movements. Another diverse field of study with no methodological dogmatism, the social movement study is interconnected with the feminist field in many aspects, as will be discussed. Next, the theory of political opportunity will be explored in order to understand the political context in which social movements make coalitions (to resist). The last part of the chapter is about Transnational Networks. Among the different understandings of the concept of transnational network, the focus will be on the Transnational Feminist Networks, in order to understand how their organization and specificities are favorable to make alliances with local social movements. Finally, the chapter discusses the concept of 'intersectional solidarity' and the coalitions created by the Gender Social Movements and the Transnational Feminist Networks.

2.1. Feminisms

It is crucial to understand how the history of feminism is interconnected to social movements and transnational activism. On the one hand, the understanding of feminism and social movements is easily confused. On the other hand, there is an idea of novelty when the connection of feminism and transnational activism is presented. Both pre-conceptions can be problematic, as will be pointed out.

The first point to be considered is that although social movements and feminist connections are related to important events -as the suffragist movements in the 19-20th century- one should not just understand feminism from the social movement concept. As pointed out by Hawkesworth (2018, p. 40) "conflating feminism with forms of protest and mass demonstrations sustains a representation of feminism as perpetual outsider" and mask that feminism can also be understood as a broader concept that goes beyond social movements, as "an emerging

consciousness of injustices, grounded in raced and gendered hierarchies, which generates transformative efforts" (Jayawardena 1995, p. 9, apud Hawkesworth, 2018, p. 40). Following this idea, feminism may be or not be related to activism of social movements, and at the same time, social movements may or may not be feminists.

The second point is that the history of feminism is also interrelated to transnational activism. Hawkesworth (2018) shows how some issues as violence against women, could be traced since the 15th century as points of articulation in the international feminist agenda. As pointed out by the author:

> By troubling erroneous assumptions about the "newness" of transnational feminist activism and dispelling the modernist myth of irreversible progress in women's rights, a historical approach to global feminism generates useful lessons for contemporary transformative efforts (p. 39).

The term "feminism" is widely known. Nevertheless, the choice not to conceptualize what one understands by "feminism" may generate different - and sometimes wrong - interpretations. Although it is not an easy task, this work tries to address "feminism" by showing the many ways to speak of it.

One way of understanding the concept of feminism is mapping through the history of the feminist fights and conquers, looking at the encounters of understanding of the term considering the plurality of feminisms. Another option is to understand feminism as a mode of identification and a set of political convictions (Hawkesworth, 2018). The divergence of authors about how to understand feminism is also presented in how to look at the convergences and differences between the movements. Tripp (2006) highlights the development of an international consensus about women´s rights due to the contribution of Western and non-Western countries. For the author, "the consensus represents an important convergence of feminisms and women´s rights advocacy worldwide (…) that have learned from one another but have often had quite independent trajectories and source of movement" (p. 51-52). Although the author recognizes that the consensus is not unanimous and there is a great polarization about many causes, she had a positive view of this convergence.

Corredor (2019), however, does not share this optimistic view looking at the current context. For the author, the diversity of feminist movements from their

epistemologies to their political strategies have created momentary coalitions that are intrinsically fragile. In addition, Corredor pointed out that those tensions between feminisms have been exploited by a strategic countermovement against "gender ideology". "Its leading tactic was to manufacture gender ideology terminology and couple it with provocative rhetoric that exploits deep divisions within feminism and LGBTQ+ movements" (p. 625).[6] This tactic of trying to divide feminists was also perceived in one of the first attacks to gender in official documents, back in the 1990s. "The Family Coalition pamphlet[7] had left many feminists present at the Preparatory Committee – who had never read Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler or Fausto Sterling – perplexed: "We were provoked to explain gender to ourselves and to others"" (Corrêa, 2018, p. 6, my translation). Corredor (2019) also presents an example of an attempt made by the Catholic Church to exploit this division between feminisms -virtuous feminism vs. gender feminism- which the former "seeks to defend women´s dignity in the family but without severing women´s family bond" (Corredor, 2019, p. 626 *apud* Holy See, 1997, 1.8) and the latter represents the "creators of gender ideology, a virulent theory designed to disaggregate sex from gender and destroy the family unit" (p. 626).

In addition to this manipulative division of "good feminism" and "bad feminism", there is still a great number of activists who fight for the same causes, but do not identify themselves with the term "feminism". The understanding of these groups as feminists or not feminists, also generates a controversy between scholars. For Hawkesworth (2018), it is important to separate those who call themselves as feminists from those who refuse to use the term; that is why a crucial question to her research is "how are women who embrace feminism different from women who do not?" (p. 35). However, other scholars, as Moghadam (2015) point out that the timing and context are important variables to the use of the term "feminism".

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[6] The roots of those movements against "gender ideology" can be seen in the contestation of the mention to gender, back in the 1990s - See Corrêa (2018).

[7] "the pamphlet "against gender" that had been distributed, a few days earlier, to delegates (especially from the global South) by an organization on the North American Catholic right: the Women's Coalition for the Family, led by journalist Dale O'Leary" (Corrêa, 2018, p. 5, my translation) at the Committee Preparatory stage for the IV CMM in Beijing -New York, March 1995.

Moghadam (2015) understands that "feminism as a set of ideas and a movement is distinguished from other woman-led movements, in that it is premised on a critique of women´s subordination to men and a call for societal change toward equality" (p. 54). But the author signalizes that depending on the place or time, some women´s groups may not use the term "feminism" because it could be associated to western culture or could be not politically strategic. "In some countries in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe, women´s rights groups may frame their struggle as one for ***civil society, democracy*** **or** ***national development*** as well as for women´s rights" (p. 54, my emphasis).

2.1.1.
Feminist Lenses

This research adopts feminist cultural lenses to the literature on social movements and transnational networks to understand the gender resistance in conservative authoritarian governments.

The feminist approach highlights the centrality of gender in the social relations bringing into focus the women´s movement. Additionally, the cultural lenses understand the social movement activity in a wider sense, studying cultural processes such as the creativity within movements, the development of the collective identity, and the relation between culture and structure. By considering all those activities "behind the scenes", a feminist cultural lenses approach allows for a multi-level analysis of participation, and reflections about the continuity, adaptation, and survival of the gender social movements (Maddison and Shaw, 2012).

The adoption of a feminist cultural lenses together with the theory of political opportunity, discussed below, allow for a reflection about the gender resistance of those social movements, that draws attention to the importance of adaptation of the women´s movements according to the political context.

2.1.2.
Feminist Methods and Methodology

Ackerly, Stern and True (2006) understand that in order to produce a feminist methodology, one should understand its relation to ontology, epistemology, methods and ethics. Ackerly, Stern and True (2006) explain:

> We use the term *methodology* or *theoretical method* to refer to the intellectual process guiding reflections about the relationship among all of these; that is, guiding self-conscious reflections on epistemological assumptions, ontological perspective, ethical responsibilities, and method choices (p. 6).

For the authors, how one understands the world (ontology) is directly connected to the knowledge one produces (epistemology), the methods one chooses to use in the research, and their ethical implications. In IR, the feminist methodology is multiple and in expansion and so are their research questions and methods produced. Although this multiplicity may seem complex, it is a positive contribution to the IR field once this feminist approach grows apart from the mainstream. Maya Zalewski (1996) in her text "*All these theories and yet the bodies keep piling up"* differentiates the theorists who see theory as a tool, mostly represented by the mainstream of IR, from those who see theory as the everyday practice, calling attention to feminist researchers, as Cynthia Enloe and Christine Silvester. This understanding of theory as an everyday practice "means that first, we are *all* theorising (not just 'the theorists') and second, that the theorising that counts or that matters, in terms of affecting and/or creating international political events, is not confined either to policy makers or to academics" (p. 346).

Not just theory and methodology have an important place to feminist studies. "Our methods, methodologies, and ways of producing and communicating knowledge not only orient the questions we ask and the knowledge we pursue, but they also direct the effects and purposes of our work. **Methods enact our worlds**" (Law and Urry 2004 apud Harcourt et. al., 2015, p. 158, my emphasis). The importance of using creative methods which would not just go along with the scientific methods available is also a position the feminists take. Using creative methods to do research reformulates what is considered as good scientific method. As pointed out by Prugl (2020), "for feminists committed to emancipation and social transformation the 'scientific method' has long been problematic because it has functioned to hide the realities of women and gender" (p. 304). But what could be considered a creative method in the feminist studies?

As an example, Harcourt (2015) presents her creative method as 'reflective feminist praxis'. This way, she emphasizes how she crosses borders through her feminist method, being a feminist in the academic environment, while she is an academic in the feminist circles. For the author,

> academics influenced by their engagement in activism are working to develop new methods that can "perform" and capture the fluidity of changing understandings of identities, bodies, emotions, networks, power relations, and knowledge. This is particularly important for the in-between places, cyberspaces, people, places, and events that refuse to be categorized. Peoples' lives in those spaces have to be analyzed and described as they shift and change and defy easy capturing in current social science framing (Harcourt et. al., 2015, p. 160).

To sum up, different feminist authors are questioning the theories, methods, and methodologies of inquiry available from the mainstream. Also, they are trying to develop creative methods and connect different fields of study. That is the reason why "feminist inquiries need to remain uncomfortably lodged at the intersections of multiple fields of scholarship" (Wibben, 2016, p. 2). It is through the constant questioning of these limits that these scholars remain 'true to feminist methodological and political commitments and to continual, radical, and deliberate critique, allowing for only temporal resting points' (Wibben, 2016, p. 2 apud Wibben, 2011a, p. 114). Hence, feminist theory, method and methodology are urgent for the study of social movements. As pointed out by Maddison and Shaw (2012):

> There seems a very obvious and important link to be made between the subversive potential of feminist *thinking* and the subversive potential of social movement *activism*. Feminist social movement research has an outstanding capacity to draw these links in ways that can only enrich the field of social movement studies (p. 394).

Following this argument, this work will analyze the social movements and transnational networks through a feminist lens.

2.2.
Social Movements

Social Movements are defined by Della Porta and Diani (2006) as a distinct social and political process due to "their consisting informal networks, linking individual and organizational actors engaged in conflictual relations to other actors, on the basis of a shared collective identity" (p. 30).

Social Movements are distinguished by their political/cultural engagements which aim at promoting or opposing social change. Firstly, it is important to clearly identify the opponents of the movements in order to check conflictual relations among them. "Social Movement action (...) requires the identification of targets for collective efforts, specifically articulated in social political terms" (p. 21). Secondly, it is crucial in a social movement to have coordination of the initiative and conduct of actors, and this depends on permanent negotiations between the ones involved in the collective action. As pointed by the authors "no single organized actor, no matter how powerful, can claim to represent a movement as a whole" (p. 21). Lastly, the development of collective identity, which goes beyond a specific event or initiative, is a must aspect to define a social movement. Both the common sense between participants, and a shared commitment create a bond among players, who may differ but are still compatible in a collective mobilization. To summarize, the authors show that:

> As a result, organizational and individual actors involved in collective action no longer merely pursue specific goals but come to regard themselves as elements of much larger and encompassing process of change – or resistance to change (p. 22).

According to Gohn and Bringel (2012) social movements represent the core aspect of society, that is why studying them permits a serious reflection about the demands of political changes. For the authors, "movements transit, flow and happen in unconsolidated spaces of social structures and organizations. Most of the time, they are questioning these structures and proposing new forms of organization to political society. That is why they are innovative" (position 177, my translation).

2.2.1.
Social Movements Literature

The literature of social movements is vast and diverse not only in its theoretical approaches, but also in its methods and methodologies. This is so because the development of social movements studies was marked by diverse lenses of analysis, which saw and interpreted those movements in distinct forms. Those multiple theorical possibilities allowed the field to be free of "methodological dogmatisms", encouraging both the connection of the field with different study areas, and the methodological plurality (Maddison and Shaw, 2012).

Roggeband and Klandermans (2017) pointed out that "(the field of) social movement studies is developing as a distinctive subfield in most of social science" (p. 2). It can be understood as an effect of the pluralism of social movements studies, as highlighted by Donatella Della Porta (2016), and its propensity for theorical cross-fertilization with other fields. "Emerging through a bridging of different disciplinary approaches (…) social movement scholars constructed a toolkit of concepts and hypotheses by combining inputs from different fields of knowledge" (p. 2).

Furthermore, in the field of social movements there was a significant openness to new approaches, such openness allowed many creative methods to be applied in research, hence, making the social movement field be recognized as a real empirical science (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002). This positive attitude towards empirical research allowed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to be used, many times in mixed-methods strategies of research (Della Porta, 2016). Therefore, "the emergence of social movement scholarship in a wider scope of disciplines brings in a large set of new theoretical and conceptual tools to the debate that help us understand and analyze current protest" (Roggeband and Klandermans, 2017, p. 2).

Regarding the diversity of theories, Gohn and Bringel (2012) point out that since the 1980s, there have been important debates on 'What is the purpose and meaning of social movements?' North American scholars prioritized the analysis based on the construction of strategies, whereas Europeans focused their research on the construction of identities. In Latin America, the debate took place between scholars who emphasized the structural conditions of society and those who highlighted the political conflicts and power relations. The authors who looked at the structural conditions, such as social inequalities and exploitation understood the movement formation through group awareness and organization. In contrast, the

other scholars who emphasized the political conflicts and power relations observed that it was through the discursive process that the movements were able to construct their identities. In addition, there are also sub-divisions of those scholars who focus on socio-political factors, analyzing the new social movements and their potential for cultural resistance, and those who focus on political-economic factors, emphasizing economic power and the structure of domination in their analysis.

Gohn and Bringel (2012) argue that from the 2000s onwards, the debate has shifted its focus to local/global and North/South. Great emphasis was placed on phenomenological, reflective, and relational approaches to social movements that highlighted identities and collective subjectivities, networks of belonging and bonds of trust. Thus, it was possible to perceive five analytical axes within the studies of social movements. The first axis derived from the focus on cultural aspects and the construction of identity based on religion, ethnicity, territory, etc. This way "participating subjects construct senses and meanings for their actions based on their own collective action" (position 263, my translation). The second focused on issues of social justice, recognition, and redistribution, whether through aspects of Critical Theory, feminist theories, or multicultural approaches. The third was based on studies which "highlight the resilience of social movements, elaborations on the theme of autonomy, new forms of struggle in search of the construction of a new world, new social relations not focused/oriented by the market, but in the fight against the neoliberalism" (position 273, my translation). This is an eclectic axis that is divided among scholars who focus their analysis on the System, and the ones who focus theirs on the Subject. Among the former are T.Negri e M. Hart (crowd analysis); R. Cox, G. Therborn, D. Harvey (spatial dimensions); and I. Wallerstein (World-System). Among the latter are J. Ranciere and S. Zizek (who inspired the Ocupy Wall Street Movement). An important aspect brough by those authors is that:

> There is always a substrate, a legacy of the past which translates into memory and learning, many times suppressed and silenced as resistance forms, which on some occasions reappear, and articulate themselves with the present facts, regroup sociopolitical forces, reconstruct the movements and group's identity, rupturing with domination forms (Gohn and Bringel, 2012, position 288, my translation).

The fourth axis presented by Gohn and Bringel is influenced by the Postcolonial Theory. However, before properly entering in this axis it is important

to highlight that it is preferable to refer to Postcolonial Theories in the plural as there is a great diversity of postcolonial strands, which do not intend to be a cohesive field or even a homogeneous theory. Furthermore, there are important differences between the postcolonial and decolonial theories. Gohn and Bringel (2012) do not discuss this, but Chakrabarty (2005) rightly calls attention, in "*Legacies of Bandung: Decolonisation and the Politics of Culture*", to the importance to differentiate Postcolonialism and Decoloniality:

> The urge to decolonise, to be rid of the coloniser in every possible way, was internal to all anti-colonial criticism after the end of the first world war. Postcolonial critics of our times, on the other hand, have emphasised how the colonial situation produced forms of hybridity or mimicry that necessarily escaped the Manichean logic of the colonial encounter (p. 4812).

Thus, Chakrabarty (2005) presents how the postcolonial studies, despite being influenced by the anticolonial criticisms, have their origin in the West for a western public, while the decolonial criticism emerged in colonized countries among the intellectuals from the anticolonial movements themselves. Ballestrin (2013) draws attention to the particularities of the postcolonial and decolonial thoughts in the context of Latin America. "Mignolo affirms that the postcolonial theories have their locus of enunciation in the colonial heritage of the British Empire, and therefore, it is mandatory to search for a critical categorization of the Occidentalism which has its locus in Latin America" (Castro-Gómez and Mendieta, 1998, p. 17 *apud* Ballestrin, 2013, p. 95, my translation). Having said that, Mignolo, one of the founders of the research program Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality[8] draws apart "from the internal criticism of modernity elaborated by postmodernism, demanding engagement with intellectuals from the south like Waman Puma de Ayala, Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Rigoberta Menchú or Gloria Anzaldúa" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 452 *apud* Rojas, 2019, p. 532, my translation). This

[8] Rojas (2019) presents that the research program "Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality" was composed by Mignolo, Quijano, Dussel, Escobar and others, aiming at "bringing to surface the importance of descolonization of knowledge and the visibility of alternative forms of knowing and thinking" (p. 532, my translation). Being crucial to "take seriously the epistemic force of local histories", which include descolonization experiences, as the Tupac Amaru rebellion, the Haitian Revolution and the anticolonial movements of the 1960s" (Escobar, 2007, p. 184-185 *apud* Rojas, 2019, p. 532).

would be a crucial point for the understanding of the difference between postcolonialism and decoloniality. Although both areas of study understand the coloniality as constitutive of modernity, the latter differentiates itself by acting as a counterpart of modernity/coloniality, i.e. "a movement of practical and theoretical, political and epistemological resistance to the logic of modernity/coloniality". (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 105, my translation)

Thus, the fourth axis would have been influenced by the postcolonial and decolonial theories, searching for a "decolonization of power and knowledge to think the movements from the experiences from the South continent itself" (Gohn and Bringel, 2012, position 294, my translation). An important author to work with new understanding about social movements is Dussel. He analyzed a critical pedagogy which contributed to the emancipation of the oppressed, in an approach based on authors like Paulo Freire, Marcuse and Nietzsche to "create an ethics of freedom from the victim´s identity construction" (Gohn and Bringel, 2012, position 304, my translation)

Lastly, the fifth axis presented by Gohn and Bringel (2012) is based on theories that channeled all attention to processes of institutionalization of collective actions. The scholars who participated in this debate "moved the focus to the importance of political mobilization, institutional processes, and the structures of political opportunities – used by the different actors and social organizations in the configuration of the political and administrative field where they act" (position 314, my translation). This final axis is important because this work analyzes the cooperation between institutionalized networks and grassroot social movements. When the de-democratization context is concerned, the opportunity theory can help to understand when and how those coalitions may occur, this is why this is discussed in more depth next.

2.2.2.
Social Movements and the Political Opportunity Theory

A crucial dimension to be pointed out is the interaction between movements and the political system. Della Porta and Diani (2006) argue that "movements represent innovative, sometimes radical, elements both in the way in which the

political system works, and in its very structure." (p.31). Hence, the relation between agent and structure is pointed out by Meyer (2004):

> The wisdom, creativity, and outcomes of activists' choices - their *agency* - can only be understood and evaluated by looking at the political context and the rules of the games in which those choices are made - that is, *structure (p. x)*

Once we understand that social movements develop and act in political arenas that significantly influence their trajectories, the concept of political opportunity helps to draw attention to the political environment in which those movements are present. Since their political opportunities differ across context and over time, the way a movement should be studied also changes (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002).

Opportunity theory suggests that in a scenario where the political system is selectively open, coalitions between movements may be a strategic choice. In a selectively open political system, there is great difficulty for some social movements to get access to it, especially grassroot movements due to their inconsistent framing and decentralized structure. At times where the niche of opportunities is low, it is easier for an institutionalized movement to get access. However, some institutionalized movements have their demands limited by the gatekeepers in the political system who permit or deny access according to their demands. This does not happen with grassroot movements, which do not change their demands based on political limitation, what enables them to fight for changes based on their collective identity (Pruijt and Roggeband, 2014).

In contexts of democratic crises and democratic backlash, such as the case study of this research, social movements have an important participation in resisting. How social movements resist depends on their goals and characteristics, such as orientation, place of activity and funding program (see table 1). It also depends on how they manage to create alliances across differences. In order to analyze those coalitions, this project raises some questions: Why different movements decide to engage together? Which terms, goals, and methods are they willing to negotiate to have a common purpose? Are they mostly engaging in a long-term alliance or a short-term project? All those questions help in understanding the types of coalition among movements.

Table 1. The grassroot and institutionalized models of social movements

Grassroot Model	**Institutionalized Model**
Attempts to create egalitarian, nonhierarchical structures Consensus-based decision making	Clear division of labor and authority
Continuity between means and goals	Means and goals loosely coupled
Individual before the organization	Organization before the individual
Creation of alternatives	Transformation through institutions

Sources: Developed by the author based on Pruijt and Roggeband, 2014, p. 3.

2.3. Transnational Networks

The concept of transnational networks emphasizes the transnational aspect of the networks, which means that both the localization and the issue that connects the network have an aspect that transcends the nation-state. Besides, one should not confuse transnational with international. The transnational aspect "suggest a conscious crossing of national boundaries and a superseding of nationalist orientations" (Moghadam, 2000, p. 60-61). Therefore, Della Porta and Marchetti (2011) understands Transnational Networks as:

> a permanent co-ordination among different organizations (and sometimes individuals, such as experts), located in several countries, based on a shared frame for one specific global issue, developing both protest and proposal in the form of joint campaigns and social mobilizations against common targets at national or supranational level (p. 429).

2.3.1. Transnational Feminist Network

This research focuses on the concept of Transnational Feminist Network (TFN), from Moghadam (2000). However, before introducing it, it is important to address other concepts: *transnational feminism, transnational feminist activism*, *global feminism*, and *global feminist activism.*

As for the first concept, *transnational feminism*, Baksh and Harcourt (2015) argue that many authors contributed differently to this understanding. For Nancy Fraser (2005), transnational feminism must challenge gender injustice not limiting itself to the frame of modern territorial state. Whereas Mohanty (2003), in what regards the women´s struggles, points out that is crucial for transnational feminism to question Eurocentric epistemologies and their assumptions about gender, race, class etc.

The second concept, *transnational feminist activism,* from Moghadam (2015) is part of what she earlier conceptualized as Transnational Feminist Network (TFN). For Moghadam (2015),

> *transnational feminist activism* takes place on a number of levels (global, regional, local); addresses political, policy, and normative issues within global and local spaces; involves a variety of strategies (protests, petitions, conferences, coalition building); and mobilizes women from three or more countries around a number of priority issues (neoliberal economic policy, women´s health and reproductive rights, sexual rights, conflict and peacebuilding, antifundamentalism, and women´s human rights). **The organized expression of such transnational feminist activism is what I have called the transnational feminist network (TFN)** (p.53, my emphasis).

Regarding *global feminism*, Moghadam (2000) conceptualizes:

> *Global feminism* may be defined as the discourse and movement of women aimed at advancing the status of women through greater access to resources, legal measures to effect gender equality and the self-empowerment of women within national boundaries but through transnational form of organizing and mobilizing. **It is predicated upon the notion that notwithstanding cultural, class and ideological differences among women of the world, there is a commonality in the forms of women´s disadvantage and the forms of women´s organizational world-wide** (p.62, my emphasis).

The concept of *global feminism* from Moghadam is also connected to the Hawkesworth´s concept of global feminist activism. For Hawkesworth (2018) *global feminist activism* is:

> international feminist mobilizations involving woman in more than one nation or more than one region, who seek to **forge a collective identity**

> **among women** and to improve the condition of women. (…) feminist activism that targeted problems at global level, considering various transformative tactics that rely upon international organizations and transnational networks and the kinds of change they enable (p.35, my emphasis).

What Hawkesworth (2018) identified as a global feminist activism, Moghadam (2015) understands as "TFNs that advocate for women´s participation and rights while also engaging critically with policy and legal issues and with states, international organizations, and institutions of global governance" (p.55).

Finally, the present work will focus on the concept of Transnational Feminist Network (TFN) because it connects with all the previous concepts, resuming it well. Moghadam (2000), conceptualizes **Transnational Feminist Network** as:

> Feminist groups and women´s organization (…) [that] have common agenda across national borders (…) [and] engage in information exchange, mutual support and a combination of lobbying, advocacy, and direct action toward the realization of their goals of equality and empowerment for women and social justice and societal democratization (p.61-62).

2.3.1.1. Transnational Feminist Network History

As discussed before, the transnational aspect of the TFNs is central to understanding this specific configuration of feminist organizations. However, the literature also diverges in interpreting the history of transnational feminism and consequently the TFN´s.

According to Hawkesworth (2018), the history of Transnational Feminism could be traced back from the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, once Transnational Feminist Networks are placed in the center, this history becomes much more recent. It was in the late nineteenth century that women´s influence in international decision making had developed, mostly due to the creation of several international NGOs which had the focus on constructing a "collective identity as feminist internationalists" (Miller, 1999, p. 226 apud Hawkesworth, 2018, p. 65). By using the language of sisterhood, the feminist activists from those organizations managed to forge connections with other woman´s group to craft a transnational feminist agenda. In order to do that, they not just have created networks of woman with

common goals around the world but also “provided opportunities to build women’s solidarity and to promote greater understanding of national cultures and the conditions of women within them” (Hawkesworth, 2018, p.66).

