

**The Culture for the New Right in Latin America
and its Actions in Baja California****La cultura para la nueva derecha en América Latina
y su accionar en Baja California**Areli Veloz Contreras¹

ABSTRACT

The article addresses the current theoretical elaborations put forth by prominent figures of the new right in Latin America and their strategic diffusion in Baja California. The conducted ethnography has provided insights into the mechanisms employed to redefine and reinforce a right-wing perspective that perceives itself as renewed. Among the findings, it was discovered that despite political and religious discrepancies within the so-called new right-wing groups, they coincide in the reworking of a theoretical corpus that addresses gender ideology, which stems from cultural studies, highlighting the relationship between culture and power. It is noted that there is an updated production of the discourse of the new right that seeks to maintain a worldview contrary to that expressed by feminisms, achieved through the co-optation and manipulation of progressive theorizations to engage audiences and expand their political ranks.

Keywords: 1. new right, 2. gender ideology, 3. cultural battle, 4. Baja California, 5. Mexicali.

RESUMEN

En el artículo se abordan las actuales elaboraciones teóricas que producen las figuras representativas de la nueva derecha en América Latina y su estratégica difusión en Baja California. El trabajo etnográfico permitió conocer los mecanismos empleados para redefinir y fortalecer una derecha que se percibe a sí misma como renovada. Se encontró que, aunque existen discrepancias políticas y religiosas entre los grupos llamados a sí mismos de la nueva derecha, coinciden en la reelaboración de un corpus teórico que hace frente a la ideología de género, el cual deviene de los estudios culturales, destacando la relación entre cultura y poder. Se advierte que existe una producción actualizada del discurso de la nueva derecha que pretende mantener un entendido del mundo contrario a lo manifestado por los feminismos, por medio de la cooptación y manipulación de las teorizaciones progresistas para exaltar a las audiencias y acrecentar sus cuadros políticos.

Palabras clave: 1. nueva derecha, 2. ideología de género, 3. batalla cultural, 4. Baja California, 5. Mexicali.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the late 20th century, the strengthening and rise of right-wing movements on a global scale has been visualized as a reaction to progressive governments and changes in identity rights, specifically those related to sexuality, reproduction, and gender. While reactions to these issues were already evident since the mid-20th century, it is currently that they acquire characteristics that could define and reshape the rise of the current right-wing (Cannon & Rangel, 2020; Giordano, 2019).

In the case of Latin America, political mobilizations of recent years for the decriminalization of abortion, recognition of sexual and gender diversity, as well as pro-life and pro-family demonstrations, have fostered polarized discourses in the political landscape. On one hand, there are anti-feminist mobilizations that argue that gender discourse goes against the nuclear family model and heterosexuality, emphasizing the sexual identities of children (Álvarez Benavides & Jiménez Aguilar, 2021; Bárcenas Barajas, 2020; Díaz Camarena, 2021; Ferré-Pavia & Sambucetti, 2021; Veloz, 2021). On the other hand, there are those who advocate for and defend women's rights from a naturalistic perspective of sex (Alabao, 2020; Delgado, 2017; Méndez, 2022; Zarembeg & Guzmán Lucero, 2019). There are also various conservative groups that, on a transnational level, advocate for a political project aimed at restoring the moral order of nations through the preservation of the heterosexual nuclear family, in contrast to the sexual and reproductive rights acquired in recent years (Bárcenas Barajas, 2021; Gallagher, 2004; Gudiño Bessone, 2017; Jiménez Aguilar, 2021; Miskolci & Campana, 2017; Vaggione, 2022).