The first half of the twentieth century was marked by the World Wars. Although the Great war period was a difficult moment for transnational feminist activism, the interwar years were essential for their development. Defying the idea of transnational feminist movements as elitist, based on women from the global north, the 1920´s decade was marked by several woman´s movements in the global south being part of women networks, connecting feminist transnationally. It was by “working together across national borders, they forged the political will to investigate structures of disadvantage, politicize them, and build international coalitions to address them” (Hawkesworth, 2018, p.73). However, the interaction between groups from the global north and south was never easy. There were moments of disagreements and even rupture between them due to racism and imperialism, as pointed out in the example below:

> U.S. feminists made little effort to hide the fact that they regarded themselves and their culture as superior. Indeed, when setting out for a tour of Latin America, Carrie Chapman Catt referred to herself as a “missionary,” whose explicit objective was to “civilize inferiors.” In her interactions with Latin American feminists, Catt made it clear that she did not consider them her equals. On the contrary, she considered it her responsibility to “act as a representative of U.S. policy interests,” rather than as an equal participant in women’s common struggle (Ehrick 1999, 73–74 apud Hawkesworth, 2018, p.74).

As pointed out by Hawkesworth (2018, p. 77-78), it was through an orientalist view that “Northern Europe and the United States were understood as “the core”; Eastern Europe and Southern Europe as “semiperiphery”; and Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa as “periphery” in a world feminist system.” This vision placed on the one side Americans and Europeans feminists as natural leaders of the transnational organizations and, on the other side all the “more oppressed sisters” from the global south.

Agreeing with Hawkesworth in this point, Moghadam (2000) shows how the 1970´s were a time of disagreements between Western and Third World feminists. The firsts tended to focus on woman´s legal equality and sexual autonomy while the seconds tended to prioritize imperialism and underdevelopment as their main concern. The author also highlights how those disagreements took a central place

at the First UN Conference on Woman in Mexico City in 1975, culminating in strong arguments at the second conference in Copenhagen in 1980. Nonetheless, the authors disagree in their interpretation of the transnational aspect. If for Hawkesworth (2018) this clash between Western and Third World feminist was seen as a disagreement and even a rupture in the transnational feminist agenda, for Moghadam (2000) this transnational aspect was never present at that time.

Moghadam (2000) argues that the feminist agendas until the 1980s were still nationally and regionally framed. It was during the decade of the 1980s that the women´s networking became not just international but transnational. On the one side, new information technologies (i.e internet) and advances in technological communication (fax, email, websites) connected women in different part of the world. On the other side, the economic harsh of the 1980s created a shared solidarity between feminist of the North and the South. "Feminists from the North come to appreciate the relevance of economic conditions and foreign policies to women´s lives, while feminists from the South came to recognize the pertinence of "body politics' (p. 61). The transnational aspect started in the 1980s was a turning point for the feminist movements, as pointed out by Moghadam (2000):

> What began in the early 1980s as the formation of a handful of small feminist networks comprised of individuals in a few neighboring countries has been transformed into large, sometimes professionalized organizations with officers, publications, annual meetings, web sites, ties to national and international non-governmental organizations (such as human right groups), consultative status with the UN and so on (p.63).

The UN Conference on Woman in Nairobi (1985) and in Beijing (1995) were important moment for transnational feminism. Not just the conferences themselves were crucial, but also all that happened before and after that (preparatory meetings, women´s conferences, other UN Conferences about Human Rights and Development). All those events played an important role connecting different feminist groups and making possible the emergence of the "global feminism" and the creation of several TFNs (Moghadam, 2000).

It is important to highlight that not all TFNs are the same. They have different focuses and strategies of actions according to their purpose and constraints. On the one hand, "WIDE (Women In Development Europe) [has] focused [its] energies on structural adjustments and its social and gender effects, and on the biases and

deficiencies of international development cooperation and assistance" (p. 64). Their action "in opposition to structural adjustment policies and the activities of the international financial institutions in developing countries has forced the World Bank to take more seriously gender and social issues and to form an External Gender Consultative Group" (p. 66). On the other hand, WLUML (Woman Living Under Muslim Law), has as its central concern creating "Actions Alerts (petitions and campaigns reminiscent of Amnesty International), that usually draw attention to the plight of an individual or a group suffering from discrimination or unjust treatment in a Muslim country" (p.65). Although TFNs may be different in their emphasizes and ways of action, they are not restrictive or closed, which means that they both have a broad political agenda and connect between networks. As pointed out by the author:

> Interaction and cooperation among feminist networks constitute a significant aspect of the phenomenon. Not only do the large have regular contact with each other (…), but local groups that may belong to one network will also have members that belong to other networks. Feminist networks tap to each other in an almost seamless web, with many points of intersection (Moghadam, 2000, p.66).

To sum up, beneficial results came from Third and Fourth UN Conference on Woman in Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995), with the creation of many TFNs. By the emergence of "global feminism", feminist networks engaged differently in advocacy, policies criticism and decision-making process. The impact that they were able to do in global politics was due to concerted actions and networks cooperation, which shows the importance of studying alliances between feminist groups.

Finally, it is important to call attention to the divergence in the literature about the interpretation of the history of the transnational feminist networks. By paying attention to how differently the authors point out feminisms´ disagreements, ruptures but also their connections and successes, it is possible to look at how the groups organize themselves and manage to create alliances with others. The disagreement between feminisms is an important aspect to be analyzed to better understand how the feminists negotiate internally when making coalitions to a common cause. In order to investigate it, the following questions were raised: "Which activist (if any) could lead and represent the whole group? Which group could claim to represent the interest of certain women? Which women are truly

represented in transnational feminist activism? Whose views and interests are the prevailing after disagreements between groups? In an attempt to answer these questions, the next section will focus on the coalitions created between Transnational Feminist Networks and Gender Social Movements.

2.3.2. Transnational Feminist Network and Gender Social Movement Coalitions

Before addressing the coalitions among groups, it is important to point out that this work differentiates Transnational Feminist Networks from Gender Social Movements. The intention is not to trace rigid boundaries between them or to hierarchize the importance of each organization; it is understood that both are important gender resistance models, which may act in distinct forms and places yet be complementary, as discussed in the case study of Hungary.

A common perception about TFNs and Gender SMs is that "the former [TFNs] are sometimes described as elitist or "top-down" groups in which those in charge are separate from the broad base of women, while the latter [are] (…) community based, (…) centered around feminist principles of collaboration and power-sharing" (Moghadam, 2015, p. 55-56). Addressing this critique, this research looks into how different formations of Transnational Feminist Networks and Gender Social Movements manage to create coalitions across differences.

This work adopts the concept of coalition among groups of Ciccia and Roggeband (2021, p. 185) when the authors point out that this concept can be defined, at the most basic level, as "where two or more social movement organizations work together on a common goal". In addition, the authors draw attention to the variety of forms that a coalition can take. "[C]oalitions can take a variety of forms which range from loosely coupled activities around some broadly defined issue to the constitution of umbrella organizations that coordinate actions among members". Another important aspect to be highlighted is that coalitions are not just common among Feminist movements, actually all social movements create alliances or collaboration among groups pursuing shared goals (Van Dyke and Amos, 2017).

Although there is a vast literature about Social Movements Coalitions, this work focuses on the specificities of Feminist and Gender Movements coalitions, addressing two important concepts: intersectionality and solidarity. Both concepts are ambivalent and contested in literature, hence it is important to point out that there is no intention to debate the meaning of both, but to analyze how "intersectionality" and "solidarity" have become concepts that helped to create (and understand) coalitions among Feminist movements.

The concept of intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to address an analytical issue related to race and gender: the problem of exclusion of black women from both gender and race analytical structures. Neither analytical structure represent the struggle of black women, the former focuses only on white women and the latter only on black men. The solution could not come from the addition of black women in one of those categories, it could only come from an analysis which takes intersectionality into account, because "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140).

Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in the 1989 article specifically to address the experience of black women. However, this concept spread both in the academic world and in social movements discourses signifying differently from the author´s first mention. That interaction between the academic feminists and social movements activists created a tendency of a broader definition of the term. It is now understood that multiple oppressions -not just gender and race- come from different sides, intersecting each other, and creating unique life experiences. Thus, the fight against one oppression should consider all its intersections. According to a working definition of Patricia Hill Collins and Valerie Chepp (2013):

> [I]ntersectionality consists of an assemblage of ideas and practices that maintain that gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, ability, and similar phenomena cannot be analytically understood in isolation from one another; instead, these constructs signal an intersecting constellation of power relationships that produce unequal material realities and distinctive social experiences for individuals and groups positioned within them (Collins and Chepp, 2013, p.58).

Focusing on the term solidarity, Tomos (2017) argues that through a literature review, the concept of solidarity may be understood via three distinct approaches: shared identities, shared interests, and political opportunity structures. The author points out that the first aspect -shared identity- has been heavily criticized by the

feminists because “people identify in relation to multiple intersections of gender, class, race, sexuality, region, and nationality” (p. 711). Hence, instead of corroding solidarity, diversity can create structures for the groups to cooperate with one another. The second aspect -shared interests- would be a rational expression of the groups, related to material interests. However, this approach does not explain how transnational political mobilizations may build solidarity across multiple social groups, with different identities and interests. The third approach -political opportunity structures- focuses not on the specificities of the groups but on the structural context. Although scholars agree on the structural importance, there is no consensus about which structures enable solidarity among groups. Considering that none of these approaches is sufficient to understand how solidarity builds alliances among groups, Tormos (2017) proposes an intersectional approach to solidarity:

> An intersectional approach to solidarity (...) consists of an ongoing process of creating ties and coalitions across social group differences by negotiating power asymmetries. An intersectionally conscious political praxis requires recognizing and representing intersectionally marginalized social groups formed by multiple interactions and linkages between different social structures and lived experiences (Tormos, 2017, p.712).

According to Ciccia and Roggeband (2021), the representation and recognition of intersected unprivileged groups has been well mobilized both by literature and the movements activism. However, the coalition-building aspect has not received great attention until recently. Thus, this research will specifically focus on this gap using the concept of ‘intersectional solidarity’:

> intersectional solidarity (...) comprises instances of cooperation occurring between two or more organizations mobilizing different constituencies defined by gender, sexuality, ethnic/racial, class and other divisions, or located across national boundaries as in transnational cooperation (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021, p. 183).

The authors point out four types of ‘intersectional solidarity’ between feminist movements: **Instrumental Intersectionality**; **Transformative Solidarity**; **Incorporation**; and **Pragmatic Solidarity**. It is important to notice that those coalitions are not out of context, it depends on how they interact and shape each other. So, there is no such a thing as an independent type of coalition because they all intersect. However, for the purpose of the research they were framed based

on the *Recognition of Difference* or *Common Denominator* and classified whether they have had a *Transformative praxis* or not (table 2).

(*Table 2 Types of intersectional feminist solidarity)*

Transformative praxis	Framing of issues	
	Recognition of difference (RD)	*Common Denominator (CD)*
Absent	**1.Instrumental intersectionality** Short-term Single issue	**3. Incorporation** Short-term Single issue
Present	**2.Transformative solidarity** Long-term Multi-issue	**4.Pragmatic solidarity** Short-term Multi-issue

Source: Developed by Ciccia and Roggeband (2021).

The first type, instrumental intersectionality, is a short-term coalition in which the differences among groups are recognized and a common issue is negotiated. However, it does not impact the movements toward a core transformative praxis. The second, transformative solidarity, is a long-term coalition among different groups, created through discussions of potential issues for collaboration rather than one common purpose. Besides, the impact of these exchanges among groups created a transformative praxis in the core of each movement. The third one, incorporation, is a coalition among groups with a common denominator, ex. worker´s right (instead of migrant domestic worker), for a short period and focusing on one single issue. However, the transformative praxis is not presented, not altering the core of the groups. And the last type, pragmatic solidarity, is a short-term coalition, with a common denominator, focusing on multiple issues and being

transformative -not leaving the groups in the same way they were before the coalition. This last type is mostly presented in transnational activism, and it is the focus of this research, so this work will closely look at it.

The Pragmatic solidarity type has a Common Dominator (CD) frame, which means that the groups emphasize what they have in common, and the differences are highlighted just when they intersect with same relevant issues. "Examples of the use of such frames are identifiable in the reliance on human rights discourses in the transnational movement against **violence against women**" (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021, p. 187, my emphasis). When using the human right frame, the violence against woman encompasses a wide range of issues, making it easier to build coalitions, both between feminisms and with other movements, such as human rights organizations. However, as noticed by the authors, this type of frame can both mask specific forms of violence, by emphasizing a universal issue, and dilute its meaning or having it co-opted.

The other aspect of Pragmatic solidarity is the transformative praxis. For the authors, the transformative aspect should be concerned not just with the **recognition** of minority groups´ claims specificities and the **representation** of them in changing the power dynamics, but also the **redistribution** of resources among groups. Thereby, a transformative praxis comes from "a constant work of organizations to address power disparities at the symbolic level of how issues are framed, and an equally deep transformation of the material structures through which power works within coalitions" (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021, p. 189). One case presented by the authors as example of Pragmatic Solidarity is the Schwenken´s (2003, 2005) analysis of the European Network for migrant domestic work - RESPECT. This work will focus on the RESPECT case in order to reflect what possible issues can be found in the case study of the alliance between the networks WAVE and EWL and gender movements in Hungary in the case of violence against women.

Schwenken (2003, 2005) called attention to the importance of framing. According to Snow, Vliegenthart and Ketelaars (2018) the frame is an important variable that determines how one sees or acts towards a fact or object. The authors point out three important aspects of framing:

> [T]hey function like picture frames, *focusing attention* by bracketing what in our sensual field is "in-frame" and what is "out-of-frame." They also function as *articulation mechanisms* in the sense of tying together the various punctuated elements of the scene so that one coherent set of meanings rather than another is conveyed. And finally, frames often perform a *transformative function* by reconstituting the way in which some objects of attention are seen or understood as relating to each other or to the actor (p. 393).

In analyzing RESPECT, Schwenken (2003, 2005) points out that it was perceptible that how the migrant domestic work´s issue was framed influenced directly in their alliances and conquers. The network changed its frame depending on the moment: human rights, migrant issue, human traffic, women´s right or worker´s right. This work will focus on the shift from human trafficking to women´s right due to its idea of empowerment. The agency of the migrant was brought into light against the idea of the victim/domestic slave. However, the migrant framing was not accentuated due to political structures opportunities. As pointed out by a network member: "(t)he European Commission is relatively progressive on the rights of women, more progressive than they are on the rights of migrant workers, and we should try and use that" (Schwenken, 2003, p. 49 *apud* B. Anderson, *in:* SOLIDAR and Kalayaan, 1996, p. 14). By framing the migrant domestic work´s right as women´s rights the RESPECT Network was able to create alliances with feminist groups, gain access to the "Velvet Triangle"[9] in the European Union, which resulted in funding to address the core aspect of the network, the migrant issue.

The gender-specific approach called attention to combating violence against women in the households and in employer-employee relations. They have discussed the differences between the two types of violence against woman and concluded that the type of relationship was the main concern. "Violence between employers and employees is enhanced by the migration regulations that make undocumented women extremely dependent on the good-will of their employers" (Schwenken, 2005, p.184). Hence, in order to fight the violence against woman in the domestic workplace it was mandatory to address the migration issue. However, the author

[9] The feminist velvet triangle is concept coined by Alison Woodward (2004) that address the collaboration among EU femocracts in different levels, feminist academics and women´s movements activists (LANG, 2014).

points out that regarding the migration demands there was limited progress, also due to the migration issue being regulated on the national level.

Summing up, the coalitions made by RESPECT network and feminist bureaucrats, academics and activists created a pragmatic solidarity. By framing a common dominator, the women´s right, made a short-term coalition that had a transformative praxis. On the one side, the feminist bureaucrats of the EU were encouraged to continuously pursuing the migration agenda as part of the woman´s right. On the other side, the RESPECT Network changed the construction of the identity of the migrant woman to proud and independent woman instead of victim, addressing the issue of women´s empowerment as central to network.

After analyzing the different types of coalition and the RESPECT network example, this research raises the questions: Which types of gender movements coalitions are happening in Hungary? How can Hungarian gender movements and transnational feminists' networks build solidarity without erasing the voices and perspectives of the less powerful groups? How can intersectionality approach emerge gender identities and strengthen collective action in Hungary? And, finally, how are the Hungarian movements negotiating with feminist networks in order to resist in the current authoritarian context?

In order to address those questions, it is crucial to investigate the Hungarian context by first, understanding Orbán´s governments and the previous context/ History that enable him to be elected in 2010 and remain in power for more than a decade. Second, reflecting on the influence of the European Union, looking at its constrains but also reinforcements in the Orbán´s regime. Third, analyzing the role of conservative movements in the regime, especially the anti-gender mobilizations. Finally, investigating what happened with Gender Social Movements in the country, how they have been affected by Orbán´s regime and how they are resisting and fighting for survival in the current Hungarian context. Those questions are going to be addressed in the next chapter.

3
The Global Far Right and the case of Hungary

This chapter starts by pointing out two important issues that should be addressed in advance. First, the new articulation of the right has been named differently according to the authors, such as New Right, Old-New Right, Global Right, Global Far-right etc. This work does not intend to focus on which name better describes this articulation, but it is concerned in its specificities. Hence, the name used will be conforming to the author´s choice. Second, there are many specificities concerning this new articulation of the right (gender aspect, education, globalization, social media etc.) and also significant divergences between regions and leaderships. Despite all those aspects being interconnected, it would be impossible to analyze them in depth. For this reason, this chapter focuses on the aspects connected to Gender, Social Movements, Democracy, and the Hungarian context.

3.1.
New articulation of the right

This new phenomenon can be better understood addressing some conceptualizations of the so-called new right´s articulation. The literature highlights that this new form is not homogeneous: there are distinct right-wing parties, ideologies, and actions in practice, and it is of the foremost importance to differentiate them. However, this differentiation has been questioned by the same literature because the events since the 2000s have shown that the new right alliance has become increasingly complex.

3.1.1.
Is it Fascism? Extreme right, (populist) radical right and mainstream right

As previously said, this new articulation of the right has been named differently according to the author. However, it is not just this articulation that has

received different names but also the division of the rights. Some authors make use of the names ultra-right, far right, extreme-right, radical right etc. many times with different meanings. Therefore, this work will make use of Mudde´s (2019) concepts of the division of the right as they have been commonly used in literature.

Cas Mudde (2019) argues that the right could be divided between the far right (extreme-right and populist radical right) and mainstream right. In addition, the author calls attention to the democratic aspect when distinguishing the far right.

> Whereas the extreme right rejects the essence of democracy – the idea of political equality and government by popular majority – the (populist) radical right supports democracy, at least in theory, but fundamentally challenges key institutions and values of liberal democracy, including minority rights, rule of law, and separation of powers (p. 36).

Yet, Mudde (2019) highlights that in recent years, this separation of the right has become blurred. After the years 2000, a new scenario has been presented: "the mainstreaming of the far right – in terms of ideology, politics, and organization – that characterizes the fourth wave has made the borders between the radical right and the mainstream right (...) more and more difficult to establish" (p. 30). As mentioned before, Cas Mudde (2019) divides the far right into two axes. One the one side, the extreme-right and on the other side, the (populist) radical right.

Concerning the extreme-right, Mudde (2019) points out that fascism is the most important ideology, having the German Nazism and the Italian Fascism as its main examples. According to the author, the most distinguishable difference between Fascist and Nazis ideology is that the former has the center in the State and the latter in the race. "Whereas fascists see the main Entity as the state, a legal category, Nazis see it as the race, a supposedly biological category" (p. 32). As an ideology, fascism rejects democracy: the center is the state, not the individual, offering a "third way" against both liberalism and socialism. In addition, the fascist state controls every aspect of social life and glorifies violence and war.

> For fascists, the state is not just a legal institution, it is an ethical, organic, and spiritual entity which requires full loyalty and submission. In essence, fascism is totalitarian, in that it wants full control of society. Every aspect of life is to be controlled by the party/state and there is absolutely no space for independence. (…) It believes that violence is power, and war not only is the natural state of life, but also purifies and regenerates the nation and state (p. 32).

Complementing this analysis, Renton (2019) affirms that "fascism is best understood as a specific form of reactionary mass movement". It is specific because there is leadership cult and party form. It is also reactionary due to its desire to advance the technological capitalism - not in a more egalitarian way – but to restore a conservative society associated with the 18th century. In addition, "[f]ascism is also a form of mass politics, characterized by rallies, marches and violence against its opponents, reflecting a fascist goal to purge the existing state" (p. 22). Once fascism is comprehended as this 'specific form of reactionary mass movement' it is possible to realize an internal contradiction: its reactionary commitment works against its mass support. The fascist state tries to get rid of democracy supported by mass movements, but it does not advance any redistribution policy. The fascist ideology grows in times of crises but is not sustainable once it is in power due to its inegalitarian ruling. Hence, they are constantly trying to regain a divergent social base.

> Where fascism has established a mass base, history has so far provided just two outcomes: either a political defeat by domestic rivals better skilled at popular mobilisation, or a cycle of re-radicalisation ultimately culminating in the involvement of fascist states in all-out racial and military war (p.22).

For Renton (2019), this convergence of the right is not fascist. Indeed, there are some "backwards-looking fascist groups seeking to imitate the political forms of the 1930s (..) [and] parties of fascist origin but later at some distance from their starting point" (p.23). In contrast to the fascist ideology, this new far right does not want to oppose democracy. Actually, they even make use of its institutions in an attempt to reach power via electoral means and be seen not as an autocratic leadership. In addition, this new far right also uses democratic rhetoric to criticize the liberal form of democracy and some even propose an 'illiberal' one.

In agreement with Renton (2019), this work argues that the convergence of the right is not a re-emergency of fascism because it would need to meet specific aspects of this ideology (rejection of democracy, mass support, extreme violence etc.). Thus, what is happening now is not a fascist phenomenon but a new wave of the far right and it is fundamental to understand its specificities.

> Rather than simple "rebranding," this convergence marks substantive shifts in ideas, organization, and strategies that obscure the NR's [New Right] location on the

> political spectrum and make it much harder to counter than a movement carrying the historical legacy of the swastika and the holocaust. Opponents of fascism have a well-practiced vocabulary of antifascism, but the same lexicon has been found wanting in the face of the NR, which is characterized by a wide range of positions on political, economic, and cultural institutions (Abrahamsen et al, 2020, p. 104-105).

3.2.
The New (wave) of the radical right

Cas Mudde (2019) argues that there are four waves of the radical right. The first wave, neo-fascism (1945-55), consisted in groups that either adapted to the new democratic scenario or worked marginally in the society. In Europe, in this period, the far-right politics, such as nationalism, were perceived negatively and many new-fascist parties were banned. The second wave, right-wing populism (1955-80) was marked by "the rise of a variety of right-wing populist parties and politicians, which were defined by opposition to the postwar elites rather than allegiance to a defeated ideology and regime" (p. 23). In Europe, these parties were known as being against the development of a welfare state to deal with post war conditions. Indeed, there were some hybrid parties with ideas both varying from the new radical right to the old extreme right, but these parties were not majority at that time. The third wave, radical right (1980-2000), had its peak in Europe in the 1990s and both new radical and old mainstream parties took part in this wave. The populist radical right wave happened differently in what regards the national and regional context. In spite of these differences, most of the parties had as their center nativism, authoritarianism and populism. In a context of enduring unemployment and mass immigration, the radical right got stronger through the adhesion of new followers who shared their critiques against immigrants, minorities, and European elites. By presenting itself as the voice of the people, the populist radical right started to gain seats in the national parliaments and "[b]y the turn of the century, (…) [it] had become the dominant ideology within the European far right" (p.26).

The fourth wave (2000-) is the one that is currently happening, and it is the most relevant for this research. According to the author "the far right entered a fourth wave in the twenty-first century, electorally and politically profiting from three "crises": the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (and beyond), the Great Recession of 2008, and the "refugee crisis" of 2015" (p. 28). As previously seen, right-wing parties commonly use the context of crisis to increase their presence in

national politics, nothing novel in it. The novelty of the fourth wave has its origin in mainstreaming of the far right. Until the years 2000, far-right politics were considered off-limits by the mainstream parties, but it has recently changed. Nowadays, the mainstream parties are forming coalitions with populist radical right parties. From the extreme-right, these coalitions are using even fascist ideas in their debates. From the populist radical right, they are implementing policies that are just slightly moderate. It is perceived that there is a radicalization of the right in this new wave. Parties that belonged for years to the mainstream/ conservative spectrum have now become 'new far-right' parties, which is the case of Fidesz in Hungary.

In sum, this new wave of the far right is highly heterogeneous, as not seen before, and the mainstream right is becoming increasingly radicalized which is a novelty. Although it is still the populist radical right in its core, other parties from the extreme right to the mainstream right are now part of this new wave. Now, all over Europe, the far right has had its support increased: (1) they have been able to make their presences in countries that historically rejected them, (2) they have become one of - if not- the biggest party in places they were marginalized, and (3) they have managed not just to be present in the legislative power, but also in the executive, ruling the country. A major example is the populist radical right leader, Viktor Orbán, from Hungary who controls both the legislative, through his party, and the executive as the prime minister.

3.3.
Similarities and Divergences of the Transnational New Right

Abrahamsen et al (2020, p.95) call the New Right this articulation of leaders, parties, and movements from the Right. On the one hand, the authors recognize "the many diverse, dispersed, and divided articulations of the Right". On the other hand, this articulation transcended the local/regional aspect: "it is possible—and necessary—to speak of a globally interconnected Right". Stemming from this idea, the authors draw attention to this transnationalism of the New Right. From loose networks to coordinated groups, the new right articulates meetings, think tanks, and launching events in order to develop their illiberal agendas. They aim at sharing experiences, creating a common discourse, and supporting each other in their fight against global liberalism. However, they can also be distinct in crucial core aspects,

depending on their history, context, audience, etc. Hence, this research will first look at three common aspects of this global right (critique of globalization, the enemy vs. people rhetoric, and the nationalism in a transnational movement), second, it will focus on three distinct aspects (economy, values, and geopolitics). This work will make use of some examples of Hungary, as it is the subject of the case study. Hungary can be considered, on the one hand, an extreme example of the New Right politics. On the other hand, the Orbán´s regime is adapting its politics, not exactly echoing other new right politics depending on context and place.

3.3.1 Similarities of the right: A critique of globalization (and global liberalism)

The critique of the New Right towards globalization is not a critique of capitalist development but a critique of the transformation in social power that came with it. Globalization, then, would be the product of the logic of liberal power. According to the New Right ideas:

> Reducing individuals to economic maximizers and values to subjective hedonism, contemporary liberalism does not enhance "diversity." On the contrary, it flattens the world, divesting diversity of any real substantive content and social grounding, commodifying individuals and cultures, and eroding non liberal societies and refashioning them in its image" (Abrahamsen et al, 2020, p. 97).

Hence, the ones who do not adapt to these transformations are just 'left behind' by the system, both economically and socially. Brown (2019) when addressing the 'left behinds' call attention to not reduce the analysis to an economic neoliberal aspect. There is also a moral side, connected to white masculinism, that should be taken into account. "The neoliberalization of everyday life— not merely its inegalitarian effects, but also its relentlessly inegalitarian spirit— richly compounds [resentments]: it is the range of the economically left behinds [and] the rage of dethroned white masculinism" (p. 177). Thus, globalization not just made them lose their economic power, but also their social prestige and its roots connected to the nation-state. As a result, it developed rancor against both immigrants and politicians who allowed this to happen.

In the case of Hungary, this rancor against immigrants and opposition politicians -rooted in the critique of globalism - appears constantly in Orbán´s discourse:

> Tell everyone that migration is the rust which would slowly but surely consume our country. Tell everyone that we would have to provide for migrants. If resettlement commences, economic growth will be for nothing: there will be nothing from which to support families; and there will be nothing from which to pay pensions. Tell everyone that mass migration threatens the everyday security that we take for granted. Mass migration brings with it the increased threat of terrorism. It is clear as day: where there is mass migration, women are in dangerous from violent attacks. (Hungria, 2018b, s/p apud Freire and Resende, 2023, position 3093).

> Most absurd of all is that […] there is a national party which has seen better days, and which has now come up with the idea that Islam is the last hope for humanity. Today our political opponents in Hungary are in a hopeless situation. They have failed to understand the mood of the times. On the most important issue they have not stood by us, and have not stood by the country. They did not support us when the fences was being built. They withdrew to the sidelines during the referendum on the mandatory migrant quota. They did not support the amendment to the Constitution. They denied the reality of immigration. They denied the reality of the mandatory migrant quota and the Soros Plan. The people can see this and know the truth. (Hungria, 2018c, s/p apud Freire and Resende, 2023, position 3125-3140).

3.3.2
Similarities of the right: The Enemy vs. the People rhetoric

Abrahamsen et al (2020) points out that the New Right is using this rhetoric of enemy vs. the people in order to separate on the one side, the enemy, those who profit from globalization and are responsible for the current scenario: “the elite-dominated international institutions such as the UN, the EU, and NATO; NGOs; managed global capitalism; and transnational cultural and educational networks” (p.98). And, on the other side, the people, the ones who were left behind because did not succumb to this liberal globalized way of living. According to the authors, what the NR does is to portray those who are “the predominant victims of the regimes (…) [as] the very agents (…) capable of overthrowing it” (p.99). In this context, the New Right comes as defending the sovereign nation-state against globalization, and the traditional cultures against the loss of meaning coming from liberal ideology. “[T]he NR sees an opportunity to mobilize traditional culture to reactionary ends, while at the same time seeking to reintroduce social meaning through cultural politics” (p.99).

This separation between ‘us vs. them’ has created a hostile environment in which marginalized group (such as migrants, feminists, LGBTQIA+ people etc.) are seen as undeserving and beneficiating from the system. The proposed solution from the NR is to overthrow the liberalism because it has been too weak, relativist and complacent in creating solution to the current scenario of calamities and implement locally and globally their strategies that are anti-elitists, misogynous, racists and xenophobe. “[T]he NR has embarked on a campaign to gain control over key EU institutions, which are allegedly in the hands of unaccountable European bureaucrats and undemocratic global capitalists” (Abrahamsen et al, 2020, p.100).

In Hungary, the People vs. Enemy is central to Orbán´s discourses and it has been connected both to the critique of globalization, previously presented, and to the nationalism in a transnational movement, presented next. One important enemy picked by the Prime Minister was George Soros, a Hungarian philanthropist and billionaire eradicated in the USA. According to Freire and Resende (2023) “George Soros is the word capable of condensing all the subjects of the political border who oppose the 'people': immigrants, opposition parties, media and international NGOs, Brussels and Western European governments” (position 3109, my translation). As seen below in Orbán´s discourse:

> We are up against media outlets maintained by foreign concerns and domestic oligarchs, professional hired activists, troublemaking protest organizers, and a chain of NGOs financed by an international speculator, summed up by and embodied in the name “George Soros”. This is the world we must fight with in order to defend that which is ours (Hungria, 2018a, s/p apud Freire and Resende, 2023, position 3067).

3.3.3.
Similarities of the right: Nationalism in a Transnational movement

Renton (2019) calls attention to the importance of understanding the nationalism in the new right´s rhetoric. In the case of Hungary, it is notorious the presence of the words “Hungary”; “Hungarians” and “Hungarian people” in Orbán´s discourses (Freire and Resende, 2023). As highlighted in the Prime Minister´s speeches below:

> We passionately love **Hungary**, and are ready to do everything we can for it.

> Being **Hungarian** means that we love our homeland and respect one another.
> The good soldier does not fight because he hates that which is facing him, but because he loves that which is behind him. He loves **Hungary and Hungarians** (Hungria, 2018b, s/p apud Freire and Resende, 2023, position 3080, my emphasis).

> I believe that **Hungarians** have a future if we remain **Hungarians**: if we cultivate the **Hungarian language**, defend our Christian and **Hungarian culture**, and preserve independence and **Hungarian freedom**. Well now, Dear Friends, this is the **Hungarian model**, and – as far as I can see – it works. Appreciating hard work, supporting families, retaining national identity and preserving independence: this is the future – and this future can be ours (Hungria, 2018c, s/p apud Freire and Resende, 2023, position 2975-2986, my emphasis).

Freire and Resende (2023) argue that this 'nationalism' deep-rooted in Orbán´s rhetoric is connected to the People vs. Enemy imaginary. In this imaginary, by emphasizing the national aspects of the country (culture, language, religion, history etc) a Hungarian identity would be built – The people; in a contraposition to that identity there would be an Enemy - George Soros, European Institutions, Migrants etc.

According to Renton (2019), it is not properly nationalism that they are defending but something else, something new. "If nationalism was supposed to be about protecting what was specific to a country from the encroachment of the global then the nationalists (...) were becoming a new cosmopolitan movement of their own" (p. 141). Hence, for the author it should not be addressed as nationalism but as 'internationalism', since it is central to the new right political project. In addition, the author points out that:

> [t]hese international links changed the character of the right in each country, enabling it to acquire a deeper social layer of support and to advance more radical demands (...). In working together in a permanent alliance, the mainstream and its outliers were converging at a mid-point somewhere between the centre and the far right (p.149).

In sum, this convergence of the right has meant more than coalitions among conservative/mainstream and far-right parties. In some contexts, it has also meant a radicalization process where old conservative and center-right parties are moving even more to the right. Three common aspects were perceived: an anti-globalization rhetoric; enemy vs. the people mobilization, and a worldwide international alliance. In Europe, the new wave of the right made use of the anti-immigration and anti-global (and European) elite sentiment as a form to guarantee their place in national parliaments and executive positions. Not just in Europe, this new wave is connected

in forms of networks spread through the world and their internationalism is central to a common project. This internationalism values New Right´s local/national achievements around the world, where one's victory in their national context in celebrated in other countries as a victory of the cause. This networking provides possibilities for the new right to exchange experiences with other NR politicians and develop their positions in national context. It is through this transnationality that the NR wants to create a common and larger right-wing audience around the world.

3.3.4.
Divergences of the right

It is of the highest importance not to take this convergence as a unified process since the new right changes according to the country and the context. Thus, this work will now focus on three main core divergences inside the global new right wave: economy, values, and geopolitics. The divergences will be presented using the Hungarian case as an example; however, one should not consider Hungary as a case with no similarities with the New Right. On the contrary, Orbán´s regime is known as an extreme example of how the politics from the NR are tested and implemented. Concurrently, Hungary is also a prominent example of how the new right politics may vary in different times and places. Ruling for more than a decade, Orbán has been able to personalize the new right politics according to the country specificities and even change his rhetoric depending on the context.

3.3.4.1
Economic divergences

Steven Forti (2021) argues that there are divergences in how the new right-wing parties are dealing with the economic aspect. On the one hand, some parties have moved more to the left in a Welfare Chauvinism program – "a proposal that combines the claim of certain elements of the social State with a very restrictive position regarding who can receive the benefits of national solidarity" (p. 79, my translation). On the other hand, some new right-wing parties have as central to their program a neo or ultraliberal ideology. In a hybrid association of both welfare

chauvinism and neoliberal ideology, Hungary is under a 'neoliberal regime of social policy'[10] called 'Orbánomics'.

In what concerns the Welfare chauvinism, Orbán has implemented conservative social policies in the country. The family support programs are known as the center of Orbán's social policies. As pointed out by Graff and Korolczuk (2022), in contrast to the neoliberal policies which consider the family as an alternative to the welfare state, the 'family values' are used by ultraconservative chauvinist-welfare states as a redistribution social policy. However, it is not quite what is happening in Hungary. These pro-family policies were designed to exclude the low-income families (mostly poor workers, unemployed and Romans). Concurrently, the universal social policies- such as the subsidies- have not had any increase during Orbán´s government.[11] So, the redistribution social policy that was expected has not taken place, on the contrary, the family support programs have just increased the social inequalities.

Concerning the neoliberal aspect, Orbán´s regime has maintained several austerity policies: (1) they reduced the effective tax rate -now the lowest in Europe- for multinational corporations besides giving them generous fiscal advantages to invest in the country; (2) they introduced a flat income tax - which also affected the minimum wage - benefiting just the richest ones in the country; (3) they reduced government spending in the social and educational areas; and (4) they implemented new labor policies directly attacking the unions power and harming the workers´ rights.

> [I]n the face of proclamations of patriotism, protectionism and pauperism, the government has put into practice since its return to power in 2010 "a social Darwinism of the neoliberal type", renouncing "the universal nature of state assistance to transform the benefits [...] in a sectoral and highly discretionary welfare state"[12] (Forti, 2021, p. 84, my translation).

[10]M. Vegh, https://www.contretemps.eu/hongrie-Orbán-economie-inegalites-neoliberalisme/ Accessed on 27-06-2023 at 11:14 am

[11]https://www.contretemps.eu/hongrie-Orbán-economie-inegalites-neoliberalisme/ Accessed on 27-06-2023 at 11:14 am

[12] S. Bottom, Orbán. Un despota in Europa, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2019

3.3.4.2
Values divergences

The second divergence presented by Forti (2021) is about values. In this part, this work will focus on the Christian and (traditional) Family values as it is mobilized by the new right as a contrast to the gender aspect. Later, on the next chapter, the opposition 'Gender vs. Family' will be better explained when analyzing anti-gender groups.

It is possible to observe relations of the new right connected to the Christian and traditional family values. The cultural background and political traditions play an important role in defining how the new right works in the country. Addressing the religious aspect, Forti (2021, p.85, my translation) points out that "in Catholic or Orthodox countries, positions are much tougher if compared to Protestant countries, where religion has historically had a much smaller weight in its contemporary era". How to deal with Christian and family values (gender and sex orientation included) may vary from Moderate to Ultraconservative.

In the moderate spectrum there are party leaders that make use of their divergent sexual orientation to draw attention to the possibility of being a right-wing gay, as it is the case of Geer Wilders, from the Netherlands and Alice Weidel, from Germany. In addition, many times the 'homonationalism' is present in the new right discourses confirming a critique of the identity politics and valuing patriotism. In the middle spectrum, there are right-wing leaders who draw attention to being a woman in leadership but with differences regarding the religious aspect. In Italy, the prime- minister Giorgia Meloni identifies herself emphasizing her religion, saying: "I am Giorgia, I am a woman, I am a mother, I am Christian, I am Italian".[13] Going against this religious connection, Marine Le Pen in France is associated with secularism in a rhetoric of woman´s security and anti-immigration. In the other extreme spectrum, there are patriarchal conservative leaders, as the case of Orbán, who assert both the religion and traditional family values, being against any gender and sex orientation divergence. However, as it has been pointed out in this work,

[13] Forti, p. 89 apud discourse of Meloni in San Giovanni de Roma Square in October, 2019.

Hungary is also a case of how this new right politics are been distorted due to local interests.

Concerning the Christian values, Orbán has insistently connected religion to the nation-state. Even the new constitution, formulated during his regime, addresses the link between nationhood and Christianity. “Orbán has repeatedly argued that liberal democracy needs to be replaced by “Christian democracy,” which protects “the ways of life springing from Christian culture” (Abrahamsen et al, 2020, p. 101).

It is important once again to draw attention to how the leaders from the new right not just use the culture background of the country but also manipulate their discourses to match the political context and their interests. The case of Orbán and Turanism[14] is one of these examples. As pointed out by Teitelbaum (2020, p.60) “[b]y fall of 2018 the president, began declaring Hungarians—the people and their language—as Turkic in larger and larger forums”. Making use of Turanist nationalism rhetoric, Orbán´s discourses started to link Hungarian cultural background to the East, strengthening the links with Turkey via traditionalism. This change of discourse led to “[a] few months later Hungary would become the first country in the European Union to buy armored vehicles from Turkey” (Teitelbaum, 2020, p.61).

When it comes to family values, some aspects may be considered contradictory. Although the prime minister uses discourses of traditional family values, some of his government changes in respect to social policies derived from women´s demands. According to the government discourse, women play two important roles in society: worker and mother. Therefore, Orbán´s government advanced a specific family policy - ‘GYED extra’- to provide state benefits for childcare even after the parent was back to work. “This creates better opportunities for women, as they are able to receive the benefit and a wage at the same time, encouraging them to return to the labour market”.[15] Another example is the day

[14] Turanism has been defended by the Hungarian extreme-right as: “ the belief, historically dubious though not entirely devoid of truth, that ethnic Hungarians originated as nomads in Central Asia and migrated into the Carpathian Basin of Central Europe in the distant past” (Teitelbaum, 2020, p. 54).

[15] Orsolya Bajnay https://cz.boell.org/en/2022/12/09/Orbán-Viktors-social-contract-women#_ftn13

nursery: “Since 2018, all municipalities must have a day nursery if there are more than 40 children under the age of three resident there, or if at least five families demand one.”[16]

These two agendas (childcare as paid work and daycare guaranteed by the State) have been central to feminist demands for decades in spite of being difficult to have them implemented even in liberal left-wing governments. Nevertheless, these feminist agendas should not be confused with the aforementioned ‘family’ policies. At first, Orbán´s policies seem progressive in not restricting the role of women to the traditional private space: “several of their policies encourage women to return to their jobs after childbearing, and some are even helpful for lower class people as well, such as the development of day nurseries”.[17] Quite the contrary, these policies are part of a pronatalism government agenda which aims to increase the fertility rate in Hungary. Adding to that, the country is facing labor shortages and the woman´s earnings are considerably lower. ‘[T]he wage gap between women and men, (...) is still an issue in Hungary, (...) [and it was] the fifth biggest wage gap in 2020 amongst EU countries”[18].

3.3.4.3. Geopolitical divergences

Forti (2021) presents as a third divergence the geopolitical aspect. The author addresses that the right-wing leaders in Europe are mostly either anti-Russia (and Pro-USA) or they are impartial. Some of these leaders criticize America´s practices- wishing for a more independent Europe- but without losing bonds with the country. Some other leaders share some of the ‘Putinian’ ideas- such as strong leadership- but do not open ally with Russia. Hungary does not follow any of these policies and once more has an exceptional attitude in relation to the positions of its European colleagues.

When addressing the relationship with Russia, contrasting with other ex-soviet countries, Hungary does not have an anti-Russian position. Forti (2021)

[16] Idem.
[17] idem
[18] Idem.

mentions that “Since his return to government in 2010, Orbán has gone from a militant anti-communism (…) [to] a "pragmatic compromise" with Moscow based on a project for the geopolitical reorientation of the Magyar[19] country” (p.96, my translation). The Hungarian rapprochement with Russia goes against the position of other ex-soviet countries. Poland, for example, has an extreme rejection to Russia due to its past history with the Soviet Union (the invasion in 1939 and the harsh communist regime during cold war). Sharing the same anti-Russia feeling, the nationalists in the Baltic countries also reject any connection with Putin. Although sympathizing with the form of ruling of the Russian president, the far right in these countries is anti-Putin and see the USA and the NATO as saviors.

In the case of Hungary, Forti (2021) points out that the geopolitical orientation towards Russia was both a political and an economical strategy. On the one hand, Orbán and Putin share this authoritarian and traditional way of ruling. They learn from each other and share political advice, which can be seen in the implementation of the anti-LGBT Law in Hungary in 2019 based on a Russian legislation. On the other hand, Putin and Orbán developed a partnership focused on the Hungarian economy, in which Russia plays a crucial role exporting gas to Hungary. The dependance of Hungary on Russian gas plus Orbán’s interest in negotiating with Russia´s financial oligarchy highly influences the country geopolitical positioning. “[The Hungarian Prime minister] has defended on multiple occasions the end of the European Union sanctions against Russia after the annexation of Crimea and has publicly defended the Kremlin line in both Syria and Ukraine” (p. 97, my translation).

Forti (2021) argues that concerning the relationship with the USA, one important aspect to draw attention to is that Hungary is part of the NATO. Hungary has never broken up relations with the U.S., on the contrary, their relation flows from a pragmatic to a closer one, depending on who is their leader. “[W]ith Trump in the White House, the Budapest government has become very close to Washington - Orbán publicly supported the candidacy of the New York tycoon in 2016 and in 2020” (p. 97, my translation). The same relation based on values and/or

[19] Hungarian

economic advantages is taking place with the European Union. “Budapest is not against the Union but accepts it in exchange for a certain margin of political sovereignty and rejecting the rule of law” (p.97, my translation). In addition, the Hungarian Prime Minister is creating his own network around the globe. Both Germany, Israel, and China, are examples of countries where Orbán managed to build connections that bring to his government economic advantages and develops his political strength -inside and outside Hungary.

Once again, this research intends to emphasize that the Hungarian strategies specificities are crucial to be understood in relation to the country´s national context. There is a tendency in literature to analyze the Central Eastern Europe region all together and even highlight a regional division (East/West) when the quality of democracy is concerned. As pointed out by Sedelmeier (2023), “studies of democratic backsliding have been at the forefront of framing the issue as a general ‘eastern’ problem in the EU” (p.2). However, framing the issue as a regional one is counter-productive in two aspects. First, it discourages the debate of further East enlargement affecting the EU´s influence in the democratization process in the region. Second, once the role of the EU is discredited its policies regarding sanctions are also affected.

> If the latter [Eastern countries] are perceived to be unable to achieve similar levels of democracy as the western members, then it may also be seen as inevitable that they will either backslide or at best merely maintain a low level of democracy (…) In this way, [it] can predispose EU member states against using sanctions to enforce democracy internally. (p.5)

Arguing against this East-West division, Sedelmeier (2023) says that it tends to represent on the one side, the East as the democracy backlash, and on the other side, the West as the role model and protector of the democratic institutions in the EU. This attitude has not just influenced in the EU´s policy but it has also created the peril of focusing on a region instead of paying attention to the country’s specificities:

> On the one hand, western member states are certainly not immune to backsliding, as not least the cases of Greece or Austria indicate. (...) [On the Other hand] [s]ome eastern members are often found among the stronger democracies: Estonia stands out for having attained a level of democracy that is better than most western European member states. (p. 21)

This perception of East-West division is unfavorable to both the EU not being a proper protector of democracy of its member states and to the CEE countries not being understood in their specificities. Addressing this concern of Sedelmeier (2023), this research will focus specifically on the Hungarian case and later the role of EU in the democratization process.

In Hungary, Orbán has ruled the country for more than a decade, controlling all aspects of society, and shaping national public policies and international alliances according to what favors the Hungarian regime. Therefore, in order to understand this context, the next part will focus on (1) the Hungarian history after the Cold War and the democratization process, (2) the history of Orbán and his party Fidesz after the Cold War, (3) Orbán´s regime since 2010 and (4) the role of the EU -from the influence on the democratization to the "legitimizing, constraining and supporting" role in Orbán´s regime.

3.4. Hungarian Context (1989 – 2010)

According to Scheppele (2013), after the end of the cold war and the dismantling of the Soviet Union, Hungary made its transition from the "communist nestle" to a politically stable democracy. "Hungary had been a major success story among the post-1989 transition states. A reasonably stable six-party, tri-polar political system emerged in the 1990s" (p.3). For five consecutive elections, nationalist/conservative, liberal and post-communist parties coexisted and alternated in power in regular elections. Additionally, there were always viable alternative parties each time. However, by the end of the 1990´s the Hungarian scenario changed when several parties lost their competing power. Some political parties were unable to renew their leaderships for the next generation, which resulted in their collapse. Ultimately, only three parties ran for new elections in the beginning of the years 2000. The Neo-fascist party, Jobbik; the governing party Fidesz, whose leader since 1989 was Viktor Orbán, and the Socialists. The outcome of the election was that Viktor Orbán was not re-elected, and the Socialists entered the government in 2002, staying in power until Orbán was elected in 2010.

In the first term of the Socialist government, Hungary experienced significant improvements. However, it would change in the second term with Hungary facing

a huge crisis in the political and economic scenario after 2008. During the first term, in 2004, the country joined the European Union, having waited for 10 years to become a member. A referendum was held in the country in 2003 and the proposal was approved with almost 84% of the votes. Becoming an EU member brought significant growth to the country, however, in 2006 the scenario started to change. The second term of the Socialist in power was marked by a huge economic crisis which started in 2006 and culminated with the World crisis in 2008. From 2006 to 2008, Hungary experienced a GDP drop from +4% to -5%. In addition to this catastrophe, the Socialist governing party was involved in a huge corruption scandal. Therefore, by the 2010 election, there was no viable competition: the socialist party - deeply involved in corruption scandals - and the neo-fascist party - rejected even by the nationalist public. There was only one party with the know-how and experience, which had a recognized leader, and which was not involved in the economic and corruption crisis. It was Viktor Orbán´s party, Fidesz (Scheppele, 2013).

3.4.1.
Orbán and FIDESZ: From 1989 to 2010

In order to understand how Orbán managed not only to enter the government in 2010 but also remain in power for more than 10 years, it is crucial to analyze in detail Orbán´s and Fidesz´s political path since the end of the Cold War in 1989.

According to the European Commission[20], the Constitution of 1949 was modified as a result of the agreement attained between the democratic opposition, formed by intellectual groups and movements, and the weakened communist leadership. The Amendment to the Constitution in 1989 turned Hungary into a parliamentary democracy. Consequently, the country was consolidated as a republic and as an independent and democratic constitutional state.

Despite its renewal, the constitution presented a great weakness, which lied in the "two-thirds majority" of the parliament. As explained by Krekó and Enyedi (2018), "the remodelled constitutional order, although it featured a significant

[20] https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/hungary/historical-development Accessed on 14.02.23 at 10:02 am

separation of powers, nonetheless allowed a two-thirds majority of parliament to make major institutional changes" (p. 42). This specific majority was intended to function as a mechanism to limit the Constitutional Court, which was very powerful. Thus, if the Constitutional Court made some unpopular decision, the supermajority could oppose it. However, it created a vulnerable system in which no one thought that a single party could get the majority. No one else, except Orbán (Scheppele, 2013).