Faced with the panorama of political polarization that could jeopardize or harm identity rights—understood as the recognition of diversities—, in recent years there has been an increase in research addressing the strengthening of anti-gender positions. Academic works have emerged that shed light on the mobilizations and political strategies of various conservative groups, taking into account the particularity of the political context (Vigoya & Rondón, 2017). For example, the fear-based discourses propagated by campaigns such as “Con mis hijos no te metas” (Don't mess with my children) (González Vélez et al., 2018) have been documented; actions that highlight the political magnitude of their positions within the context of COVID-19 have been observed (Corrêa, 2022); the strategies used against advancements in gender policies and theorizations have also been examined (Faur & Viveros Vigoya, 2020); as well as the formation of a cartography of anti-gender movements that redefine the roles of the democratic State and the principles of secularism and secularity in contemporary societies (Bárcenas Barajas, 2022).

Likewise, it is argued that the current right-wing positions can be distinguished from those of the past due to the relationship between various religious groups—such as Catholics and Evangelicals—who, as a common project, defend the heterosexual and heteronormative nuclear family. Furthermore, the increasing presence of Evangelical groups in public spaces and in politics is redefining the current conservative agenda (Blancarte Pimentel, 2021; De Almeida, 2021; De la Torre & Seman, 2021; Gutiérrez Zúñiga, 2021; Salazar, 2020; Seman, 2021). It is even suggested that the anti-gender agenda is a global phenomenon that involves devising strategies to promote

and reinforce its political presence in different countries (Faur & Viveros Vigoya, 2020; Fassin, 2020; Kováts, 2018; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018; Pető, 2016).

Among the strategies employed by the new right stemming from religious institutions, there is the secularization of discourse to attract supporters and strengthen their political factions (Vaggione, 2012, 2022), as well as generating anti-gender knowledge strategically detached from the religious sphere in order to have an impact on political activism. (Rodríguez-Rondón & Rivera-Amarillo, 2020). On a global scale, these strategies attack and discredit both feminist movements and gender and queer theories, considering them as ideologies (Fassin, 2020). Therefore, this article aims to contribute to research focused on understanding and analyzing the strategies of anti-gender movements by producing and disseminating a theoretical corpus that supports and legitimizes, socially and politically, the discourse against gender ideology. It should be emphasized that it is through the manipulation and instrumentalization of the concept of culture—which specifically stems from the ideas of Antonio Gramsci (2013), as mentioned early on by Mouffe and Turner (1981) and later by Wright (2004) and Paternotte and Kuhar (2018)—which has resurfaced and reinforced the current political nature of the discourse of a right-wing that perceives itself as renewed, and that confronts a new left which it presents under the label of gender ideology (in various events and/or in the literature it produces and circulates).

The present analysis focuses on the case of the anti-gender movement in Mexicali; however, it is not approached from a parochial standpoint but rather as a contribution to research on conservatism and gender in Mexico, specifically in the state of Baja California (Hernández Vicencio & Negrete Mata, 2001; López Arámburo, 2005; Maier, 2010; Romero Arias, 2020; Veloz, 2019, 2021). The aim is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the transnational political dynamics of these political factions.

To develop the proposed argument, firstly, the emergence of the concept of culture, which stems from cultural studies in general and the contributions of Antonio Gramsci in particular, is discussed as it shapes the current discourse and theoretical framework of the new right. Secondly, the methodological approach is described. Then, the political actions of conservative factions in Baja California are addressed, followed by an examination of the disputes over social classifications that designate what is considered human, highlighting their anthropological character. Lastly, it is pointed out how the concept of the intellectual, based on Gramsci (2013), has been reworked to enhance and strengthen the theoretical discourse and practices of the right-wing as a political identification on both transnational and local scales.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE FROM THE CULTURAL BATTLE

Since the second half of the 20th century, the concept of culture—initially defined within anthropology and later within the field of cultural studies—was reimagined through discourses on diversities and different ways of life. This had strong political implications, particularly in the case of demands for the “recognition of differences” (Fraser, 2015, p. 21). Simultaneously, reactionary movements emerged, appealing to the preservation of moral values surrounding the heterosexual

and heteronormative nuclear family. These movements turned culture into a center of demands and disputes, strategically employed in political arenas. As a result, the theoretical and practical reinterpretation of culture reinforced its agency, media presence, and identification as a renewed right-wing.