Scheppele (2013) points out that Orbán had a plan not just to come back to power but also to remain as long as he wished. The author draws attention to three main factors. First, Orbán was quite aware how the Constitutional order worked as he had been part of its renovation in 1989. Second, he was prime minister from 1998-2002, when he lost to the socialists. So, not only did he know the constitutional flaws, but he also had the experience and connections from his time in power. Third, he had enough time to orchestrate his plan consulting several private law offices without calling attention to his scheme. "During his eight years in the political wilderness from 2002-2010, his party hired phalanxes of private law firms to draft a plan that would permit the capture of the government" (p.7). The plans consisted in once Orbán was back in power, hundreds of complex laws – a new Constitution included - would be implemented to create a system completely controlled by the Fidesz´s prime minister. However, it could just happen if his party had two-thirds of the parliament, which Orbán strategically managed to achieve:

> Brought to power in spring 2010 in a free and fair election, Orbán turned 40% popular approval into a 53% party-list vote, which, under Hungary's disproportionate election law, gave his Fidesz party 68% of the seats in a unicameral parliament. Under the rules of the game, Hungary's constitution could be changed with a two-thirds vote (Scheppele, 2013, p.5).

Once in power, Orbán started to implement his own regime in the country. Neither a democracy as such, nor an authentic autocratic government. Orbán had created a unique regime. Some authors call it Autocratic Legalism, others call it a Hybrid Regime, but the Orbán itself names it Illiberal Democracy. So as to properly understand the differences, this work will revise the three concepts, digging into the specificities of the Hungarian government, to analyze the regime created by Orbán.

3.5
Orbán´s regime: Illiberal democracy? Authoritarian legalism? Or hybrid regime?

Currently, liberal democracies have been questioned in Eastern Europe but in other terms, with regimes calling themselves "illiberal democracies". For decades scholars have called the attention that "illiberal democracies" were gaining strength, so the researchers should advocate to a democracy that not only follows the electoral procedures, but one that guarantees a constitutional liberalism (Kurki, 2010). However, to say that a democracy can be other than liberal - such as illiberal - does not give a clear understanding of the term. "Illiberal democracy" has been used by state leaders to mean different things. One specific meaning is to contrast it to the liberal term, which is connected to politicians from the left. Therefore, when right wing leaders call their governments "illiberal democracies" it represents a kind of government against the identity politics, connected to left-wing politics. This idea can be confirmed in Orbán´s speech:

> The Hungarian nation is not a simple sum of individuals, but a community that needs to be organized, strengthened and developed, and in this sense, the new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state organization, but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead. (Scheppele, 2018, p. 562, footnote 57).

Scheppele (2018) points out that Orbán in his speech emphasizes that for him, being illiberal would not mean denying a foundational value of liberalism: freedom. However, the freedom referred is the "freedom of speech". The author draws attention to another speech of Orbán: "Liberalism today no longer stands for freedom but for political correctness, which is antithetical to freedom" (Orbán *apud* Scheppele, 2018, p. 567). Scheppele (2018) argues that Orbán, and other state leaders, on purpose "mistake the conflict between two values— freedom of speech and respect for the dignity of others—for a fight between liberalism and illiberalism" (p.568). Far from being an innocent mistake, those leaders intend to undermine the term liberal, addressing the countries and institutions that call themselves liberal as not truly valuing freedom. And after, use the term illiberal as

being against the identity politics, opposing the "political correctness" and defending the freedom of speech and the national interest.

For Scheppele (2018) those leaders are not implementing an illiberal regime but autocratic one. They seek to minimize liberal democracy entering the government by electorate mandates and use the legal mechanism to implement their autocratic regime. "They use their democratic mandates to launch legal reforms that remove the check on executive power, limit the challenges to their rule, and undermine the crucial accountability institutions of a democratic state" (p. 547). Scheppele (2018) names those regimes Autocratic Legalism. Thus, for the author, it is not a question of *if* democracy is falling apart in the country, but also *how* it is happening.

> Some constitutional democracies are being deliberately hijacked by a set of legally clever autocrats, who use constitutionalism and democracy to destroy both. (...) New autocrats are not just benefiting from the crisis of confidence in public institutions; they are attacking the basic principles of liberal and democratic constitutionalism because they want to consolidate power and entrench themselves in office for the long haul (Scheppele, 2018, p. 547).

If, for Scheppele (2018) Hungary could not be called any type of democracy, but an Autocratic Legalist regime, for other authors this label would still be limited. For Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018), adding an adjective to democracy or authoritarianism does not emphasize that it is a hybrid regime, an independent one: neither a democracy, nor an autocracy, but a place in between. For the authors, Hungary is facing a hybrid regime that does not fit as a democracy or an autocracy and need to be handled taking into account its specificities. Orbán´s regime is one that, one the one hand, fulfils the democratic mandatory requirements, as regular elections and a legislative parliament, but, on the other hand, has authoritarian characteristics: a strong leader, Viktor Orbán, in the executive power; the legislative controlled by Fidesz, prime minister´s party, with two-thirds of the seats, and a judiciary debilitated by the abrupt Constitutional changes in the country.

In addition, the authors argue that Hungary´s regime is not just hybrid, but also unique. According to Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018), Hungary was a consolidated democracy in a liberal Western-type - the first and only in Eastern Europe - before Orbán holding power. The Prime Minister and its party managed to hijack the democratic government transforming it in a hybrid regime with authoritarian

characteristics. The authors argue that the Hungarian case shows that first hybrid regimes are not merely a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic government, they can go the opposite direction, acquiring more and more authoritarian characteristics. Second, hybrid regimes can be planned to last long, such as the Orbán´s case, constantly undermine democracy without wanting to become an Open Autocratic government. By staying as hybrid regime, Hungary manages to have authoritarian characteristics but still be recognize and benefit as a Democracy.

After this literature review, it is important to emphasize that it is not this works intention to analyze which label would be proper to use when describing Hungarian regime. After pointing out the literature diversion, this work will make use some of those labels according to the authors preference, focusing on how the process of democracy dismantling is happening.

3.5.1.
Orbán´s regime: The dismantle of Democracy.

Previously in this chapter it was said how Hungary became a democracy that guaranteed the division of the three powers (executive, legislative and judiciary), had regular elections, regulations institutes, and free media. It all started to change after the 2010 elections that brough Orbán back to power, this time with a two-third majority of the Parliament. “Orbán’s early legal initiatives attacked the Independence of crucial institutions, such as the judiciary (and) the media” (Scheppele, 2018, p. 549-550). If on paper many of these institutions still exists, in practice “the broader institutional structure favors governmental forces and drastically decreases the chances of (…) democratic change of government” (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p. 1174).

The first dismantlement of democracy planned by Orbán was the Constitution. As pointed out before, “Hungary chose not to adopt a new constitution after communism fell, but instead amended its 1949 basic law” (Krekó and Enyedi, 2018, p. 42). Hence, Orbán´s plan was to use a discourse of modernizing and getting rid of the remnants of communism to propose the implementation of a new constitution. Nevertheless, there was a great problem, the Constitutional Court

would oppose it. But it was already considered in Orbán´s plan and he knew what to do (Schapelle, 2018).

According to Scheppele (2018) the Prime Minister was well aware that the Constitutional weakness lay on the "two-third majority" of the parliament, which means that the supermajority could oppose any decision from the Constitutional Court. "With a constitutional supermajority that meant he could change any law in the system at will, including the constitution" (p.550). Thus, when Fidesz won the 2010´s election and had two-thirds of the legislative, Orbán started to put in practice his plan to remain in government.

The first step was downsizing the Constitutional Court power. In a rhetoric of implementing a more "efficient" Court, Orbán increased the number of judges, who were appointed by his party. This move made Fidesz much better represented at the Court. In addition, they cut down the jurisdiction of the Court in some important areas, reducing its jurisdiction to only irrelevant cases. At the end, when a new constitution came into place, in 2012, the Court was already too weak to fight back, and consequently just consolidated Orbán´s power to rule the way he had planned.

Another strategic movement from Orbán´s regime was reorganizing the judiciary. In order to make it "modern and efficient" a new judicial administration office was created. The strategy consisted of first, reducing the age of retirement of the judges, so the old leadership who did not share the same ideas could be replaced. Second, placing Fidesz members party in control of the new judicial administration office, which now had the power to assign any case to any administrative Court. As Scheppele (2013) pointed out:

> In these two steps—replacing the judicial leadership and giving their own appointees the power to move any case to any court—Fidesz invented a judicial machine to ensure that all politically sensitive cases were under their control, while simultaneously preaching the doctrine of efficiency (Scheppele, 2013, p. 8).

Conquering the Parliament, the Constitutional Court and weakening the judiciary power was not enough to guarantee Orbán´s perduring in the government. In order to benefit the Prime Minister and his party, important institutions were reorganized. "The ombudsman, state audit office, public prosecutor, media board, election commission, monetary council, budget council, and judicial administration office were all "strengthened" as is befitting a good democracy" (Scheppele, 2013, p.7). In a strategic movement, Fidesz replaced those offices with new occupants –

all chosen and controlled by the party- in a way that it seemed they were strengthening the democracy by giving them independence and supermajority. For Krekó and Enyedi (2018, p.42):

> Fidesz exploited its legislative dominance by unilaterally changing the constitution and replacing key officials in every politically relevant institution. Checks and balances were erased as the staffs and workings of the once semi-autonomous Prosecutor-General's Office, Electoral Commission, State Audit Office, Fiscal Council, state media, and Constitutional Court were radically transformed.

Orbán´s regime is not interfering only in the main democratic institutions, the make themselves present everywhere. "Orbán and his party not only keep a firm grip on the legislative and executive branches, but also dominate virtually all spheres of social life, including commerce, education, the arts, churches, and even sports" (Krekó and Enyedi, 2018, p. 40). The scenario in Hungary is that "the media has been monopolized, civil society has been neutralized, the "democratic" opposition (...) has been completely ineffective, and more than half a million people have left the country" (Scheppele, 2018, p.556).

Summing it up, guaranteed by the constitutional law, the two-third parliament majority, the control of Constitutional Court, the renovated judiciary, and the regulation institutes, Orbán not just prepared to consolidate power, but also to remain in the office indefinitely. Orbán and Fidesz managed to create a regime that dominates every aspect of social life, but in a manner that resembles a democratic country. "They masquerade as democrats and govern in the name of their democratic mandates. They don't destroy state institutions; they repurpose rather than abolish the institutions they inherited" (Scheppele, 2018, p. 573).

Orbán´s unique regime has already been in power for more than a decade and it is difficult to expect any change to a path toward democracy. Since the 2010s election, Fidesz managed to keep the two-third majority in the parliament, gained more than half a million new voters, thanks to his anti-immigration speech, and maintained the opposition weak and divided. Although the attempt of a union pro-Europe between Orbán´s opposition - even the Socialist party made alliances with Jobbik – in the 2022 elections, Orbán and his party managed to be victorious. In Orbán´s word: "We won a victory so big you can see it from the moon and you can

certainly see it from Brussels"[21]. Not just this last election, but the previous ones were considered "free but not fair" since the political scenario has been manipulated and controlled by the government.

> Competition is made uneven via the concentration of power, the elimination of the independence of government bodies to provide checks and balances, the occupation of public media and the constant obstruction of the normal functioning of independent media, financial blackmailing, and the threatening and smearing of oppositional politicians and civil organization representatives (Kováts, 2020, p. 79).

One crucial aspect to be analyzed in Orbán´s regime, and that supports the maintenance of its rhetoric as a democratic country while advancing its authoritarian/conservative decisions is the role of the European Union. Hence, the next section focusses on the role of the EU in constraining but also sustaining and legitimizing the Hungarian regime.

3.6. The role of EU

Prior to addressing the role of the EU in Orbán's regime, this part of the chapter will draw attention to how the EU influenced both the democratization process of the country albeit not preventing or acting against the democratic dismantle.

3.6.1. The Enlargement of the CEE region

Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2019) mention that "[i]n 2004, the European Union (EU) admitted the first wave of Central and East European countries (CEECs). Accession to the EU completed the new member states' long 'return to Europe' after the end of the Cold War" (p. 1). Even though there has been lately a re-evaluation of the EU Eastern enlargement due to the dismantling of Democracy in the region. Furthermore, a division between old member states (West) and new member states (East) has been currently addressed in both media

[21] https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/04/04/a-victory-so-big-you-can-see-it-from-the-moon-and-brussels-says-hungary-s-viktor-Orbán

and academy. As it has been pointed out by many authors: Valasek (2018) affirms that "[t]he perception of an unbridgeable divide and an authoritarian creep is beginning to lead to a reevaluation of EU enlargements since 2004" (p.1). Confirming this perception, Lehne (2019) points out that "Many in Western Europe now think the EU was extended too far and too quickly (p. 1). Also, Rupnik (2019) argues that this interpretation of a division East-West "is perceived as threat to the European project and (…) a justification in hindsight of the reservations with regard to the very idea of enlarging the EU to the East…." (p.1).

However, as previously mentioned, this work understands the importance of looking at the national contexts and the countries specificities instead of focusing on the region. Hence, the role of the EU in, first, promoting democracy in Hungary and then, watching the dismantling of its democratic institutions.

3.6.2. Hungary

According to Sedelmeier (2010) the democratization process in Hungary followed a trajectory in which a constellation of liberal parties agreed on liberal reforms and integration into Western international organizations. For the author, the EU influenced in Hungary in what concerns the democratic path. The PHARE programme (the *Pologne Hongrie: aide à la restructuration économique*) was a financial assistance program specifically to Poland and Hungary to support the consolidation of democracy. "This "Democracy Program" provided funding for civil society organizations that engaged in activities to promote an inclusive, pluralist, and participatory political culture" (p. 520-521). Yet, this influence on the consolidation of democracy in the country was not considered an external EU pressure. Certainly, this external pressure occurred in other countries of the central Eastern region (Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria) but it did not occur in Hungary. Hence, it would be difficult to argue that Hungary would not have become a democracy without the EU (Sedelmeier, 2019).

Although it was not a pressure, the influence on democratization played the role of guaranteeing that Hungary, as a potential member state, matched the EU conditionalities. Hence, in addition to being a European state, the EU conditionalities stipulate that all member states must have the democratic aspect. In

1978, the "Declaration on Democracy" confirmed that "respect for and maintenance of representative democracy and human rights in each Member State are essential elements of membership". Afterwards, in 1997, an amendment to the Treaty of Amsterdam stated as preconditions of membership "the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law"[22] (Sedelmeier, 2019).

Sedelmeier (2019) argues that both statements aforementioned were concerned with the fact that a new member state could revert to authoritarianism once it obtained full membership. Hence, safeguards were defined in case the democratic standards were not followed after the member state accession. And also procedures to suspend membership were specified in case of serious and persistent breaches of these principles. If democratic concerns were ever a high priority before letting a country become a member state, once it joined the EU, these concerns seemed to be left aside. Sedelmeier (2019) points out that after the new members obtained membership, the EU did not sustain its influence on the democratization process in the countries. In addition, this concern in influencing the post-communist states may not even have been present in the EU during the first half decade, as there is just little evidence of it in the early studies.

Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier (2019) argue that the post-accession compliance with the EU rules was not sustainable in cases like Hungary due to two issues: Reward and Credibility. The first aspect, reward, was a (conditional) positive incentive from the EU to possible member states for them to comply with democratic liberal norms. However, after accession, there are only negative incentives, the EU can only threaten the member states with sanctions. The second is connected to the credibility of the institution to make use of these sanctions. In the case of democratic backsliding, if the EU does not take actions against the violations, the negative incentives do not have the effect expected. But even how to start the sanctions has been difficult not just politically but also legally:

> With regard to the rules of liberal democracy, Article 7(2) TEU entails sizeable sanctions: it allows the Council to 'suspend certain…rights' of a member state for 'serious and persistent' breaches. However, the autonomy of EU institutions in

[22] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/pdf/amst-en.pdf Accessed on 10.09.23 at 12:13 pm

> deciding on sanctions is extremely limited: the member states themselves determine by unanimity (minus one) whether such a breach has occurred. (…) (Also), [d]eterminacy is lower for Article 7 since the determination of what constitutes a breach of liberal democratic values is carried out by the member states through voting, rather than through legal reasoning of an autonomous institution (Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2019, p. 6-7).

According to Sedelmeier (2019), EU´s credibility to use sanctions against democratic non-compliance has been low after the concentration of power and now consolidation of "Illiberal democracies", such as Poland and Hungary. In the Hungarian case, the EU took a long time to openly criticize Orbán´s government and when actions were taken, they were not enough, just being able to influence the domestic change in the margins. In addition, Orbán created alliances inside the EU with other Illiberal states, such as Poland, to prevent drastic sanctions against the countries.[23] Finally, Sedelmeier (2019) argues that not only has the EU been unable to prevent these breaches of liberal democracy, but also the EU proved to incapable to act as a democratization force after the dismantling of the democratic institutions.

According to Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018), the role of the EU may not be strong enough to prevent the democratic backsliding in the country, but it is crucial to prevent the Orbán´s regime to become an open authoritarian government. The authors called attention to the fact that the form the EU functions should not be understood as separated from the member states political system, but rather as part of it, in a species of multi-level governance, polity and constitutional system. "[T]he EU does not only exert its influence through providing a framework, but also fulfils systemic functions in the political systems of its member states" (p.1178). Concerning the Hungarian context, Orbán managed to strategically change internally the pollical system to maintain himself in power. However, it was not just the internal conditions that made possible Orbán´s hybrid regime. According to the authors, there is an external condition that besides constraining it, also sustains and legitimizes this as a hybrid regime: it is the European Union.

> The unique properties of the Hungarian hybrid regime follow from the fact that it is part of the EU, which is made up of democratic member states (...) Consequently, the EU functions as a "regime sustaining", a "regime constraining", and, last but not

[23] https://euobserver.com/rule-of-law/142825 Accessed on 17.09.23 at 11 am.

least, as a "regime legitimizing" factor for Hungary (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p.1174).

Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018) argue that the EU *legitimizes* Orbán´s government when it does not take the necessary steps to hinder the country changing from a democracy to a hybrid regime. One the one hand, it can be seen as a matter of legal procedures, where the European Commission does not have the legal and political tools, or even procedural precedent to stop Hungary in its path towards an authoritarian direction. This breach in legal procedures shows a tremendous flaw in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU). On the other hand, it can be seen as a misruling of the European Union policy, which chooses not to take drastic procedures against Hungary: Article 7 of the TEU obliges the EU to take proceedings against Hungary´s serious violations of the Article 2. So, when the EU does not do it, it legitimizes Hungary as a democratic regime, the only one accepted to be an EU member-states. "The fact remains that lack of sanctions and open criticism of the political development in Hungary indirectly legitimize the Orbán regime and strengthen the self-legitimizing discourse of its leaders who argue for the illiberal but democratic nature of their regime" (p.1181-1182).

If it looks like the European Union is doing less than the minimum concerning the dismantle of Hungary´s democracy, it seems that they are doing more than they should when financing this hybrid regime. The authors point out that the EU also *sustains* Orbán´s regime by investing heavily in the country. During almost all Orbán´s government, Hungary has received annually from the EU cohesion fund amounts that go up to 5% of the country´s gross national product[24]. It turns out that in the recent times, almost all the public investment for national development comes from EU funding. In addition, there has been several connections between Orbán´s government and accusations of corruption in the country. Reports from both the European Commission and the Transparency International Fund show that "in about 50% of public procurement procedures there is only one tender offer and 70% of these procedures are riddled with corruption, which often results in a 25% spike in pricing and in an additional corruption premium" (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p.1181). Therefore, it is easy to notice that the EU is taking part in maintaining

[24] https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/rfi/2021/07/08/ue-impulsiona-condenacao-de-lei-homotransfobica-aprovada-na-hungria.htm. Accessed on 26.01.2022 at 10:23 pm.

Hungary´s ruling corruption elite by strengthening their financial power. Moreover, the ruling elite is also formed by Orbán´s proteges, who have been called "political family". But there is not the only way the EU *sustains* Orbán´s regime: "Through increasing market demand and the potential multiplier effects of investment projects, the EU cohesion fund has contributed to the stability and modest growth of the economy, and thus the political stability of the regime" (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p.1181).

Finally, the EU also *constrains* the Hungarian regime in a way that permits Orbán´s government to get away from the democracy path, but also not letting it become an openly authoritarian regime. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) are playing constantly the role of constraining Orbán´s national changes. However, there has been a difference when decisions concern the protection of democracy and liberal constitutionalism and when they are about human rights and civil liberties.

When the issue of concern is the democratic clauses, the EU does not have a strong effect in changing Hungary´s national laws. "[T]he European Commission lacked the political and legal tools to confront effectively the Hungarian government over the dismantling of liberal democracy and liberal constitutionalism except for initiating infringement proceedings against the country" (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p.1178). Due to political influence, most of the European Court decisions about this issue are either weak or coming late and, ultimately, do not enforce any change in the country.

In contrast, when human rights and civil liberties are concerned, the European Courts play an important role in constraining Orbán´s regime. The case of the reestablishment of the death penalty in Hungary is a good example: in two days the EU forced Hungary to drop off the idea. One the one hand, Hungary decided to drop off some human rights issue due to the fact that it cannot afford to go against the Courts decision too often. Unlike the democratic principles, the human rights and civil liberty principles are well defined in EU´s treaties and may oblige the EU to take stronger actions against Hungary. On the other hand, it is also part of Orbán´s strategy to deal with the EU. He concedes in matters that are not so relevant in order to play firmly against the Court when the subject is of his interest (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018).

> Even though the EU could not stop the deconstruction of liberal democracy, it did help to slow down and prevent the undermining of liberal constitutionalism and the concomittant curbing of human rights and liberties in Hungary. Consequently, it is fair to say that membership in the EU matters (Bozóki and Hegedüs, 2018, p.1179).

According to Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018), although the EU plays the role of legitimizing and sustaining the Hungarian regime, the constraining role is pointed out as being crucial. However, other scholars such as Krekó and Enyedi (2018) do not see this constraining role as strong as it should be, calling attention to the inability of the EU in stopping the democratic dismantle in Hungary. Krekó and Enyedi (2018) understand that the constrains that EU is practicing are quite weak when compared to what they are providing to Hungary. "It (EU) is sending money to an illiberal, Euroskeptic government in Budapest that makes political hay by denouncing the EU while happily watching EU funds flow in" (Krekó and Enyedi, 2018, p. 45). And even when the EU tries to interfere in the government, Orbán uses it as an attack to Hungarian national sovereignty. The Fidesz leader uses his elected mandate as a shield to protect the interest of the Hungarian people, portraying the EU politicians as foreign bureaucrats who wish to interfere in the national affairs.

However, Bozóki and Hegedüs (2018) point out that it is very delicate the EU´s position since Hungary could go to an open authoritarian path in two cases: Either the EU´s stop the sustaining role, which could lead Hungary to leave the institution, or The EU did not constrain enough, permitting Orbán to rule without hindrances.

> First, if the EU drastically alters the generous nature of the cohesion funds, or (...) denies or limits access to cohesion transfers of member states that violate EU values. (...) the lack of financial motivation could prompt Hungary (...) to lose interest in remaining at the EU. Second, if, as result of its political and economic crises, the EU ceases to work as a political community of liberal democracies based on mutual values and interests, and thus is no longer able to fulfil its above-mentioned constraining function then we can expect Hungary to move further towards authoritarianism (p. 1182).

As discussed above the role of the EU in Hungary is contested. Some authors argue that overall, it ends up sustaining and legitimizing the regime. Others argue that the EU tries to strengthen democracy -not necessarily with success- but that it has prevented the regime from becoming fully authoritarian. After analyzed the role of the EU in the Hungarian regime, this work will address in the next chapter the

role of gender in the authoritarian/conservative turn, focusing on the gender resistance and the Hungarian context.

4
Gender Resistance in the authoritarian/conservative turn

Having acknowledged the context of the global new right and its specificities in the Hungarian case, the question about gender comes up: 'what is the role of gender in this new wave of authoritarian/conservative right-wing convergence?'. This research argues that gender has a central role not just in this new convergence of the right but also in the resistance to this democratic dismantling. Thus, this chapter is divided in two parts: (1) Gender in the core of the authoritarian/conservative turn; and (2) Gender Resistance: the case of the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Hungary.

The first part of the chapter -Gender in the core of the authoritarian/conservative turn-, analyzes how gender, working even more than a *symbolic glue*, has a central role for the convergence of the new right. Then, it will analyze the conservative anti-gender campaigns and their transnational articulation. After, the concept of *opportunistic synergy* will be used to analyze the effect of the anti-gender groups and authoritarian/conservative governments. Finally, the Hungarian case will be presented pointing out the specificities of the role of gender in the country.

The second part of the chapter - Gender Resistance: the case of the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Hungary-, analyzes the role of gender in the resistance groups in Hungary. First, it analyzes the connections between gender and democracy and focus on the combat of Violence Against Women (VAW). Next, the Istanbul Convention (IC) about Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence is addressed, focusing on the case of the IC in Hungary – from signature to non-ratification. Finally, the coalitions among Gender Grassroot Groups and Transnational Feminist Networks to fight for the IC are analyzed. Attempting to understand "how gender social movements and TFNs resist in authoritarian/conservative contexts", this work argues that the 'intersectional solidarity' in the Gender Resistance created a transformative praxis influencing the groups involved and the Hungarian political context.

4.2.
Gender in the core of the authoritarian/conservative turn

As seen in the previous chapters, the right builds on the convergence of heterogeneous groups, that share common aspects, but also diverge among each other. Local specificities and therefore divergences include religious and (traditional) family values, but there is a common claim that puts them together in the same fight, the fight against 'gender'. According to Grzebalska, Kováts and Petö (2017) gender has become a 'symbolic glue' that connects different groups and agendas to combat 'gender ideology'. However, even what is meant by 'gender' and 'gender ideology' is not a common sense, but mobilize broader emotions:

> 'Gender ideology' has come to signify the failure of democratic representation, and opposition to this ideology has become a means of rejecting different facets of the current socioeconomic order, from the prioritization of identity politics over material issues, and the weakening of people's social, cultural and political security, to the detachment of social and political elites and the influence of transnational institutions and the global economy on nation states (Grzebalska, Kováts and Petö, 2017, p. 6).

The authors highlight three movements in this process: (1) gender was manipulated to be a threatening concept which reunited contested issues, such as identity politics, under one big umbrella term; (2) the demonization of gender created an alternative politics centered on family, nation, and religious values; (3) the opposition to gender politics permitted the Right to increase their alliances, uniting several actors who previously had not cooperated. More than just a 'symbolic glue' this work argues that gender has a central aspect in connecting these distinct groups, hence these three aspects will be closely analyzed next.

4.2.1.
Manipulation (and Demonization) of Gender

Gender per se is a term under discussion, both in society and in the academy. Even among the anti-gender groups, what is meant by gender is not common sense, but an umbrella term. However, it is not just the meaning that concerns the anti-gender groups, but also all the political representation that comes with the word gender. The anti-gender fight is against the term itself and what it represents. A

fight not only against gender as a concept and as an ideology/theory but also as a social practice and political project.

The anti-gender fight is present in different places in society and the attack on Gender studies (and scholars) has become an emblematic element in this process. The anti-gender groups try to portray a fight between Gender Studies and Anti-gender Science, in which the former is seen as an unscientific ideology – sometimes associated with a conspiracy theory called 'cultural Marxism'[25]- and the latter seen as a scientific commonsense based on the sex differences between man and woman. The attacks on gender have spilled over to gender scholars, culminating in violent actions. The violent attacks on Judith Butler and Wendy Brown in Brazil, for instance, portrays this extreme reaction of anti-genderists.[26] The anti-gender attacks went from demonstrations in front of places where Butler was giving lectures to an actual physical attack against the author. During the demonstrations, the anti-genderists held multiple cards. Some showed a religious claim, picturing Butler as a devil, and saying: "go to hell",[27] others were concerned with the so-called protection of the children and the family saying: "no pedophilia" and "Butler´s dream is to destroy the sexual identity of your children".[28] The anti-genderists had even made an effigy of Butler and set fire to it during the demonstration[29]. All those demonstrations showed how anti-genderists distorted Butler´s claims -linking it to pedophilia and the obliteration of children´s sexual identity- directly attacking the author´s image. The culmination of those demonstrations resulted in a violent attack at São Paulo airport, where in an attempt to hurt Butler, an anti-genderist confused her with Wendy Brown, her wife, and hurt Brown.

Not just the scholars but also the institutions are facing a hard moment in maintaining gender studies. As it has already been presented, the anti-gender attacks have used the rhetoric of defending true Science against the ideology of gender.

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[25] "Radical feminism" and "cultural Marxism" are key expressions not only in actions against the rights of women and LGBTQI people, but also against the rights of girls and boys, always in the name of "family values" (Biroli, Machado and Vaggioni, 2020, p.5, my translation).

[26] https://oglobo.globo.com/cultura/livros/escritora-judith-butler-sofre-agressao-no-aeroporto-de-congonhas-22054565 - Accessed on 10.09.23 at 02:23 pm.

[27] https://sol.sapo.pt/artigo/588162/brasil-2017-queimem-a-bruxa-jesus-tem-poder- Accessed on 15.09.23 at 01:59 pm.

[28] https://www.socialistamorena.com.br/desculpa-judith-butler-nosso-pais-virou-um-lugar-de-gente-tapada/ Accessed on 15.09.23 at 2:00 pm.

[29] https://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/noticia/viver/2017/11/filosofa-judith-butler-e-recebida-no-brasil-sob-gritos-de-bruxa-pro.html Accessed on 15.09.23 at 02:20 pm.

Additionally, right-wing governments have made use of the neoliberal discourse of lack of productivity to justify reduction of investments and even the closure of Gender studies. “In August 2018, the right- wing populist government in Hungary announced its plan to ban gender studies in both public and private universities, claiming that it no longer wishes to finance such educational programs, as their graduates have no jobs anyway” (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p.62).

The manipulation (and demonization) of the word gender has had a central role in uniting different groups. Gender has been manipulated to signify different meanings, such as the collective fear about change, loss of national identity, influence of the West and its cultural hegemony. Despite their differences, all signifiers are connected to a common emotion against the Modern Era and the Sexual Revolution. ““Gender” (...) has become the right’s rallying cry, the term that allows for collective identification by linking issues concerning family, kinship, sexuality and nation within a single chain of equivalence” (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p. 16).

Concomitant to this manipulation, the demonization of gender occurs among the anti-gender groups. Its roots could be traced back to the 1990´s when the Vatican opposed to the inclusion of the term “gender” in official UN Documents. According to Corrêa (2018), before the Vatican´s official opposition, there were already contestations coming from Islamic countries and Vatican allies concerning the mention to gender. “This unexpected tension around gender also seemed to confirm that, as we suspected, an unprecedented and worrying rapprochement was underway between the Vatican and Islamic states (p. 4-5, my translation)”. Graff and Korolczuk (2022) point out that the 1995 Beijing UN World Conference on Woman was a turning point for the Vatican to exacerbate its approach against gender. After the Conference the Hole See not just started reacting against gender equality policies but also promoting transnationally this demonization of gender in favor of the traditional family values. This ‘witch hunt’ of the Vatican against gender prepared the ground for a further development of a broader international movement against “gender ideology”. This transnational movement is not just a Catholic movement. It still preserves its religious roots but now connects different conservative groups- from Islamists to right-wing parties. In sum, “they [anti-genderists] have managed to capture the word “gender,” to redefine its meaning and

demonize it, making gender equality appear like an enemy of the people (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p. 4).

4.2.2, Gender vs. Family

According to Graff and Korolczuk (2022), the 2008´s crisis and the economic implications that prevailed were perceived by the ultraconservative actors as a "crisis of the family" not in just a discursive strategy but a political one. The crisis of the left and the rise of right-wing populism was a political opportunity for the anti-genderist to be in center stage connecting the decay of moral values to the global economic crisis. In this process, the word gender replaced feminism as the poison both to the family and the social bonds leading to economic exploitation of the people by global elites.

If gender is the poison, the family is the antidote. Anti-genderists started to reframe their campaigns as pro-family in a strategy to gather ultraconservatives, parents' networks, and right-wing governments in a claim to defend children and 'family values'. "[T]he Western construction of 'child innocence' is a particularly effective frame, which can rally larger crowds than anti- gender claims alone" (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017, p.265).

It is crucial to point out that not all parents´ networks, traditional families or right-wing governments are anti-genderists. Anti-genderism has appropriated these concepts and manipulatively used rhetoric that many times is not even linked to their reality. The fear of the immigrant, the LGBT, the feminist etc. are pre-stablished and imagined ideas that do not need to match the truth. As it has been addressed, each individual/party/network has a different articulation about gender (and sexuality). It was necessary a step further to 'glue' these distinct groups: reframing the cause from 'gender' to 'family'. Rhetorically, they started to disguise the attack on gender focusing on preserving the family. There were even cases where the word gender was replaced by the word family (violence against gender vs. violence against the family) in a move to leave behind the representation of a feminist rhetoric to construct a traditional/conservative one. However, when choosing to use the word family, the anti-genderists do not want to portray a broad

concept of a family, but a specific one: “Only the relation of a woman, man and children is a true family.” (Claudio d´Amico discourse on WCF 2019).

According to Graff and Korolczuk (2022), “Calling on parents to defend their children from homosexuals [and feminists] is more than a mere rhetorical strategy. Anti-gender groups have recognized the political potential of deeply felt familial identities, roles and experiences and have managed to capture it” (p. 115). By representing a certain configuration (heterosexual with children) as “the family”, these groups managed not only to centralize the configurations of traditional families in public policies, but also to capture the word “family” as if it represented no other than their ideal type. It is imperative to understand that in this process the anti-genderists managed to make themselves present in both civil society (ultraconservatives, religious groups, parents’ networks etc.) and in the State apparatus (new-right wing governments) portraying this specific vision of “the family”. The launching of recurrent events, such as the World Congress of Families, was an important moment to “glue” the groups, connecting members of civil society with political leaders. It was exchanging ideas and learning from each other in those reunions that conservative right wings leaders developed strategies to put into practice the family frame in state policies.

These pro-family and pro-child discourses were not just an ideological position but also a strategic form for new right-wing governments to attract a broader group of voters. “[P]opulist right has made parenthood its focus, monopolizing issues such as broadly defined child welfare, parental rights and the well- being of the family” (p. 115-116). According to Graff and Korolczuk, their use of family and parenthood is strategic and aims to mobilize broader emotions against neoliberalism. However, in right-wing discourses the connection between crisis of the family and neoliberalism is not explicitly mentioned. The authors argue that it is via the family and parenthood rhetoric that right-wing conservatives transform these economic complaints into a moral fight between Us (Pro-family/ pro-child citizens) vs. Them (Western, Feminists, Marxists, Homosexuals, Global elites etc.). According to Graff and Korolczuk (2022):

> Ultraconservative actors – both religious and secular – have skillfully harnessed people’s anxieties, resentment and anger by claiming to defend the natural family against a morally corrupt and wealthy elite. This claim alone may sound somewhat

> vague; what makes it robust and convincing is the accompanying promise of more generous social policies focused on parents and children (p.58-59).

4.2.3
Anti-gender groups, Transnational Articulations and Opportunistic Sinergy.

4.2.3.1.
Anti-gender groups

Graff and Korolczuk (2022) point out three important aspects about this anti-genderism ideology. First, they base their convictions on man´s 'natural law'. They contrast the idea of social constructionism and harshly oppose to gender studies. Their claims are heterogeneous based on one hand in Christian dogmas- in a theological belief of the natural differences between man and woman- and on the other hand in scientific views on sex differences (neuropsychology, brain sex, etc.).

Second, the anti-gender groups share a pessimistic and anti-modernist rhetoric about the West. In this narrative, Western intellectuals such as Marx, Freud and also feminists and postmodern authors influenced in the degeneration of the Western culture. Following distorted anti-colonialist rhetoric, the East (and the Global South) would be regarded as the saviors of the West, setting them free from this "modern/anti-traditional world".

> Post-socialist countries and the Global South are said to be somewhat resistant to this cultural change. Today, antigenderists claim, they can save the West from spiritual and demographic suicide by defending what are presented as the original, universal Western values, referred to as Christian values and Christian civilization (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p. 18).

Third, their ideology is aligned to conspiracy theories of global power distribution. According to the anti-gender rhetoric, big transnational corporations and even some tycoons -such as George Soros from Hungary- are seen as responsible for introducing the gender terror to their traditional society. The manipulation of speeches about human rights and huge funding to the so called 'enemies of the family' -"Gramscians, leftists, cultural Marxists, radical feminists [and] LGBT totalitarians who want to control our sons and daughters, who want to shut us up" (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p. 18, apud Ignatio Arsuaga, the founder of HazteOir and CitizenGo, in his Verona 2019 speech)- are pointed out by the

antigender groups as having contributed to the disassembling of the traditional values in Western society.

4.2.3.2
Transnational Articulations

Kováts (2018) draws attention to the transnational character of the movement against gender ideology, in the context of right-wing conservative governments. The author proposes that instead of focusing on the specificities of each country, one should understand the transnationality of these articulations. "[T]he simultaneity of the movements, the different triggers in countries that differ with respect to political landscape, as well as gender and LGBT policies indicates that rather than dealing with isolated cases, we are witnessing a transnational phenomenon" (Kováts, 2018, p. 2). There are several transnational aspects which connect those movements worldwide, such as common triggers, similar languages, and same rhetoric. One important aspect for this research is the common opposition to gender equality developments. "Anti-gender movements want to claim that gender equality is an "ideology" and introduce the misleading terms "gender ideology" or "gender theory" which distort the achievements of gender equality" (Kováts and Poim, 2015, p. 11).

Graff and Koroloczuk (2022) point out that although it is a transnational articulation, a 'local' aspect is highlighted in the anti-gender campaigns. According to this ideology, formal politics are seen as wicked and corrupt, manipulated by transnational institutions that are not concerned with the struggles of local people. Detached from this formal politics, grassroots mobilizations -such as the mobilizations of parent´s network- are seen as the true fighters combating people´s real problems. "[M]ost grassroots parental mobilizations pride themselves on being authentic and home-grown, representing the true voice of ordinary people, their everyday needs and grievances" (p.58). The mobilization of the parent/grandparent identity is common in their rhetoric, as seen in this anti-genderist claim: "I did not engage in activism as a member of a party, but as a mother and a grandmother" (Svatonova, 2019, *apud* Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p.123). By addressing the parent/grandparent identity those groups transgress from private to public spaces. They present themselves as an alternative to liberal civil society mobilizations,

criticizing the "professionalization and institutionalization of civil society, which makes citizens' initiatives donor- dependent and accountable to foreign funders rather than to the constituencies they claim to represent" (p.59).

Graff and Korolczuk (2022) argue that many of the strategies that those conservative groups are using originated from social movements and feminists' struggles. Their "strategy consists in repeating the steps by which feminism went international (and institutional) (…) building transnational networks and introducing the movement's vocabulary into the language of international institutions and treaties" (p. 46). Roggeband (2019) call it "counterframing" when groups start to make use of well dissuaded vocabulary such as 'solidarity', 'hope' and 'community' but in a different manner, using conservative framings. According to the author:

> Conservative activists have increasingly adopted those human rights frames and terminology they previously rejected to influence the international agenda. Human rights have become a central site of normative contestation, where both women rights activists and conservative actors promote contrasting interpretations of human rights (Roggeband, 2019, p.9).

This strategy of occupying the place of organized civil society – not in a liberal but a conservative way– has been fundamental in connecting these anti-gender mobilizations and new right-wing governments. This communion can be better understood via the concept of opportunistic synergy.

4.2.3.2. The opportunistic synergy

'Opportunistic Synergy' is a concept developed by Graff and Korolczuk (2022) to explain "the complex relationship between anti-gender campaigns and the rise of right-wing populism" (p. 164). A pivotal aspect to be addressed is that while gender is central to the convergence of the right, anti-genderism is not inherent to the new right´s world view. It has been presented in this research that different actors of the new right make use of gender diversely, depending on the context, audience, and political interest. Literature on anti-genderism has already highlighted the danger of mistaking anti-gender campaigns and right-wing populism (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017). However instead of just differentiating

them, this research -aligned with Graff and Korolczuk (2022) theorization- calls attention to the importance of their interconnection. Hence, it proposes to reflect on: (1) how both anti-gender mobilizations and right-wing political parties are working together -supporting and relying on each other- and (2) how this partnership may not only maintain a conservative agenda alive -when the new right is the opposition– but also develop a conservative/authoritarian agenda -in new right-wing governments. The concept of opportunistic synergy can better explain contexts where new right-wings governments are in power and how they relate with anti-gender campaigns.

According to Graff and Korolczuk (2022), this communion between anti-gender actors and right-wing politicians works both on the ideological/discursive and on the strategic/organizational level. On the ideological/discursive level, right-wing groups benefit from using narratives and arguments promoted by anti-gender campaigns. On the strategic/organizational level, anti-gender actors profit from having access to both financial and organizational structures from right-wing parties, especially when it is the New Right ruling the country. "What facilitates this collusion is not so much an intrinsic social conservatism of populist politicians, but the fact that the ultraconservative critiques of gender have been framed in populist terms and are thus readily adaptable to populist politics" (p.165).

Graff and Korolczuk (2022) argue that although there is a mutual benefit, it does not mean that both new right-wing parties and ultraconservatives share the same goals. For the right-wing parties, the anti-gender rhetoric works in a moralizing effect: on the one hand it attracts the more traditional voters and on the other hand it transforms an economic conflict -elites vs. the people- into a moral fight. The ultraconservatives benefit from political opportunity structures created by the New Right- especially when they are in power. The new right-wing parties work opening gates for anti-genderists to gain fundings and participate in policy-making processes. As allies, both groups profit from this communion, working together to increase their power in local and international spheres.

Graff and Korolczuk (2022) highlight how this alliance between right-wing parties and anti-gender groups provided the means for an elite change and the control of key institutions of society. On the ideology terms, the traditional values started becoming the basis of the new elite and society. On control terms, the new right-wing managed to get access to key societal institutions through individuals

who made their way into several bodies of control (Supreme Court, ministries, culture, the media etc.). According to the authors, it is this opportunistic synergy that enables "wide-scale elite change in governmental bodies, academia, cultural institutions and civil society" (p.7).

According to Graff and Korolczuk (2022), there is an important distinction to be made concerning right-wing alliances when in opposition and when in power. When the new right is the opposition, the opportunistic synergy works preparing the ground to a New-Right government. In civil society, anti-genderists normalize their vocabulary, softening their discourses, shifting their concern to 'the family' and attracting a broader audience. In the political arena, right-wing parties work as a strong opposition in the legislative, making it difficult to advance liberal and modern agendas. Consequently, this opportunistic synergy (1) develops the moralization of right-wing discourses- increasingly centered in the family values and traditionalism- and (2) enlarges the power of anti-gender groups, resulting both in the creation of new anti-gender groups and in the attraction of more members from civil society.

When new right-wing parties come into power, the opportunistic synergy continues to work but much more intensively. Moralizing discourses are translated into public policies; the opposition to liberal agendas turns into vetoes and even setbacks in law; both state fundings and strategic positions in international institutions become available to anti-gender groups and even transnational right-wing alliances strength their connections. Thus, this opportunistic synergy plays an important role in constructing both a conservative government and also a conservative civil society, as alternative to the liberal ones (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022).

4.2.4.
The role of gender in Hungary

According to Petö and Kovátz (2017), there is no significant anti-gender mobilization in Hungary. The authors propose some possible reasons why these movements are not yet strong in the country, analyzing both social and political contexts. First, they do not see either gender or LGBT mainstream policies in

Hungary. Both gender equality and LGBT legislation are considered being far away from institutionalization, which could be a reason for triggering the movements. Second, the Catholic Church is not an important player in the country. “Whereas the Roman Catholic Church plays a significant role in the mobilizations all over Europe, in Hungary the Church does not possess such a leading opinion making character” (p.124). Third, there are particularities of Hungarian conservatism that should be pointed out. The place of the (traditional) family is central to both right-wing conservatives and the Far Right, resulting in no difference in their gender discourses. Finally, the authors present that in Hungary there is ‘success of conflict-avoiding initiatives´, in which conservative groups and human right organizations are open to dialogue and negotiation.

All the reasons previously presented are connected to the current political context of the country. As seen before, Orbán´s illiberal regime does not aim to implement any mechanism for gender equality. The not yet emergency of anti-gender mobilizations in Hungary is related “to the (lack of) institutionalization of gender equality policies – there is nothing one can protest against – and the state of affairs with the current government, which nearly eliminated all NGOs that could be advocates for gender equality” (p.123-124).

However, having no visible anti-gender mobilization in Hungary does not mean that there are not anti-gender discourses occurring in the country. According to the authors, anti-gender discourses had their seed in 2008, when the term ‘gender ideology’ first appeared in a discourse of a Fidesz MP. The term was again used in 2010 – now in the political agenda- to oppose an amendment for preschool education. But the anti-gender discourses just became dense after 2014 while it was under discussion in the European Parliament and the link between ‘gender ideology’ and the EU was constantly reinforced by conservative representatives. The authors draw attention to a radio interview in 2014 of Katalin Novak – former Undersecretary of Family Affairs and now since 2022 the President of Hungary:

> She claimed in a deploring tone, discussing between the lines the term “gender”, that some Western governments are trying to sneak into EU and the UN documents expressions, which are expanding the notion of the family. She also stressed out that the Hungarian government does not agree with having hardly definable terms and controversial principles in these documents and would initiate a coalition with those countries which share Hungarian standpoint (p. 121).

The authors point out a shift in Novak's discourse and the government communication. "In 2011 during the Hungarian EU-presidency, the government's standpoint was that family mainstreaming should be supported instead of gender mainstreaming, which they perceived as an anti-family agenda" (p. 122). This government communication is still in connection to Katlin´s radio discourse against gender. However, the authors present that in 2015, at a UN Commission concerning the status of Women, Novak claimed that "family policy cannot be pitched against women's equality. It can be effectively pursued in parallel with women's politics" and advocated women's increased political representation" (p.122).

What the authors understand as a shift in Novak´s and the government discourse is understood in this work as a manipulation of gender agenda. According to Drumond and Rebelo (2023) conservative right-wing governments are using different strategies to deal with gender norms. In some cases, there is a crusade against the word gender – in an attempt to ban or erase the word from official documents and discourses or replace it for other words such as woman or sex. There are some cases where conservative groups use 'counterframing' as a strategy, capturing words or jargon already popularized in international arenas and reframing it in a conservative way. However, there is another strategic movement underway by right-wing governments and conservative groups: Gender washing. According to Walters (2022), there is not a clear definition of gender washing, however, this research aligned with Allan (2020) will address this strategy as a "'discourse of false state feminism,' whereby authoritarian regimes make 'claims to promote gender equality while simultaneously undermining it' in order to appease international institutions or investors" (Walters, 2022, p. 1579). Hence, it is a strategy of promoting gender equality policies but with authoritarian/conservative purposes and interests. As pointed out by Drumond and Rebelo (2023):

> Instead of confronting women's and LGBTI rights through norm spoiling, [they] align themselves with, rather than challenge, internationally accepted gender equality frameworks. (...) these actors present themselves as gender champions in order to increase their reputation, prestige and standing at the world stage (p. 4).

Recently, Katalin Novak discoursed in the Woman Delivery 2023 opening ceremony in Rwanda. The Hungarian President referred constantly to women´s empowerment and gender equality in her discourse. She pointed out that increasing the fertility rate is an important goal for Hungary in what concerns both gender

equality and women´s empowerment. In her speech, Novak affirmed that "the main challenge women face is the decision between motherhood or a career" but due to pro-family programs Hungarian women do not need to choose between career and family, they can have both. Justifying that, the President said that Hungary needs women to be both in the family and workplace. Next, by reenforcing the importance of women´s choice, she said that she hopes that her own teenager daughter feels empowered to have "even 10 children if she chooses to"[30].

Novak´s discourses are cases of manipulation of pro-gender agenda, 'couterframing' and gender washing. In her discourses, the Hungarian President captured feminist claims -such as the importance of women in politics and leadership to democracy; used 'counterframing' strategically to link 'empowerment', 'women´s equality' and 'women´s choice' to a conservative agenda- in which those words are connected to traditional values and the role of women as a mother. And even the choice argument used by feminists to address pro-abortion campaigns was captured to signify how many children a woman could have, instead of choosing NOT to have children or having an abortion. The Gender washing strategy becomes clear when she tries to present herself and the Hungarian government as defenders of women´s rights, when it is common knowledge the authoritarian characteristics and gender inequalities of Orbán´s regime.

Additionally, this manipulation of pro-gender agendas presents two important facts which must be pointed out. First, it can occur differently in national and international arenas. In the Hungarian case, the discourse to national audiences has a different purpose than the one to international audiences. For local audiences, the government wants to portray itself as strengthening the conservative regime and national interests; for international audiences, they want to guarantee their peers they are in accord with international norms and defending 'women´s equality'. This movement is seen as a strategic position of Orbán´s regime to deal with national vs. international audiences. The Prime minister himself has been using different discourses internally and externally when referring to the EU. Second, this manipulation of the gender agenda has occurred in other right-wing conservative

[30] https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jul/19/gut-churning-anger-as-hungarian-president-addresses-major-womens-rights-conference?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other Accessed on 24.09.2023 at 11:30 pm.

governments. Drumond and Rebelo (2023) argue that in Brazil, Bolsonaro´s conservative government used "a double-track approach that combines norm spoiling and gender washing to maintain a conservative and yet acceptable international profile" (p. 1). By attacking women´s human rights in some arenas while advocating gender equality in others, anti-gender actors managed to create what appear to be a contradictory manifestation.

Hence, literature shows that those inconsistencies may happen concomitantly yet in different arenas and for different audiences. This could lead to an understanding that it is not a mere shift in discourse but a strategic use of the pro-gender agenda: making use of gender norms when and in a way that it is convenient for the conservative agenda. As pointed out by Drumond and Rebelo (2023), "pro-gender norms were embraced and tolerated because they continued to act as markers of biological differences and uphold traditional family values, preserving women's symbolic role as mothers" (p. 2). Complementary to this move, there is the manipulation and capturing of feminists' demands and vocabularies in international arenas. This work argues that this movement could be understood as a strategic positioning of conservative groups not only to guarantee their acceptance in international arenas but also to attract new supporters and create alliances with other groups- even with some women´s groups.