From the late 20th century onwards, the concept of culture was reclaimed and turned into a distinguishing feature of the new right, which involved understanding it through the disputes over dominant definitions that became widespread common sense. Thus, the legacy of Antonio Gramsci (2013) represented a substantial shift in the understanding of culture, moving from a static, homogeneous, and harmonious view to conceiving it as a reference point for unequal power relations.

It was then that the concept of culture began to acquire centrality in the political actions of the new right within a context that was labeled as postmodern. The notion of culture was redefined within the framework of neo-Marxism, closely associated with the widely cited Gramsci, as mentioned by proponents of this perspective (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). This neo-Marxist is considered to be expressed through radical feminisms or theories that promote sex change, which, from their perspective, subvert the natural aspects of human beings through a relativization of culture; while, on the other hand, they argue that from feminism, gender studies, or LGBTI+ activism, language is manipulated to conceal domination under the guise of democracy or equality (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018).

In this sense, for different intellectuals of the new right, the current context is defined by a cultural revolution focused on changing subjectivities for the domination of populations, an idea that has become widespread globally (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018; Korolczuk, 2015). They constantly argue that the war is no longer fought with weapons, but by transforming the common sense of people and redefining the oppressor-oppressed relationship. Therefore, through events, literature, and various media, they promote a cultural battle that can only be won through culture itself.

This cultural battle, associated with the confrontation with feminist ideology and later with gender ideology, is a trend observed in various countries in Latin America, Europe, and the United States (Korolczuk, 2015; Kováts, 2018; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018; Pető, 2016). From the Catholic Church, representative figures of the right-wing argue that feminist theories deny the nature of human beings (Ratzinger, 1997) by considering that heterosexuality is not mandatory and that biological sex is not fixed. Subsequently, during the preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the concept of gender was used to replace the concept of woman, establishing that internationally all governmental and community policies and institutions should adopt this perspective (Miskolci & Campana, 2017; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018). This political shift provoked reactions from various conservative groups, as they argued that sex was replaced by gender, thereby legitimizing the displacement of biological conception by cultural factors (Ratzinger, 1997). They saw this as an interpretation based on relativism that went against the essence of humanity. Simultaneously, they identified a genealogy of feminism that strategically

allowed them to differentiate between an acceptable feminism and another that they identified as violent, radical, and globalizing (Rodríguez-Rondón & Rivera-Amarillo, 2020).

In Mexico, since 2016, the debate surrounding gender ideology gained greater prominence as the concept became popularized in European countries and subsequently in Argentina and Brazil— influenced by Jorge Scala’s book (2010)—, and later in Mexico (Miskolci & Campana, 2017). It is worth noting that following the decriminalization of abortion in 2007 and the recognition of same-sex marriage in 2009 in what was then the Federal District—now Mexico City (CDMX)—, discussions related to cultural definitions of family, reproduction, and sexuality gained strength in the public sphere. These discussions became a fertile ground for the reinforcement of subsequent mobilizations and the development and dissemination of theoretical frameworks by current representative figures of the new right in Latin America.

METHODOLOGY

As of 2017, events and mobilizations have been witnessed in Mexicali, Baja California, concerning family, sexuality, and reproduction. There has also been an engagement with influential Catholic groups in the city: including Frente Nacional por la Familia de B. C. (National Front for the Family of B.C; FNF), Salvemos las 2 Vidas (Save Both Lives), Consejo Estatal Vida y Familia (State Council for Life and Family), Dimensión Vida Diócesis de Mexicali (Diocese of Mexicali’s Dimension of Life) and ProLife Army. While these associations have their differences, they often collaborate to organize and self-manage events and demonstrations. At the same time, they are intertwined with national groups—such as FNF, Red Familia, Patria Unida, and Vida y Familia (VIFAC)—, as well as international groups like ProLife Choice, CitizenGo, and HazteOir, among others. Additionally, there is collaborative work among religious civil organizations advocating for life from conception in cities in Baja California, Mexico, as well as in California and Arizona, United States.