In Hungary, the strengthening of conservative groups happened concomitantly with the weakening of progressive groups. Roggeband and Krizsán (2021) show that although the civic space was curtailed for progressive civil society organizations – such as the women´s movements- it was also extended to conservative organizations. "Civil society organizations identified as not in line with government ideology and critical of it face obstruction and restraints, whereas simultaneously the space and state support for organizations identified as progovernment is expanded" (p. 23). In addition, the government started to create GONGOs -NGOs that served the interest of the government- or made use of existing organizations to foster a democratic image by giving space to civil society organizations to act. Hence, instead of declaring a governmental persecution against women´s movement it would portray it to be an antagonist dispute among civil society organizations.

> By reconfiguring civic and institutional spaces, rather than closing them altogether, backsliding governments uphold the façade of democracy, because they can claim that civil society is sustained or even promoted and consulted on important political decisions. This contributes to both domestic and international legitimacy (p. 25).

Roggeband and Krizsán (2021) point out three aspects of the reorganization of the civil space in Hungary: (1) the access to political arena; (2) the access to funding; (3) the access to advocacy space.

Concerning the access to the political arena, the authors show that "direct consultation mechanisms between women's rights groups and the state are dismantled, and these groups are now replaced by pro-family groups" (p. 25-26). In the international arena, the replacement occurred with conservative women´s organizations playing the center role in representing the women´s NGOs of the country. For example, the Association of Hungarian Women – a coalition of conservative women's organizations was delegated to represent women's NGOs in the European Institute for Gender Equality. In the national sphere, the replacement occurred with the marginalization of women´s group and the dismantling of gender equality structures. The Council for Gender Equality -with a long history of woman´s group participation- was replaced by a 'Work Group and Round Table on Human Rights' to serve as the UN Universal Periodic Review consultation platform. The group on Woman´s right, did not only exclude women´s group from playing a central role -setting the agenda or making decisions- but also included a variety of groups, such as conservative women's groups, family protection groups, churches, and governmental think tank. Adding to that, men´s groups and pro-family groups started to replace women´s rights associations not just in civil society consultations about women´s rights but also in providing them services. Take the case of domestic violence, in which women´s group with long expertise in providing training and services were replaced by pro-family groups, which framed domestic violence as family violence- instead of gender violence (Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021).

Concerning the access to funding, Roggeband and Krizsán (2021) show that:

> Drastic changes in state funding and regulation to restrict foreign funding have taken place here with the result of weakening women's rights organizations, while at the same time strengthening existing and stimulating new civil society initiatives in line with the conservative governments' anti-gender equality agenda, thus helping to create an alternative civil society that can replace existing women's rights (and other human rights) organizations (p. 28).

From the onset of Orbán´s regime, the funding mechanisms to support civil society organizations started to change. In what concerns state funding, its mechanisms were reorganized in relation to 'public utility', just a few NGOs were considered proper for funding. Consequently, the National Cooperation Fund - strongly controlled by the government- just allocated funding for NGOs which were aligned to government objectives. In the case of the woman´s organizations, there was significant increase of funding to the ones dealing with family policies. Nevertheless, the only ones that received the government funds were the ones which supported the traditional role of women as defenders of family and nation. Once again, the case of domestic violence represents a replacement of women´s organization for alternative civil society groups. In spite of lacking expertise in the field, a new pro-family organization, 'Family Friendly Country non-profit Ltd', was chosen to allocate European Social Fund Money in the combat against domestic violence.

In relation to external funding, the restrictions came later into place. The external fundings were the main source for the viability of most of the women´s groups - especially the ones using a gender mainstream approach which were not supported by government funding. In 2017, a new law required 'special registration' and publicly display of funding only to the NGOs relying on foreign funding. The Open Society Foundation, a major organization that provided funding for gender equality projects, was one of the many organizations that left the country after the implementation of this law (Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021).

Concerning the access to advocacy space, Roggeband and Krizsán (2021) affirm that "[it] is severely curtailed for pro-gender equality organizations" (p. 29). As it has been previously pointed out, the women´s organizations faced the dismantling of the consultation mechanisms, their replacement for conservative groups when dealing with women´s rights issues and their fundings support limited by new laws. Additionally, they also faced persecutions and stigmatization, restricting their space for advocacy. The 'Stop Soros' law (2017) was an example of a measure that stigmatized and criminalized foreign funded NGOs. Not just the groups were stigmatized but also the people connected to them. Even a 'blacklist' of about 200 people who supposedly worked for the 'Soros organizations' was published. In addition, the organizations that received the support of the Norwegian Civil Fund were subject to 'illegitimate government inspection and blacklisting' as

a result of the Fund´s refusal to channel money via the government. In those cases, women´s groups and their members suffered dramatically under stigmatizations and persecutions. This harassment not just impacted the women´s personal integrity but also affected women´s group as a whole by curtailing their advocacy space.

4.3.
Gender Resistance: the case of the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Hungary

4.3.1
'It is all about gender'

This chapter started arguing that gender is the key element to understand the new political alignment of the right. As seen, the word gender has been manipulated -and demonized-, it has been replaced by 'family' in discourses and public policies and even used to link anti-gender groups to right-wing parties in an 'opportunistic synergy'. The strategies used by right-wing conservative governments are multiple: incorporation of the anti-gender discourse in their rhetoric, manipulation of pro-gender agenda, using 'counterframing' and gender washing, and replacement of the progressive CSOs for alternative conservative groups, weakening the women´s movement, blocking their access to political arenas, to governmental and foreign fundings and curtailing their advocacy space.

Nevertheless, gender is not only important to understand the new-right convergence, gender is also a key element when reflecting about resistance in authoritarian contexts. For this reason, the second part of the chapter focuses on gender resistance. First, this research draws attention to the connection between gender and democracy. By using the concept of 'gender equals democracy', it is understood that fighting for gender equality is a form of fighting for democracy. Thus, fighting against Violence Against Women (VAW) is an important form of gender resistance for the sake of democracy. Finally, the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Hungary is a case that illustrates how gender grassroot groups in coalition with TFNs resisted to the attack on the IC in the country. Drawing on the concept of 'Intersectional Solidarity' this research analyzes how the coalitions between different movements can work together in a transformative way.

4.3.2.
‘Gender equals democracy’

This work adopts the premise that gender permeates all aspects of social life, including democracy. Hence, “[t]he conflict around “gender” is also a struggle over the future of democracy” (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022, p. 2). According to the United Nations Development Program[31] “Gender equality is a crucial feature of democratic societies”. In addition, Biroli, Machado and Vaggione (2020) draw attention to “[t]he notion of gender (...) is also related to the process of re-signifying the human rights agenda and the notion of citizenship itself, in a period of consolidation of liberal democracies in different parts of the world” (p. 17-18, my translation).

When saying ‘gender equals democracy’, several aspects could be addressed, the one this work has chosen is Violence against women (VAW) due to its fundamental connection to the protection of democracy. According to Krizsán and Roggeband (2021), “VAW is a critical field because of its intimate connection to democracy and particularly to the immediate impact of debates and opposition to gender in this field on women’s bodies” (p. 45).

Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) argue that the Violence Against Women undermines democracy in three levels: individual, group and procedural level. The individual level is related to woman´s basic human rights. Either physically or mentally -or even both- the violence against women is a direct attack to their integrity and human rights, which is also a direct attack to the liberal democracy. At the group level, the forms of attack that disproportionally affect a single woman impact in the status of women as a group. When women are disproportionally at risk due to gender discrimination, they tend to remain in their traditional unequal place, affecting those who suffer direct violence but also the ones who do not. In the procedural aspect, VAW affects the democratic process and decision-making preventing women to participate equally in the public sphere. The violence suffered by women in politics, media or human rights activism force them out of the public sphere, limiting their access to political power. As pointed out by the authors:

[31] https://www.undp.org/eurasia/our-focus/gender-equality/gender-equality-and-democratic-governance Accessed on 04.09.2023 at 11 am

> VAW is central to maintaining gender inequality, a mechanism that reproduces in multiple ways the inequality of women as individuals as well as a politically disadvantaged group. As such, VAW obstructs 'gender equals democracy' and state reluctance to address it may lead to an erosion of fundamental democratic rights (p. 20).

Still according to the authors, when VAW is addressed in an *individual human rights frame*, the problems of gender inequality are left out. The use of this frame results in gender-neutral approach texts which do not link violence with structural gender inequality problems, resulting both in a misdiagnosis of the problematic and ineffective ways to combat violence. Instead, the authors draw attention to the *Gender transformative frame,* which not just emphasizes the disproportional violence that women suffer -as the *woman-centered frame* does- but also addresses the social structured problem, putting women in the center not just as victims, but also as combatants against VAW. According to Krizsán and Roggeband (2021):

> *Gender transformative frames* define VAW as a gender inequality problem and aim not only to address its symptoms but propose to act on the root causes of the problem, that is, to include gender transformative elements such as women's empowerment programs, gender-sensitive education and awareness-raising programs, and to mandate partnering with women's rights groups for implementation (p. 23).

Historically, when VAW is addressed, Women´s organization have played a critical role in both national and international advocacy. They have helped to bring up VAW as a global human right issue; aiding in the translation from international norms to national law; and also influenced in shaping the state response to VAW. The participation of women´s organization in shaping the states services and policies, in what VAW is concerned, gave to women´s movement a central role in the matter and created a close relationship between women´s movement and their states. One the one hand, this leading role made the women´s groups acquire expertise both in helping victims and shaping policies, which influenced in the professionalization of the movements. One the other hand, it made the organizations dependent on state funding and/or external donors, which raised the debate not only about their autonomy and cooptation, but also about the vulnerability of the groups to state reconfigurations and/or decrease of fundings.

4.3.3.
The Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention – or the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence - is a treaty of the Council of Europe (CoE) that bring together two important agendas, violence against women and domestic violence. The main objectives of the treaty were to develop/improve international standards to combat VAW and domestic violence. The treaty is better known as Istanbul Convention, named after the city where it opened for signatures in 2011 - Istanbul, Turkey. According to the CoE´s website, the Istanbul Convention was created to be a "new landmark treaty of the Council of Europe[32] [that] opens the path for creating a legal framework at pan-European level to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence"[33].

Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) argue that the IC was a remarkable achievement because it "not only pulled together policy expertise that had been generated since VAW was recognized as a human rights issue, but also explicitly reiterated its link to gender inequality and the (...) social transformative components of the feminist VAW agenda" (p. 26). According to the authors, the convention has two complementary objectives: not only to protect women, prevent, prosecute, and eliminate VAW and domestic violence, but also to "contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women" (Article 1). In addition, both objectives were supported by the definition of VAW as "a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women (Article 3)" (p. 26). Hence, the authors argue that the IC states that combating VAW (as a human right)

[32] Founded in 1949 the Council of Europe (CoE) defines itself as the European continent's leading human rights organization. It has 47 member states of which 27 are also members of the European Union. One ofthe foundational documents of the CoE is the European Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms a treaty designed to protect democracy, human rights and rule of law and which is ratified by all CoE member states. The CoE is a key innovator is human rights matters including prominent equality issues such as anti-discrimination, ethnic data collection, human rights bodies, gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting or rights of LGBTI persons (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 46, footnote 4).

[33] https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210 (Accessed on 01.11.2023 at 2pm)

and domestic violence is directly connected to combating gender inequality, the IC "makes the link between addressing VAW and gender transformation unequivocal" (p. 28).

The authors point out that the empowering approach is taken seriously by the Convention, going beyond the criminal justice interventions and carceral approach. The treaty counted with "measures to empower victims, economically and otherwise (Article 18), to overcome the consequences of violence and rebuild their lives" (p. 28). Not only the empowerment, but also the gender-sensitive aspect is crucial to the convention, both in Article 6 and Article 12. The former presents its "mandate to use a gender-sensitive perspective in all implemented measures, including empowering women and promoting equality between men and women" (Article 6). The later requires the parties to "take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behavior of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men" (Article 12).

Another important aspect of the Convention highlighted by the authors is the call for the presence of the civil society actors, in cooperation with the States, to combat VAW and domestic violence. The IC places women´s rights organizations in a special role to act on all stages of enforcement. Article 9 states that the parties must "recognize, encourage and support, at all levels, the work of relevant nongovernmental organizations and of civil society active in combating violence against women and establish effective co-operation with these organizations." In addition, Article 8 explicitly mentions the need to make financial resources available to CSOs involved in implementing activities and Article 18 emphasizes the cooperation and coordination with CSOs as a necessity to provide protection to the victims (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

Finally, some aspects of the Convention were considered controversial by different actors. Here it will be pointed out three aspects: gender inequality, gender concept and migration. In relation to the gender inequality, there were direct forms of opposition that "argued for men´s rights and against the supposed disadvantage men face once women's rights are "prioritized" " (p. 31). Krizsán and Roggeband argue that one the one hand, the treaty favors the terminology "violence against women" instead of gender-based violence, which is rarely used in the convention.

Article 2 defines gender-based violence as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (p. 27). This definition emphasizes women and understate that gender-based violence may occur against man and other victims. On the other hand, Article 4 recognizes de diversity of the women´s category, prohibiting discrimination to “any ground such as sex, gender, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status”. By acknowledging the diversity in the category of women, the treaty is open to an intersectional approach of the category.

Concerning the gender concept, Article 3 defines gender as “the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men”. The opposition to gender were mainly canalized by anti-gender groups, that “challenge the concept of gender as socially constructed and linked to identity rather than to biological sex medically determined upon birth” (p. 34). The authors call attention that the anti-gender claim is not opposing to women or women´s protection, they go against the feminist values of empowerment and autonomy (especially sexual autonomy). As seen before in this work, the anti-gender ideology states that gender erases the differences between sexes and exposes society to gender confusion and homosexuality, threatening the (traditional) family institution (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

The migration issue was mobilized by several countries that refused the ratification. The chapter on migration and asylum of the Istanbul Convention, especially articles 59, 60 and 61, has specific requirements for the states. Article 59 proposes that spouses or partners victims of violence have their residence permits unlinked from the violence perpetuator. Article 60 requires states to ensure that the recognition of gender-based VAW could be a form of persecution, as stated in the Geneva Convention, leading to a ground for asylum or refugee status. In addition, Article 61 presents a prohibition on returning people to places where they may be subjected to gender-based violence. However, according to Krizsán and Roggeband (2021), the main objective of the IC was not to change the countries migration policy but rather call attention to specific forms of abuse and violence suffered by women and their vulnerability when concerning asylum and immigration.

The controversies around the Istanbul Convention did not appear at the first moment, in fact it was very much successful case of norm diffusion with many campaigns for signatures. Although it was considered a top-down technocratic process, feminists groups acted raising awareness to the importance of the Istanbul Convention among political actors and public in general. Transnational actions were triggered by these processes such as the One Billion Rising campaign - 'the biggest mass global action to end violence against women' [34], and also a conference supported by European´s Women Lobby and the Counsil of Europe to connect women´s right groups and political actors in a Europe-wide project. The Norwegian Civic fund also had an important role in the financial support to women´s groups. This fund made it possible for the groups to develop their projects, including the IC norms. Even the cooperation with media professionals was made in a way to improve gender-sensitive media coverage about the Convention. As a result, several countries signed (and some even ratified) the Convention.

However, the IC ratification processes were not just a mere technocratic procedure, as expected. Already in 2012, alliances opposing the signature and the ratification of the IC popped up around Europe. Controversies around the gender aspect of the Convention opened debates on gender and democracy, with anti-gender mobilizations strongly engaged in the opposition to the ratification process, in a 'War on Gender'. For the authors, the "contention is multifaceted but converges around two central claims: (1) the conception of gender in the IC is problematic and (2) the IC would limit national sovereignty through external imposition of gender and migration-related standards" (p. 56). Despite having divergent agendas, the actors made use of the IC to contest against several issues, as liberal democracy and the feminist approach on combating violence against women, claiming that the IC would be an attack on national sovereignty and the traditional heterosexual family. This anti-gender rhetoric was even appropriated by government actors, and – as in the case of Hungary- became part of the regime´s ideology. As a result, many countries in the CEE region, such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Hungary - did not ratify the IC convention and some, such as Poland, are considering withdrawing (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

[34] https://www.onebillionrising.org/about/campaign/ (Accessed on 10.09.2023 at 2:03 pm)

4.3.4.
Hungary and the non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention

This session will focus on how the Istanbul Convention was dealt with in Hungary. First, it will present a summary of the case of the IC in Hungary – from signature to non-ratification, showing the contestation over the Convention and the incorporation of anti-gender discourse in the Hungarian regime. Finally, it will present the resistance of the in-favor groups, divided in three parts: (1) Coalitions for the creation of the IC and its signature; (2) Coalitions for demanding the ratification in Hungary; (3) Coalitions for resisting the attacks on the Istanbul Convention in Hungary.

4.3.4.1
The IC in Hungary – from signature to non-ratification

In Hungary, the process of the signature evolved without controversies and the IC was signed in March 2014. Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) point out that the "intensified mobilization in the run-up to the April 2014 national elections, particularly actions targeting political parties, may have contributed to the signature, which came shortly before the elections (p. 133)". After the signature, a high-level working group was created to codify the draft into Hungarian law. At first, Orbán´s government perceived the IC as a high commitment to combat domestic violence using new approaches apart from criminal interventions. However, no women´s group whatsoever had any participation in this process despite the demand in the regulations.

Shortly after the signature, the mobilization for the ratification started. In the following years, women´s demands for the ratification played a central role. In the political arena, the opposition parties -mainly women´s MP- fought to maintain the IC in the parliament agenda, trying to compel the government to start the ratification process. However, those attempts were constantly blocked by the FIDESZ majority; consequently, a substantive debate about the IC did not occur in Parliament. In the civil society sphere, women´s rights NGOs started a campaign to collect signatures to press the government for the ratification. Later on, other NGOs joined in the campaign, which brought together many civil society organizations, enticing

thousands of citizens to sign the petition. Finally, three years after the signature, the government codified the draft law for ratification and opened a public consultation in the beginning of 2017. It was then that the contestation came to place (see fig. 1).

From February to May of 2017, men´s rights groups, conservative think tanks, right-wing parties and religious associations expressed their discontentment about the Istanbul Convention. They created reports and petitions opposing the IC, calling it a 'Troyan horse' and saying: 'no to gender Convention'. In March 2018, some months before the election, several Hungarian organizations joined a transnational coalition in order to send a petition to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Their main target was the mentions to gender, requesting its removal from the IC.

The controversies around the IC were used to delay its ratification until the beginning of 2019, when the government discourses started to change, mostly supported by the failure of the EU to ratify the Convention. By the end of 2019 it was evident that some of the anti-gender arguments had been integrated into the government rhetoric, making it clear the government positioning against the IC. Their criticisms were mainly focused on: "(1) the concept of gender used in the Convention and the underlying social transformative character of gender ideology and (2) the Convention's imposition of new flows of migration on Hungary" (p. 69). As a result, the opposition to the IC changed from an anti-gender civil society groups rhetoric to an official position of the government.

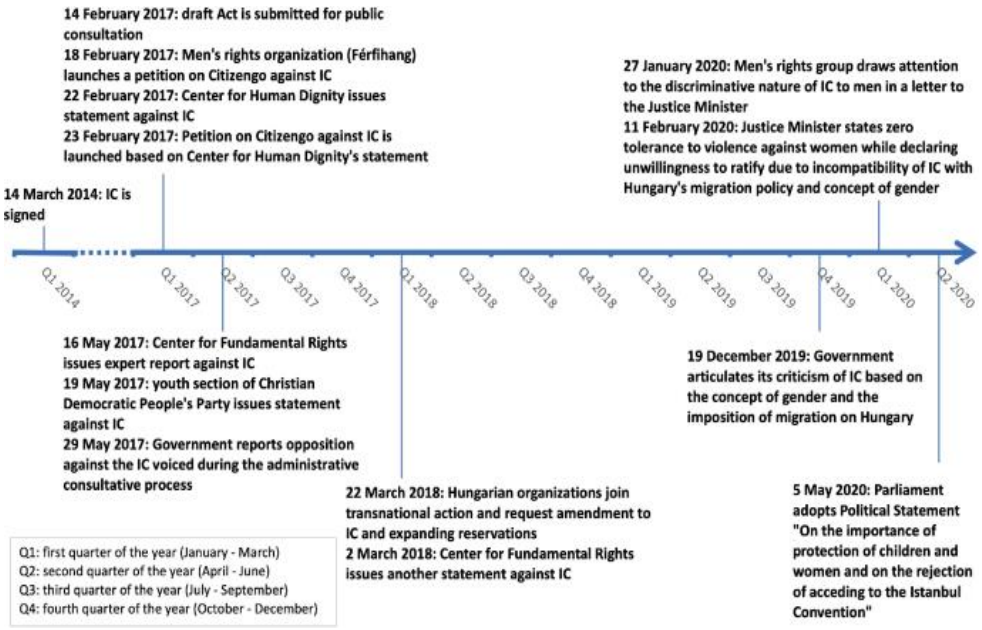
As mentioned above, the resistance groups responded to the attacks right after they started (see fig. 2). Important coalitions were formed to fight for the IC and democracy, these coalitions will be analyzed further on in the chapter. Despite the multiple effort to ratify the Convention, in 2020, the parliament voted against the ratification. The government spokesperson even declared that "this is what democracy is: the parliament correcting a faulty decision by the government [the IC signature]" (p. 70). In the Transnational level, Hungary took part in several actions against the IC, including supporting the Convention on the Right of the Family, a conservative proposal to replace the IC.

This strategy of anti-gender and conservative actors using a democratic rhetoric against a gender issue is already known in other contexts. Biroli, Machado and Vaggioni (2020) argue that by considering a gender topic "ideological" and

from a minority group, the act of blocking it to become a law, for example, would be considered by anti-gender actors as a decision from the majority and a protection of democracy. “Minority movements, a label attributed to feminist and LGBTQI movements, represent a threat to the majorities, acting against “true democracy”. Politicians must listen to the “democratic will of the people”” (Biroli, Machado and Vaggioni, 2020, p. 217, my translation). However, what anti-gender actors are doing do not contribute to the protection of democratic institutions, but it is the dismantling of democracy itself, as pointed out by Biroli, Machado and Vaggioni (2020):

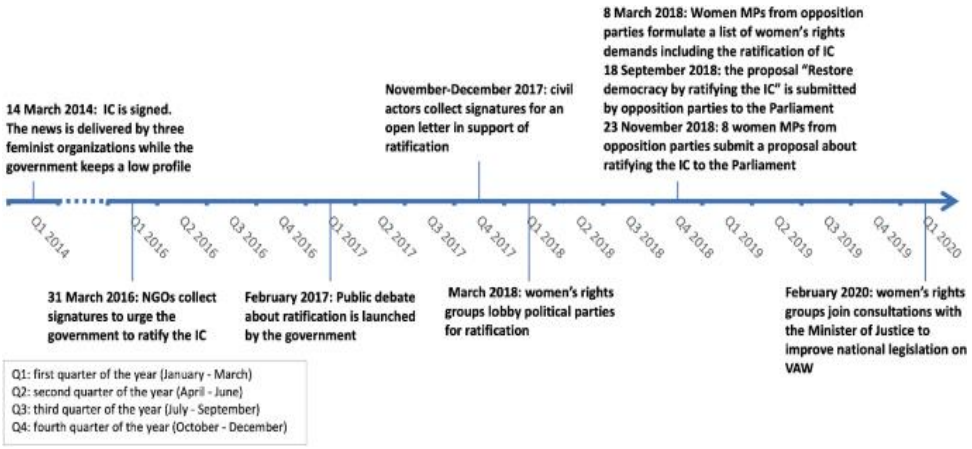
> Campaigns against gender contribute to the erosion of democracies as they compromise fundamental values and institutional requirements such as plurality, secularism, protection of minorities, the right to free expression and opposition. The second reason is that they have served to legitimize alternatives and authoritarian leadership in times of anti-politics. The defense of the family has justified restrictions on rights, naturalized inequalities and called into question even legislation and policies that aim to guarantee the physical integrity of women and LGBTQI people. The phenomenon [campaigns against gender] (…) does not just concern gender and sexuality as “specific” issues. (...) **The moment is different: the foundations of the gender equality agenda are at risk, together with the foundations of democracy and the rule of law** (p. 189, my translation, my emphasis).

Fig. 1 Timeline of opposition to the IC in Hungary



Source: Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 68

Fig. 2 Timeline of promoting the IC and resistance to attacks in Hungary



Source: Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 132

4.3.4.2. Gender Resistance and Coalitions in favor of the IC

As discussed previously, the anti-gender campaigns and their alliances with governments representatives changed the context for women´s movements. This new anti-gender context put women´s groups under attack and having to face both an authoritarian government and conservative civilian groups. In Hungary, the women´s group had already faced a step back in their action power before the anti-gender campaigns. It is known that the influence of woman´s group in state policies were marginal in the country but after 2010, the Orbán regime drastically changed their scenery. However, it was not just a step back for the women´s groups, this new scenario also opened new possibilities. As pointed out by Krizsán and Roggeband (2021):

> They imposed threats on women's rights activists, curtailing their capacity and space to act, but also resulted in new strategies and frames, and catalyzed new, often more powerful coalitions of resistance, depending on tradition, strength and capacity of preceding women's rights organizing (p. 121).

4.3.4.2.1
Gender Grassroot Groups and Transnational Feminist Networks alliances

This work will now focus on four women´s groups (NANE; PATENT, WAVE and EWL) and their connections previous to the Istanbul Convention. Next, it will analyze how their coalition worked in resisting to the attacks on the Istanbul Convention. Drawing on the concept of 'intersectional solidarity', this work argues that the coalition among different groups -grassroots movements and transnational networks- worked in a transformative means of resistance, impacting on the future of the movements and of the country.

4.3.4.2.1.1
Gender Grassroot Groups in Hungary (NANE and PATENT)

NANE was created in 1994 and it was the first Women´s right association in the country (Matthews, Horne and Levitt, 2005). They are known for their work in combating domestic violence via a helpline -since 1994-, raising public awareness, and providing service to organizations, such as professional trainings for judges, policemen, and social service workers (Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021). NANE groups define themselves as "primarily dedicated to ending human rights violations and the threat of violence against women and children through advocacy, personal support services, and public education" (NANE, 1999, p. 1 *apud* Matthews, Horne and Levitt, 2005, p. 91). NANE´s association claim to use the human right frame: 'women´s right as humans right', although recognizing the gender structural aspect of violence against women. According to NANE´s publication in 2019,

> [v]iolence against women is defined as a structural and global phenomenon that knows no social, economic or national boundaries. Its presence in society is a consequence of power differences between women and men and is an extreme form of gender-based discrimination; and its elimination is a basic condition for the social equality of women and men (p. 11, my translation).

By understanding Violence Against Women as a structural problem, the answers proposed by the group were also in line with the women´s need. NANE´s volunteers support the victims not just by listening to them and giving them advice, but also accompanying them to police stations, to the court and even helping with

childcare. In addition, the provided services aim to integrate the victim in a pro-active way, making them the agent of their own emancipation. “Victims who participated in the integrated program were able to actively participate in the management of their own case, so they were much more self-aware and able to fight for their justice and safety” (NANE, 2019, p. 16, my translation). Through the concept of self-help, NANE offers group sessions as a safe space to share experiences and create bonding with other members. Besides, “[t]his practice reinforces to survivors [the idea] that they are not alone in their experiences and that domestic and intimate partner violence is a social problem” (NANE, 2019, p. 26, my translation).

PATENT (Society Against Patriarchy) is a legal defense association founded in 2006. Several of the founding members had previously worked in legal assistance and strategic litigation on the issue of violence against women. The group was created due to practical needs of experts in the legal area and presently it enrolls specialists, lawyers, researchers, and trained experts who deal with legal assistance, legal analysis and also drafting legislative proposals. The creation of an advocacy organization specialized in legal defense was “to support victims against the shortcomings and even malice of the justice system, to put pressure on the state so that legislation and law enforcement suit women's most basic [needs], and to protect their human and civil rights related to security” (NANE, 2019, p. 56, my translation).

At the beginning, PATENT dealt just with cases of violence against women, however, after 2010 when Orbán´s regime came to power the focus of the group shifted. Due to the drastic backsteps in women´s rights achievements the organization started to engage with the issues of sexual and reproductive rights- especially the right to abortion. One of the main projects of this organization is the ‘court monitoring’, in which their volunteers monitor more than 300 trials involving women´s right. As a result, the Hungarian state put the PATENT association in the state ‘blacklist’ (NANE, 2019).

4.3.4.2.1.2 Transnational Feminist Networks (WAVE and EWL)

WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe) is “a network organization composed of more than 160 women´s organizations in 46 European countries (…)

and is the only network dedicated solely to work against violence against women".[35] The network has as its main focus the areas of: (1) capacity building - trainings, webinars and partnership projects; (2) advocacy – campaigns for better legislation and improved implementation of existing laws; (3) research – data collection and analysis of male violence against women. Additionally, they are working on identifying barriers and supporting services to help with the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

Although naming themselves as a European network- based in Europe and working mostly inside the European boarders- this work, in accordance with Lang (2012) chose to highlight their transnational aspect, and then frame it as TFN in the terms of Moghadam (2000). First, their aim has a transnational approach "WAVE aim at establishing equality by working towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women". Second, the seed for the creation of the network came from transnational cooperations, such as the ones created in the World Conference on Human Right in Vienna (1993) and in the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). Third, the use of the 'European' framework could be seen as strategic purposes, connected to the access to EU´s funding. 'Since 1997, WAVE´s work has been continuously supported through funding by the European Commission'. They have been part of the European 'Daphne' Project and since 2019, they a registered organization in the EU. In the period of 2022-2023 alone they received more than half a million euros in funding from the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union.[36]

The European Women´s Lobby (EWL) is 'the largest European umbrella network of women´s association'[37]. It was formed in 1990, thanks to the support granted by the European Commission. The direct link with the EU -since its creation- is a strong reason why the focus of this network is on the European level. Since its early beginnings the EWL has had as its purpose to connect women´s organizations and Institutions, aiming to 'promote the integration of gender equality

[35] https://wave-network.org/our-work/ (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 2:03 pm)

[36] ttps://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=820880834847-22 (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 2:05 pm)

[37] https://www.womenlobby.org/Mission-vision-values?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 2:06 pm)

in all areas of policy within the institutions of the European Union'. Besides the EU, the network has a consultative status at the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council, participates in regular bases in activities of the UN Comission on the Status of Women (CSW) and recently helped setting up the new UN Women entity. This work also considers the European Women´s Lobby as a TFN due to its transnational purposes in developing gender equality and protecting women and girls.

Being a big umbrella network, the EWL works in several areas: decision-making and leadership, women´s economic independence, migrant and refugee women, violence against women etc. The combat on violence against women is considered one of the top priorities of the network and since 1997 they have an 'Observatory on Violence Against Women'. The observatory is a unique structure – connecting women all around Europe with experience and expertise in combating male violence. This connection allows them to share information, form bridges among regional groups and mobilize public awareness. The EU accession to the Istanbul Convention became a central fight for the network, creating coalitions around Europe to end violence against women and girls.

4.3.4.2.1.3
Previous Partnerships between the groups

The first two groups, NANE and PATENT, are gender grassroot groups that work in Hungary, aiding women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Both groups are mainly supported by foreign fundings -no government has ever helped the groups financially- and they are used to working in partnership. Before 2010, the groups had some access to governmental institutions that had an important role in domestic violence, which made possible to them to work together in orientation programs.

> [I]n 2008, NANE and its partner organization, PATENT, initiated the creation of a working group with the support of a foundation, in which specialists from many different fields cooperated in uncovering systemic errors in action against intimate partner violence and formulating solutions. The program, which was implemented in an unprecedented professional collaboration, provided lawyers, child protection specialists, police officers, psychologists, forensic psychologists and employees of the social care system with a transparent and practice-oriented methodological guide

> for the protection of victims of violence against women and the effective prosecution of the perpetrators (NANE, 2019, p. 20, my translation).

However, after 2010 their channels with governmental institutions were shut down and even the access to external funding became difficult (Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021). Their partnership continues in other programs, such as the co-writing of proposals that served as the basis for the creation of laws and regulations on domestic and sexual violence in Hungary. NANE and PATENT have developed in distinct areas of the combat against domestic violence and when working together they tend to do it in a complementary form. They have a conjoint website for the project 'Advocating for the Rights of Domestic Abuse Victims', funded by Open Society Institute, which resulted in a manual on how effectively handle cases of domestic violence.[38] Another important achievement of this partnership is, for the first time in Hungary, an 'integrated client service', in which both NANE and PATENT combine several 'help supports' -legal, psychological and social counseling- in a long-term care. This model has been running since 2005 and in 2019 alone, it helped 175 people (Pap, Thoth and Wirth, 2019; NANE, 2019).

NANE and PATENT are members of the European Women´s Lobby umbrella network, and since 2003 the Hungarian Women´s Lobby was established in Budapest.[39] "The Hungarian Women's Lobby (HWL) is the national coordination for the European Women's Lobby which advocates for women's rights on the EU level and also monitors national compliance with EU requirements regarding women's rights".[40] In the international sphere, the HWL represents the Hungarian women´s organizations agendas. In the national arena, it campaigns for gender equality, bringing European-wide concerns to the country.[41]

In what concerns the WAVE network, both NANE and PATENT are members. During this research, it was not found previous partnership in projects between WAVE and PATENT- just the "Szeged Rebel Girls Camp" and Laywers training in 2023, in which the Hungarian group received a funding of five thousand euros via the WAVE network. In contrast, NANE organization and the WAVE

[38] https://nokjoga.hu/in-english/ (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 02:10 pm)
[39] https://www.womenlobby.org/Hungarian-Women-s-Lobby?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 02:10 pm)
[40] https://nokjoga.hu/in-english/ (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 02:10 pm)
[41] http://noierdek.hu/2/english/ (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 02:10 pm)

network had previously cooperated in several cases. The “Adapting the Training Programme on Combatting Violence Against Women originally produced by WAVE” was a programme funded by the European Commission´s “Daphne” II in a partnership between NANE and WAVE network. WAVE provided the training programs and NANE translated, adapted, and implemented the adapted training in Hungary. Due to both local expertise and large experience of the Hungarian organization, the adapted trainings resulted in a booklet that later was disseminated in a way to help other countries to deal with the process of adapting training manuals (NANE, 2006). Another important program that emerged from this partnership was the “Power to Change” in 2008. They have created a manual informing how to set up and run support groups for victims and survivors of domestic violence (THE POWER TO CHANGE, 2008). According to NANE´s members Pap, Thoth and Wirth (2019):

> Our unique “Power to Change” program was developed in international collaboration among WAVE member organizations to run and support self-help groups for victims/survivors of violence. In addition to facilitating such groups, we provide help for those who plan to organize similar groups (p. 23).

Concerning WAVE and EWL networking, literature has shown that “the European Women’s Lobby is considerably less networked with other transnational women’s networks than are other women’s TANs [Transnational Advocacy Networks].” (Lang, 2012, 193). Possible reasons could be an “intra-EU focus” or even an “intra-membership focus”. Lang (2012) argues that even inside the EU networks, the EWL does not reach other women´s groups beyond their member organizations. During the research for this work, the only joint contributions assessed were in 2020 “The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality - Good Practices for tackling domestic violence in the context of COVID-19”, and in 2022, a “UN Special rapporteur on violence against women” based on the EWL-WAVE presentation for the above program. It is possible that the networks had previously cooperated in other issues, however, this research did not have access to it.

4.3.4.2.2
Coalition among grassroot groups (NANE and PATENT) and Transnational Feminist Networks (WAVE and EWL) in fight for the IC

This session presents the coalition created around the Istanbul Convention. The first part focus on the influence of feminist groups in proposing important points for the construction of the Convention, and the campaigns for the signature. The second part shows the campaigns for ratification and the coalitions formed in Hungary. Finally, it analyzes the coalitions that resisted the anti-gender attack.

4.3.4.2.2.1
Feminist Coalition for the creation of the IC and its signature.

Feminist movements had an important role in influencing the construction of the Istanbul Convention. This work can be traced back to the Council of Europe (CoE) campaign from 2006 to 2008 to combat violence against women, including domestic violence.[42] Feminist NGOs -WAVE and EWL included- were of great influence in the campaign, exercising their participatory status in the CoE.[43] By the end of 2008, the CoE created a group called the CAHVIO (Ad Hoc Committee for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), to work on a draft text to create comprehensive standards to prevent VAW and Domestic Violence (DV). The next two years were marked by negotiation meetings in the CAHVIO group in which once more the feminist groups made important contributions. EWL, for example, launched "NGOs call on the Council of Europe to move towards a strong instrument on Violence against Women"[44]. Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) point out that "though less ambitious than initial proposals by feminists advocates, the IC still formulates a comprehensive set of standards on VAW and the necessary instruments to tackle it" (p. 26).

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[42] https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/default_en.asp (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 12:10 pm)

[43] https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/InternationalNGOs_en.asp (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 12:10 pm)

[44] https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680594273 (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 12:10 pm)

After the adoption of the convention by the CoE, the IC opened for signature in 2011 and the campaigns for the Member States to sign started. This work will comment on some of the actions that took place in those campaigns. In 2011, the EWL had already organized a consultation meeting with Ms. Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. In that meeting, several organizations were present, WAVE included to discuss the UNs annual report addressing "Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence against women."[45] In 2012, the network called for an EU campaign, targeting the Member States and other groups, to draw attention to the VAW. The network also made part of the 'Social Platform', which issued a position paper to EU to end all form of violence, VAW included.[46] In addition, EWL supported a MEP´s campaign '#EndVAWinEurope' to the EU to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The year of 2013 was marked by the 'One Billion Rising' and the 'Act against rape! Use de Istanbul Convention!' campaigns.

As pointed out previously, the 'One Billion Rising' campaign was the biggest mass counteract in history to end violence against women. According to their website, the campaign "began as a call to action based on the staggering statistic that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 8 billion, this adds up to more than ONE BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS".[47] The EWL has participated in the campaigns from the start in 2013, raising awareness to the importance of the commitments also listed in the IC: "The EWL will take this opportunity to recall the commitments made at the European level and call for a European Year and a European strategy to end violence against women"[48]. In Hungary, the 'One Billion Rising Budapest' campaign was launched in 2013 and it was organized by the HWL and its member associations – NANE included. Even a Facebook page was created to support the movements and draw attention to the worldwide campaign.[49]

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[45] https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A-HRC-17-26.pdf (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:15 am)

[46] https://www.womenlobby.org/Social-Platform-issues-position-paper-on-EU-action-to-combat-all-forms-of-bias?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:15 am)

[47] https://www.onebillionrising.org/about/campaign/ (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:15 am)

[48] https://www.womenlobby.org/Join-the-EWL-on-14-February-2013-to-rise-and-dance-against-violence-against?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:15 am)

[49] https://www.womenlobby.org/One-Billion-Rising-in-Budapest?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:25 am)

Also in 2013, the EWL started a joint project with the CoE to promote the Istanbul Convention. Using the name "Act against rape! Use the Istanbul Convention!"[50] the group called attention to the concrete tools of the IC for changing and eradicating male violence against women, specifically rape.[51] Even an MP from FIDESZ and representatives from the Ministry of State Administration and Justice of Hungary attended the conference of the joint Project (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

In Hungary, previously to the signature, the groups concentrated in raising awareness among politicians, consolidating the movement´s capacity and calling the attention of the public to VAW. As above mentioned, the Istanbul Convention was signed in March 2014, however, it took place without any communication to the public. Three feminist organizations made the fact public, welcoming the signature and raising public awareness. The organizations highlighted the importance of the ratification and implementation of the norms in the national system. From that moment on the fight for the ratification would start (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

4.3.4.2.2.2. Coalitions for the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention (2014-2017)

The feminist fight for the ratification of the IC started right after the announcement of signature by the Hungarian government. Since the first year of Orbán´s government, with the curtailing of civic space for progressive movements, women´s groups started to face some serious hindrances to act (Roggeband and Krizsán, 2021). However, according to Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1), this stalemate also called the attention of international institutions prompting them to increase the funding to women´s groups. Many of the groups could just increase their capacity -hiring more people, consolidating projects, and turning volunteers into full-time employees- thanks to this external funding. For example, the financing of the Norwegian Civic Fund in 2013 played a key role in supporting

[50] https://www.womenlobby.org/Europe-mobilises-against-rape-and-for-the-Istanbul-Convention-as-a-tool-for?lang=en (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:25 am)

[51] https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/ewl_public_report_act_against_rape_20140425.pdf (Accessed on 30.09.2023 at 09:25 am)

projects to include the IC norms. Their projects helped in the consolidation and empowerment of a victim-support network and helped NGOs to use a human rights-based approach in their work combating violence against women (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021). In addition, this increase in capacity was essential for them to face the anti-gender attacks that started in 2017.

Even before 2017, the coalitions to ratify the IC started. According to Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1), it was unusual to Hungary to take so long to ratify a convention, usually the country was known for being one of the first Member States to ratify and the ratification process was usually non-controversial. In 2016, NANE, PATENT, and another women NGO started a campaign to alert the public about the importance of the IC. Other 17 NGOs - feminist and non-feminist – joined the campaign and signed the petition, followed by more than 5 thousand signatures from civil society members. By pointing out the delay of the Hungarian government in ratifying the IC, the campaign addressed the urgent issues that Hungary faced concerning the Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and demanded the ratification:

> In our country, the number of victims of violence against women and domestic violence is in the millions. (...) There is a lack of comprehensive and professional state action against violence against women and domestic violence in Hungary. In many cases, the perpetrators go unpunished, while the victims' safety is not guaranteed by the system. We are also seriously behind in the training of professionals, in the institutional system and in the services that help victims (...) The ratification and proper implementation of the Istanbul Convention would guarantee this comprehensive, effective and professional action. (...) [We] demand comprehensive and effective action in Hungary, as required by the Istanbul Convention. We therefore call on decision-makers to ensure that the Convention is ratified and implemented without delay or reservation as soon as possible (my translation).[52]

Another important campaign launched in the same year was the WAVE Step Up Campaign[53], which concentrated in combating domestic violence and sexual violence against women and children. Some key objectives of the campaign were: (1) to campaign for the States to support non-governmental groups that worked

[52] https://www.peticiok.com/hatekony_fellepest_a_nk_elleni_es_csaladon_beluli_erszak_ellen?fbclid=IwAR0mIMfjiadZ0_2VEQ4HYG7Obrq2laEeCAVSiDcaF4HlxWzMHwri_JcTtKk. (Accessed on 01.10.2023 at 09:15 am)

[53] http://fileserver.wave-network.org/home/WAVE_StepUp_CAMPAIGN.pdf (Accessed on 01.10.2023 at 09:15 am)

helping victims of VAW, both financially and providing specialized services; (2) to lobby for the ratification and implementation of the IC. In addition, it constantly made use of the Istanbul Convention to address the importance of using a gender-based approach when combating VAW.

> There is a concerning tendency in some countries to favour general services and services without taking a gender sensitive approach. It needs to be acknowledged that the problem of violence against women and their children, which is gender-based and rooted in the historically unequal power relationship between men and women (Council of Europe 2012:4), cannot be effectively tackled by services which apply a "gender-neutral" approach and neglect to address the root causes of the problem (WAVE, 2016, p. 6).

According to Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1), the WAVE network has a close relationship with the grassroot groups in comparison to the EWL. Due to its institutionalized background, the EWL network was better skilled in dealing with States and Institutions. As the Hungarian state was open to work with conservative groups rather than progressive ones, the EWL focused their action on the institutional environments, mostly in the transnational arena. In the national arena, some EWL campaigns were channeled to the Hungarian public through the Hungarian Women´s Lobby; however, it was much more the initiative of the members themselves than the network.

4.3.4.2.2.3
Coalitions to Resist the anti-gender attacks (2017-2020)

According to the Krizsán and Roggeband (2021), the "[a]ttacks on the IC completely changed the framing of resistance to VAW policy progress that women's rights groups were used to, making gender now the key problematic aspect of the IC and VAW intervention" (p. 133). The authors identify different types of changing strategies and capacities of the group resistance. Among them, revigorated activism, strengthened voice and coalition building, dealing with anti-IC discourses and Fear and Withdrawal were seen in Hungary. At this point, this work will focus on the coalition building aspect.

In Hungary, "the [feminist] movement responded to governmental evasion of ratification and attacks on the Convention and its promoters with increasingly

concerted, vocal and disruptive strategies" (p. 147). It started with raising awareness of the politicians and the public and joining campaigns – mostly all transnational- such as 'One Billion Rising'; 'Act against rape! Use Istanbul Convention!'; 16 Days of Activism[54] etc. The authors point out that the mobilizations for the ratification occurred mainly as organized events linked to transnational campaigns instead of street protests, since the groups had limited capacities (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021). This work argues that the coalitions with transnational networks had an important effect to prepare the groups for the fight ahead -resisting the attack to the Convention- and not letting the importance of the ratification of the IC be forgotten.

According to Krizsán and Roggeband (2021), one important strategy of the grassroot and transnational women´s movements was that they "tried to *consciously strengthen the voice they speak with* (...)[working] towards *more concerted and unified women's rights* activism" (p. 149). In 2017, as the anti-gender attacks started to intensify, the mobilizations of women´s movements also increased, which "catalyzed some of the most powerful mobilization for women's rights in Hungary" (p.133).

In the civil society arena, grassroot Women´s groups – led by NANE and PATENT - decided to build coalitions not just with Transnational Feminist Networks but also with non-feminist grassroot groups – such as LGBT, anti-poverty groups and atheists- in order to build a unified resistance to the anti-gender attacks. Between November and December of 2017 – during the 16 Days of Activism campaign- a open letter[55] reuniting 48 civil society organizations was published. Several aspects in the letter had already been previously pointed out in the 2016 petition: the delay in the ratification, the non-participation of women´s groups in the process and the lack of transparency. However, new and important aspects came to place. First, the letter was addressed to different government actors –the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán included – and also to the civil society; Second, it points out a change in the government´s rhetoric.

[54] https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/16-days-of-activism (Accessed on 01.10.2023 at 09:17 am)

[55] https://nane.hu/nyilt-level-az-isztambuli-egyezmeny-ratifikalasaert/ (Accessed on 01.10.2023 at 09:17 am)

> In the past, the government has shown commitment to action against women and domestic violence, as well as to the ratification of the Convention, at the level of communication. At the same time, statements to the contrary have recently emerged in decision-making circles, while the ratification process stalls (NANE, 2018, my translation).

Third, the letter raises awareness about the misconceptions of the word gender and the misuse of false arguments such as that gender threatens the family institution.

> [M]isinterpretations and misunderstandings [were] spread by those who attack the Convention (…) [saying] that the institution of the family is afraid of the Convention, [however], families are destroyed by violence and not by the Convention. Delaying ratification by citing misconceptions actually undermines the effective protection of victims, the consistent prosecution of perpetrators, and the prevention of violence (NANE, 2018, my translation).

Finally, the letter calls for an alliance between parties to ratify the convention, drawing attention that VAW was a concern that goes beyond political affiliation. "We hereby appeal to political parties and politicians - regardless of party affiliation - to use the opportunities available to them for ratification. This could also be the case for effective, cross-party action – as we can see in the good examples of other countries" (NANE, 2018, my translation).

This research argues that this letter may be seen as one of the seeds of the framing 'gender equals democracy' that was later articulated in the Parliament. By calling a non-party political alliance to ratify the IC, the groups were framing gender as a democracy issue, despite not using these terms. The democratic framing in connection to gender appeared more explicitly in 2018 in a press release for the Women´s day made by NANE, PATENT and other CSOs, in which among other demands they called for the ratification of the Istanbul convention. "We expect a state-level commitment to the social equality of women and men as a democratic value: the declaration of political will and its translation into comprehensive measures" (NANE,2018b, my translation).

Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) argue that in the political arena the opposition parties realigned after the 2018 elections to support the ratification, framing it as a democracy issue. According to the authors, "anti-democracy sentiments expressed by opponents of the IC also brought the support of politicians and even high-level

decisionmakers who would have otherwise likely not supported VAW policies, especially if linked to women's rights or gender equality" (p. 151). In 2017, by using "Restore democracy by ratifying the IC", Orbán´s opposition resubmitted a proposal for the parliamentary decision, which was once more blocked by FIDESZ and no parliamentary debate occurred. In this context, Women´s MP played a central role. By the end of 2018 and again in the beginning of 2019, Women´s MP from different political parties – far-right, green parties, liberals, socialists and independent – created an alliance. First, they submitted a proposal to the Parliament - "On the adoption of the Istanbul Convention"- and later they staged a protest by formulating a list with 9 demands to increase women´s opportunities in the country, one of which was the ratification of the IC.

According to the Krizsán and Roggeband (2021), this oppositional party platform to promote the ratification of the IC in the parliament was a remarkable initiative, in which even the far-right party Jobbik was part of it.

> While before 2018 only some of the parties in opposition to FIDESZ were willing to speak up for the Convention—and the far-right Jobbik party explicitly contested it—after the 2018 elections, as the IC became increasingly politicized and the political arena became more polarized, ratification of the Convention became a token issue for opposition to the government, in which even Jobbik became a partner (p. 152).

Two members of Jobbik, Andrea Varga-Damm and Dániel Z. Kárpát, called the attention to the disrespect to the victims of domestic violence after the government´s decision not to ratify the Convention. The former declared that the government acted in a hypocritical and fallacious manner in deciding not to ratify the IC, drawing attention to the fact that they could have ratified it with reservations and highlighted the parts that would not be transposed to the Hungarian legal system. The latter declared "I consider it a betrayal that, hiding behind an ideological debate, the Hungarian government simply ignores a social phenomenon so brutal that it has had no model or pattern in recent decades" (Palfi, 2020).

According to Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1), the most relevant part of this coalition should not be centered on the participation of Jobbik, since the party itself has changed a lot from its initial roots, no longer being so radical. The expert draws attention to the fact that this coalition was capable of doing what the feminist groups did not manage to attain – to attract parties/ people from the center to align with the opposition rather than with the government. On the one hand, this research agrees

with this argument and adds that this alliance for the ratification was one of the seedlings for an opposition alliance in the 2022 election, being extremely important to transform the political scenario of the following years. On the other hand, this work does not consider the parliament alliance detached from the feminist groups. It draws attention to the women´s group influence in the early formation of the alliance. Not just in the open letter at the end of 2017, but also "in preparation for the 2018 elections, women's rights groups lobbied political parties for promises on ratification" (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 133-134).