The speakers are invited both by alliances and networks that are woven at the national and/or binational level, as well as by the popularity they gain within conservative sectors, whether it is due to the publicity they gain on social media, the tours they undertake in various countries in Latin America and the United States, the literature they disseminate, or their relationships with various transnational organizations. The events are managed by the networks of these organizations, as well as by churches, schools, business owners, local media outlets—local television stations and newspapers—and interested individuals who, as frequent attendees, support the activities of the associations.

As part of the fieldwork, on November 11, 2017, we attended the conference by Argentinians Agustín Laje and Nicolás Márquez. Subsequently, in 2019, we witnessed five events featuring the participation of Agustín Laje, Argentinean Chinda Brandolino, Brazilian Sara Winter, and Mexican psychologist Everardo Martínez. In 2020, during the pandemic, in-person conferences were suspended, but not the mobilizations in the city. Three caravans were organized under the

name “Claxonazo por la vida y la familia” (Honking for life and family), which were attended by the author.

In 2021, in-person activities resumed, and three events were held featuring the participation of Agustín Laje and Argentinean Lupe Batallán, Rodrigo Iván Cortés Jiménez—national president of FNF—as well as lawyer Diana González and gynecologist Juan Carlos Balcázar. We attended these events as part of the fieldwork.

It should be noted that after the decriminalization of abortion in the state, various manifestations took place at the government palace, where observation was conducted. In May 2022, three conferences led by Pablo Muñoz Iturrieta, Nicolás Márquez, Agustín Laje, Peruvian Miklos Lukacs, and Mexican Carlos Ramírez were attended. Furthermore, access was obtained via streaming to international events held in Mexico City during 2022: the 14th World Congress of Families² and the Conservative Political Action Conference (Conferencia Política de Acción Conservadora [CPAC-México]),³ which brought together organizations and leaders from both national and international right-wing movements recognized locally. In 2023, the conference by Argentinean Javier Olivera Ravasi was attended. Additionally, fieldwork has been conducted each year since 2018 during the Marches for Life and Family, as well as press conferences and other activities held in Mexicali.

The ethnographic work allowed for the description and interpretation of political activities and discourses that unfold in these events, of which, due to space constraints, only the most representative ones are mentioned in this article. Ethnography, as described by Guber (2001), is an open method of research, which allowed for the integration of various methodological techniques—such as observation, informal interviews, and registration through recordings and field notes—to interpret the strategies employed by different groups and analyze the discourses expressed in conferences and the activities carried out by the aforementioned groups and associations.

For the data systematization, emphasis was placed on both the discourses disseminated through conferences, workshops, and congresses, as well as those that give meaning to the political actions of these leaders. The concepts of culture and truth were central in understanding how they theorize their discontent towards gender ideology, as well as their views on the figure of the intellectual. The analysis also involved examining the emotional expression in their activism.

The groups that organize and promote the aforementioned events identify themselves as Catholic, but at times they are also composed of individuals who identify as atheists. During large-scale events, they often form alliances with other churches—such as the Evangelical Church—,

² This event, internationally known as the World Congress of Families, can be consulted on the website <https://wcfmexico.org/home-en/>

³ Political summit organized by conservatives in the United States since 1974. In 2019, it started being held in other countries, bringing together internationally renowned political leaders (<https://cpacmx.com/cpac-2022-espanol/>).

this indicates that they come from different political and religious backgrounds. This is evident in the confrontations or alliances that are redefined based on the political climate of the moment.