4.3.4.3.
'Intersectional Solidarity' – Transformative resistances in Hungary

This session analyzes the coalitions above mentioned connecting them with the concept of 'intersectional solidarity'. As previously explained in chapter two, this research understands that coalitions happen in a variety of forms: "from loosely coupled activities around some broadly defined issue, to the constitution of umbrella organizations that coordinate actions between members" (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021, p. 185). Coalitions were already being formed among the grassroot movements and TFNs before the IC. Nevertheless, this work argues that the 'intersectional solidarity' in the fight for the IC (signature, ratification, and resistance to the attacks) had a transformative effect not just in the above groups, but also in the political context.

In addition, it has been decided that the concept of 'intersectional solidarity' would be used without framing the coalitions in specific forms. According to Ciccia and Roggeband (2021), although there are four ideal types of 'intersectional solidarity', the types "are not independent but rather it is the way in which they interact and shape each other in particular contexts that gives rise to different forms of intersectional solidarity. Each dimension should be considered a continuum" (p. 188). For this reason, instead of trying to frame one specific coalitions into a category, this work analyses how the concept of 'intersectional solidarity' can help to understand the transformative aspects that came along with the multiple intersections of coalitions.

In the coalitions among Gender Social Movements from Hungary and

Transnational Feminist Networks it was perceived an 'intersectional solidarity' among the groups resulting in a transformative praxis: an openness to new coalitions building, not just among the feminist groups but also among non-feminist groups.

The TFNs which had been analyzed (WAVE and EWL), started to work in 2020 in a joint project concerning Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women both in the EU and UN. The WAVE network and PATENT also developed a closer connection. The Hungarian organization, PATENT, received in 2023 a regranting from the WAVE network benefiting their programs of prevention and education initiatives in Hungary. This work recognized the transformative praxis in EWL in its attempt to be less self-centered -joining a program with groups that do not belong under its umbrella network- and also less EU-centered, since the project was brough to the UN ambit. Concerning the WAVE network, this research recognized the transformative praxis in the network closer connection to grassroot groups in Hungary, not just with NANE but now also with PATENT, and primarily focusing on the redistributive aspect by regrating funds to the grassroot group.

In the grassroot groups analyzed (NANE and PATENT) the transformative praxis occurred also in their openness to work with other CSOs. During the period of the fights for the IC, the grassroot groups assumed the leading role in the 2016 petition and 2017 open letter addressing the importance of ratifying the Convention. In the first action, in 2016, the women´s organizations played the leading role by starting a campaign to collect signatures and attracted other 17 CSOs to join it. In the following year, the women´s movements managed to almost triple the number, to 48 CSOs participating in mobilizing together for collecting signatures. The difference between the first (petition) and the second (open letter) is also perceived in: (1) the change to whom it was addressed (different governmental actors); (2) the new framing to consider gender a democratic issue; and (3) the claiming for an alliance in the parliament -regardless the political party- to ratify the IC. Nevertheless, the transformative praxis -the openness- was not only recognized in relation progressive groups but also to conservative groups.

Between late 2019 and early 2020, several cases of domestic violence appeared in the news. In particular, the case of the slaying of two children attracted the attention of the public to the inadequate state response to dealing with domestic violence enforcers. In response to the public indignation, the Ministry of Justice

declared in 2020 zero tolerance for VAW and announced multiple intervention measures, such as review of judicial decisions, child protection, and more funds for victim support centers. In addition. this led to the creation of working groups that included conservative actors, men´s/father´s rights groups and feminist movements.

The presence of family/men´s rights groups could be justified by the political context of VAW in Hungary. In 2015, the Parliament decided to replace the old resolution on combatting domestic violence (DV) by a new Parliamentary Decision in which DV was framed mainly as child and family protection. "Violence was not discussed as a gender-based discrimination problem or as a women's human rights issue, but, on the contrary, framed as a violent crime which threatens marriage, family and children" (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 190). The pro-family frame in the Parliament Decision of 2015 persisted in the political decisions against VAW, including the refusal to ratify the IC. Therefore, in 2020, when the follow-up changes in the Domestic Violence laws came into being, women´s groups had to decide if they should try to maintain a relationship with state actors- even if it were a fragile one- or if they would stand against it in all sectors. Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) show that this concern already existed among the groups even before the government official decision not to ratify the IC, as one movement actor said:

> After the attacks on the Convention started and the government spelled out its opposition, a question was raised among movement actors whether the strong demand of the ratification is still feasible and effective, or it would be more efficient to focus on the necessary steps taken to address the issue of violence against women/domestic violence. This question became particularly relevant in the context of addressing the government, or our relationship with various state actors. It was a relevant question for example when (…) the Minister of Justice initiated a process to address domestic violence and women's rights NGOs were involved in the process and could provide input (E. P. written communication with A. Krizsán, March 2020 apud Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 165).

The women´s groups -which had experience and expertise- decided to try to maintain a relationship with the state and once more accepted not to have a key role in the processes: sometimes sharing the stage with men/father groups, sometimes not being even invited to participate in certain working groups. "Rather than turning their back on the state, they met with the Ministry of Justice and joined various working groups to try to improve policies on domestic violence. This way, though with ambivalent feelings, they hope to achieve at least some VAW policy progress" (p. 165). Nevertheless, the processes that started in 2020 to change domestic

violence measures were more inclusive to the women´s groups than before and the groups welcomed the changes as long overdue (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021).

The openness of the women´s groups to work with conservative/ pro-family groups was also a transformative praxis, although an ambivalent one. On the one hand, when choosing to work with frames that were not gender-sensitive or that were based on family protection it could be a step back for the feminist cause. On the other hand, when the focus was the victims of VAW and DV, the main reason of these feminist groups to exist is to improve the life conditions of the victims and combat VAW, so being part of the government programs could be a way of doing that.

Hence, this work, aligned with Mahmood (2005) suggests avoiding looking at the women´s groups actions as either co-optation/subordination or resistance and rather pay attention to women´s agency and power relations. In addition, this work understands that 'what resistance is' should not be taken for granted, but it should be context dependent (Abu-Lughod, 1990). In the Hungarian context, Orbán´s regime has appropriated the VAW policy field and replaced a gender-based agenda by an alternative/conservative one. Thus, the presence of women´s groups working in those processes can be seen as a resistance to the full appropriation of the agenda.

In addition, this work understands that the fight for (a) the survival of women´s groups; (b) the victim's support and (c) the work of the experts in combatting VAW should not be disregarded as a form of resistance, even if gender or the IC is not mentioned or not politicized by the groups. As pointed out by an activist in the field: "The Convention remained an advocacy demand of the NGOs for now. At the same time, the Convention is also used indirectly to address substantive policy issues and demand legislative and policy changes" (E. P. written communication with A. Krizsán, March 2020 apud Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p.165).

In the case of NANE and PATENT, this work did not recognize any change in their discourse. From the beginning they have been using the frame "violence against women and children" and it has not changed after the non-ratification. As mentioned before, the changes were: (1) although the groups have more access to some processes that concern domestic violence, the access is shared with conservative and pro-family groups; (2) the processes are not gender-relation centered. However, the groups also reported a positive change in societal support.

"NANE and PATENT have seen stronger societal support manifested primarily through increase in donations, income tax offers but also individual donations, and increased number of requests for cooperation" (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2021, p. 140).

After having explained the transformative aspect of the groups, this research will focus now on how 'intersectional solidarity' influenced in the political context. This work argues that due to the frame 'gender equals democracy' new coalitions were formed -not only among feminist and non-feminist movements but also among distinct political parties.

Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) point out that particularly in an illiberal context, such as Orbán´s regime, using the gender issue in 'democracy master frames' makes it easier to form coalitions that go beyond the feminist groups. In the case of Hungary, this shift in dealing with a gender issue as a democratic fight created a broader coalition in the country among those who opposed Orbán´s authoritarian regime. The authors draw attention to the fact that "[l]inking the IC to democracy is a specific frame emerging in de-democratizing Hungary" (p. 158). Although not passing the ratification of the IC, the coalitions transformed the Hungarian political environment: a new coalition to oppose Orbán was formed in the Parliament and later the opposition parties presented together only one candidate in the 2022 elections.

Szelényi (2022), a former MP of Hungary, points out that "after 2019 the political space changed markedly, and the 'central space of force' that FIDESZ had occupied for a decade collapsed. A relatively large and diverse anti-Orbán bloc of voters formed, which unified supporters of the 'old' and 'new' opposition" (position 1986). There was indeed a transformative environment taking place in the country, not because it was the first time that the opposition tried to defeat Orbán´s regime – there had already been two other attempts – but because it was the first time that the opposition parties – socialists, center, and right-wings- united to present only one candidate. The opposition parties went as far as organizing primary elections to find the most suitable candidate.

> The primary for the prime ministerial candidate resulted in the victory of the relatively unknown Peter Marki-Zay (…), thus demonstrating that people wanted new faces in politics. The many public debates that Hungarians had been deprived of for more than a decade, and the long queues at the voting tents, gave proof of the

> fundamental desire for political pluralism and democratic competition. The primaries provided strong legitimacy for the joint candidates in the elections in 2022 (position 1998).

Although a complete defeat of Orbán´s regime was not expected, the opposition relied upon the reasonable possibility of ending Fidesz super-majority in the Parliament. Their aim was to be able to play the key role of checking the government and start to restore democracy. The opposition managed to win in Budapest and the big cities, but the countryside guaranteed the victory of Orbán´s regime. Consequently, the united opposition parties did not block either Orbán or Fidesz super-majority (Szelényi, 2022).

Attempting to analyze why the coalitions -both for the ratification of the IC and for Parliamentary election – did not attain the results expected, several possible reasons come into mind. As questioned by Szelényi (2022), is the problem in the regime itself? If so, how to defeat democratically a regime that dismantled the democratic institutions in the country? Notwithstanding, justifying every defeat by only pointing to the dismantling of democracy would not be enough. It is alarming the growth of conservative groups – in numbers and strength- and disregarding them or not taking their claims seriously may have been one of the faults of the feminist groups. Another possible reason is precisely within the feminist groups: their divergences, the co-optations, their detachment from a broader group of women -including non-feminist and women´s everyday problems.

According to Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1), in Hungary, there could be different feminist issues emerging and there could be a preference to form news groups in a more loose and less organized form. Andrea Krizsán (Interview #1) expressed that it is still an open research agenda, but one issue the expert guesses could be central to these new formations is the 'crisis of care'. It was noticed by the new groups that this agenda has been secondary to feminist movements and has recently been appropriated by conservative groups and even governments -as it was seen in Orbán´s family polices. Therefore, in order not to let the conservative narrative about family capitalize in this issue, the new groups are showing more willingness to search for common points with Orbán´s government. In addition, these forms of organizations – loose and not organized - allow the new groups to open discussions over care, work, class issues etc. spreading their concerns beyond the feminist environment.

This research argues that all previous concerns should be taken into account when fighting for democracy and that it would not diminish but it would even reinforce the importance of creating coalitions drawing on 'intersectional solidarity'. Since 'intersectional solidarity' may be present when groups share different perspectives about class, gender, race etc. and/or act in different arenas (local/national and transnational), new coalitions may be formed by the recognition of the difference when: (1) groups discussions over issues that intersection -such as care, race, and class struggle- reinforce the importance of connecting with groups that have different perspectives on those issues; (2) groups with different formations -loose and less organized forms- and/or with divergent focuses of action -according to the political opportunity- work in a short-term transformative praxis (focusing on local context) and organized groups and transnational networks work for a long-term change (in transnational arena). Both the above-mentioned possibilities show that 'intersectional solidarity' may remain an important concept for understanding resistance of feminist groups and coalition-building.

5
Conclusion

This research sought to understand ‘how gender social movements and transnational feminist networks resist in countries with conservative authoritarian governments’. The analytical framework advanced proposed to analyze the gender resistance drawing on the concept of ‘intersectional solidarity’, with the objective of inquiring which transformative praxis -if any- come from coalitions among grassroot social movements and transnational networks.

Literature on the authoritarian/conservative turn has shown that it is not an isolated phenomenon. Around the world, basic civil rights itself have been challenged by new right-wing governments, demonstrating that even democracy cannot be taken for granted, but must be fought for. Concerning the resistance, literature on both social movements and transnational networks have pointed to the importance of collective resistance to fight against this phenomenon. In addition, the feminist literature has made great contribution drawing attention to the relationship between the rise of the new right and gender, addressing issues of resistance, coalition-building and democracy.

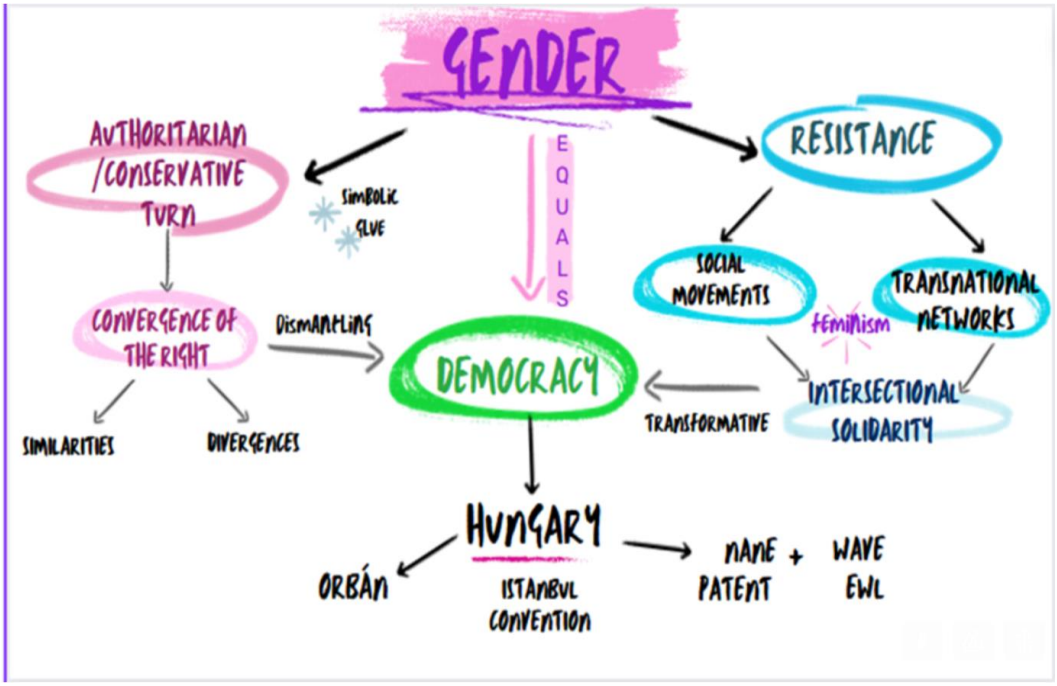
Hence, this research contributes to the literatures on the authoritarian/conservative turn, social movements, transnational networks and feminism addressing that in the context of the authoritarian turn, gender has a central role both to the convergence of the right and to the resistance. Theoretically, it contributes to the concepts of ‘intersectional solidarity’ and resistance, showing how ‘intersectional solidarity’ can be an important form of resistance in authoritarian-conservative contexts. Empirically, this research also contributes to the literature by showing the case of Hungary and the resistance of gender groups, in addition to the ‘gender equals democracy’ frame used in the context and the transformative praxis that emerged from it.

This work argues that gender is not only one aspect of the authoritarian/conservative turn, instead it is a key element. In order to understand how conservatives, right-wing parties, anti-gender groups, religious actors etc. got together in a transnational alliance, it is fundamental to consider gender. If one wants to analyze how the right became more radicalized in these processes, one should not disregard gender. Nevertheless, if the interest is not in the convergence

of the right, but the resistance to this authoritarian/conservative turn, the answer would also be to pay attention to gender. Gender permeates all aspects of social life, and in respect to the authoritarian/conservative turn, gender is in the core of both its formation and the resistance to it.

In order to better understand this phenomenon, the case study of Hungary and the Istanbul Convention were selected. The case study of Hungary was chosen due to its exceptionality. Hungary is an extreme example of an authoritarian/conservative government that has been in power over a decade, controlling all aspects of life in the country. Due to this, Orbán´s regime managed to have specific particularities regarding gender and democracy, which was highlighted in the case of the Istanbul Convention. It was analyzed the coalitions of grassroots groups (NANE and PATENT) and TFNs (WAVE and EWL) based on 'intersectional solidarity' in the context of the IC and how it had a transformative practice not only for the groups involved but also for the political context of the country and how the frame 'gender equals democracy' later affected the future of Hungary.

Fig.3 Mind Map



Source: developed by the author

The above mind map helps to understand that gender is at the core of both the authoritarian/conservative turn – acting as more than a symbolic glue- and in the resistance. This convergence of the right has similarities that show that it is a transnational phenomenon, but it also has important divergences that point to the fact that the context is a crucial aspect to be analyzed. Nevertheless, one of the most important aspects to take into account when analyzing this phenomenon is the dismantling of democracy. Social movements and transnational networks, particularly feminist ones, have played a significant part in resistance. By focusing on coalitions of gender social movements and transnational feminist networks based on 'intersectional solidarity', this research highlights the transformative praxis that emerged from the coalitions and its impact on democracy.

Having acknowledged the authoritarian/conservative turn and the Hungarian context, the research focused on the complex relation of gender and the authoritarian/conservative turn – both in its formation and the resistance to it. In the convergence of the right, it was seen that gender worked as more than just a *symbolic glue* but as a central aspect connecting different actors that previously did not cooperate in a fight against 'gender ideology'. For that to happen, gender was manipulated (and demonized), becoming an umbrella term that signify diverse contested issue; the pro-gender approach was replaced by a pro-family one, centered in traditional values and the nation; and finally, gender became a common target, from which both anti-gender actors and right-wing governments profited in aligning -in an *opportunistic synergy*- to fight a 'War on Gender'.

In terms of resistance, gender was a key element in resisting the dismantling of democracy in Hungary. The case study of Hungary and the non-ratification of the IC, illustrates the 'intersectional solidarity' among gender grassroot groups and TFNs during the fights for creating the IC, promoting its signature, demanding the ratification and resisting the anti-gender attacks and the connections between gender and democracy – 'gender equals democracy' - that emerged in the Hungarian resistance.

Regarding the research findings on the coalitions between the gender grassroots groups and the transnational feminist networks, for pedagogical reasons, three moments of the coalitions were separated: (1) the creation and promotion of the IC, (2) the fight for ratification, and (3) the resistance to the anti-gender attacks.

In the first moment, the creation and promotion of the IC, it is possible to see a higher presence of transnational feminist networks acting for the cause. In the European Union, the WAVE network and the EWL made pressure for the creation of a Convention about Violence against women (which influenced the creation of the IC by the Council of Europe). Transnational campaigns such as the One Billion Rising and the 16 Days of Activism also took place to draw attention to the issue of violence against women and the importance of signing the IC.

In the second moment -the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Hungary- the TFNs and the gender grassroots groups acted together to promote the ratification both in the international arena and in the national sphere. The grassroot groups joined international campaigns, such as those mentioned above, to raise public awareness and also to promote the debate in Parliament. In addition, the Hungarian feminist groups led campaigns that later were joined by other non-feminist groups. It is crucial to point out that these coalitions with transnational networks had an important effect in preparing the groups for the fight ahead -resisting the attack on the Convention- and not letting the importance of the ratification of the IC be forgotten.

In the third moment- the resistance to the anti-gender attacks in Hungary- the grassroots groups had a higher presence and it was not only the feminist groups that were at the forefront of the campaigns. Both feminist and non-feminist grassroots groups led the resistance, creating the seeds for the 'gender equals democracy' framework that was later articulated in parliament. A further aspect to highlight is the importance of the women deputies in this process and the coalitions they formed to fight for the IC across parties (from the far right to socialist).

In addition, the 'intersectional solidarity' among gender grassroot groups and TFNs during the fights for creating the IC, promoting its signature, demanding the ratification and resisting the anti-gender attacks had transformative praxis, which influenced both the groups involved and the political context in Hungary, affecting the democracy in the country.

Due to these coalitions based on 'intersectional solidarity', transformation praxis emerged influencing both the groups involved and the Hungarian political context. In what concerns the groups involved, the Transnational Feminist Networks were able to connect to groups outside their umbrella network and/or improve their connection with the grassroot groups. In the case of the grassroot

groups, they became more open to form alliances with non-feminist groups and even to conservative groups. In a fight for the survival of the groups and for the improvement of women´s victims' conditions, the women´s grassroot groups in Hungary started not only to re-approach the State but also to accept sharing the spotlight with conservative groups in order not to let the VAW agenda be absorbed.

Concerning the political context, the frame 'gender equals democracy' presented by the coalitions to fight for the IC emerged as a novelty. Although the connection between gender equality and democracy was not new, 'gender equals democracy' framed a gender issue - the fight against violence against women - on the same level as a democratic issue (separation of the three powers, regular free and fair elections etc.). On the basis of this framework, coalitions were formed between different groups - feminists and non-feminists - and coalitions in parliament between different parties - from socialists to the extreme right - not only to fight for the ratification of the IC, but also to oppose the Orbán government, in a fight for democracy in Hungary. Due to this new alliance against the government formed in Parliament, the opposition parties presented all together only one candidate, chosen in primary elections, in the elections of 2022.

In sum, the coalitions based on 'intersectional solidarity' and the frame 'gender equals democracy' had a transformative praxis not only to the groups involved but also to the political context of the country. Therefore, based on the concepts of 'intersectional solidarity' and 'gender equals democracy' frame, this work proposes two arguments: (1) drawing on the concept of 'intersectional solidarity', coalitions among gender grassroot groups and transnational feminist networks are an important form of resistance in authoritarian/conservative contexts; (2) the coalitions between feminist and non-feminist grassroots groups played an important role in promoting the 'gender equals democracy' framework, which was later articulated in the Hungarian parliament to create an alliance regardless of political party.

The first argument - resistance in an authoritarian/conservative context - was developed by avoiding seeing the actions of women's groups as either cooptation/subordination or resistance, but instead looking at women's agency and power relations, and thus understanding "what resistance is" by acknowledging the context. In the case of Hungary, under an authoritarian and conservative government, which harassed the movements and their members, surviving as a

group – even with lack of funds – and fighting for the ratification of the IC is a form of resistance. A resistance that might not have happened the same way without the presence of the TFNs in the coalitions. The 'intersectional solidarity' between Hungarian women´s groups and the transnational networks helped the grassroots groups to survive -both financially and in engagement. It also helped the groups to fight in both in national and international arenas, not letting the importance of the IC to be forgotten in local sphere (led by the grassroots groups) and in the international one (led by the TFNs).

The resistance of the TFNs in coalition with women's groups in Hungary produced transformative praxis both for the groups involved and for the political context of the country. The TFNs were transformed, they have created more coalitions among themselves and/or with the grassroots groups. The Hungarian women's movements were also transformed, they have expanded their coalition to include non-feminist groups and sometimes even shared the stage with conservative groups in order not to lose the gains made in the field of VAW. In addition, this transformative praxis in the groups also influenced the democracy in the country.

The second argument, around the 'gender equals democracy' frame, was developed based on the Hungarian case study. In the 2017 open letter, the groups - feminist and non-feminist - called for a political alliance regardless of parties to ratify the IC, framing a gender issue as a democratic issue - even if they did not articulate these exact terms. Later, in a press release in 2018, the groups explicitly framed gender and democracy and called for the ratification of the IC. Due to the 'gender equals democracy' frame, coalitions were formed between different parties (far right, center, and socialist parties) to fight for the ratification of the IC. These coalitions influenced not only the political context for passing the ratification, but also beyond that moment in a fight against Orbán and his party. Despite the failure to pass the ratification, a new coalition was formed in parliament, and later, for the first time, the opposition parties presented a single candidate for the 2022 elections in a coalition against Orbán's authoritarian regime.

The results obtained from both the ratification of the IC and the Parliament elections in 2022 were not the ones expected. The IC was not ratified by the Parliament and Orbán and his party Fidesz won the elections, maintaining the party´s super-majority. However, the unfortunate results did not diminish the resistance power of the groups. The way that the feminist groups created (and

influenced) coalitions shows that not just what is understood as resistance depends on the context, but also that gender resistance should not be analyzed in relation to a fixed concept but via women´s actions and the power relations. Even so, it is important to question why the results did not come into being.

Finally, this work may lead to other research agendas. The analysis of the case study of Hungary may contribute both theoretically and empirically to investigate other contexts. It is important to point out that it was not the intention of this research to generalize the results, but to comprehend deeply the authoritarian/conservative turn and the feminist resistance and these specific phenomena in Hungary. Although the results cannot be generalized, theoretical preposition may emerge from the case study. Concerning the Brazilian case, a research agenda that could be investigated is the campaigns of #EleNão (not him) during the Bolsonaro´s election in 2018. The frame 'gender equals democracy' was articulated by feminist movements with the #EleNão in an attempt to mobilize the civil society to vote against Bolsonaro, claiming that a misogynist in power – and its political plans – would be a threat to Democracy. On the one hand, the feminist campaigns were joined by other sectors of civil society, making the campaigns going beyond the feminist public. On the other hand, the #EleNão campaigns called the attention of conservative sectors of society that reacted in favor of Bolsonaro.

6
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