Political Action Against Gender Ideology in Baja California

In Baja California, the use of the concept of gender ideology in local agendas began to be visible after the initiative to reform article 4 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (Draft Decree of 2016). However, political mobilizations for the defense of the heterosexual nuclear family, as well as for life from conception, are not entirely new, as they can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s with moralization campaigns conducted against feminisms and emerging movements for sexual diversity in the state's major cities (Veloz, 2019).

However, a paradigmatic case that redefined mobilizations in defense of life for conservative groups in the state was the Paulina case in 1999.⁴ This case brought the issue of abortion to the forefront of the political agenda, both locally and nationally, and even internationally, at a time when gender was becoming a priority issue for international organizations (GIRE, 2008). Furthermore, the process surrounding the case reshaped the alliances and strategies that local conservative groups would employ to strengthen their position in the political arena.

The formation of groups and alliances for the defense of the heterosexual nuclear family and life from conception was also associated with the strong presence of a conservative party in the state, the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional [PAN]), known for its ties to the Catholic Church and its defense of the heterosexual family and femininities associated with motherhood and caregiving. It is worth noting that in 1989, this party emerged as the sole opposition party with conservative tendencies governing a federal entity, in contrast to the hegemonic Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI]) (Hernández Vicencio, 2021). Subsequently, in 2006, the Social Encounter Party (Partido Encuentro Social [PES]) was founded in the state, openly evangelical and characterized by its defense of the heterosexual family and opposition to gender ideology (Garma, 2019).

This is how strategic alliances were formed with different leaders and political parties—such as the PAN and the PES—, with government institutions—like the National System for Integral Family Development (Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia [DIF]) —, with civil associations—like Provida or Profamilia—, with small or medium-sized business owners, the Catholic Church, and subsequently with the Evangelical Church, as well as with private schools. These alliances were strengthened and expanded after 2018, when a party identified as progressive,

⁴ The case of Paulina refers to a 13-year-old girl who became pregnant after being raped. She and her mother went to the local Public Prosecutor's Office, where the termination of the pregnancy was allowed. However, at the General Hospital of Mexicali, due to various administrative obstacles, she was denied the intervention.

the National Regeneration Movement (Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional [MORENA]), in coalition with parties like the PES, won the national elections and a year later, the state elections.

Gender and family issues have been a focal point of contention for current governments in light of the progress made in sexual and reproductive rights, as evidenced, for example, by the decriminalization of abortion in 10 states of the country, including Baja California. In this particular state, in recent years, constitutional reforms have been proposed and approved regarding the decriminalization of abortion (Decree 36 of 2021), the recognition of same-sex marriage (Decree 275 of 2021), as well as the gender identity law (Decree 109 of 2022) that criminalizes offenses against sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. These political changes have sparked strong reactions from conservative groups, who, as this article shows, have expressed their opposition through various actions aimed at preserving what they perceive as the inherent nature and moral values that define humanity.

In this sense, the reinforcement of a new right-wing movement in Baja California can be attributed, among other factors, to the historical presence of conservative factions in the state, as well as their current integration into an international project against gender ideology, which managed to redefine, through interconnected networks, the geopolitical dispute over what defines the human. By strategically organizing local events, new political leaders within conservative factions are emerging. Transnational alliances and networks reshape the discourse and arguments used in the cultural battle, which often become ambiguous due to the influence of the current political climate. Therefore, intellectuals play a crucial role in strengthening right-wing political factions.

In Baja California, the new right aligns itself with an international political project that opposes neo-Marxism or the new communism—feminism, the rainbow agenda (as they call it), or environmental movements—which, since the cultural battle, have undermined the natural essence of what is truly human. Therefore, for the new right, expressing their views or having political representatives in current governments requires a strong discourse supported by the representation of their positions through the figure of the intellectual. These intellectuals disseminate a single truth (the unambiguous nature and morality of mankind) through various media outlets. This truth is seen as being at risk due to the lies imposed by a renewed left-wing movement on the international stage, which, according to various events, adversely affects families who disagree with the lifestyles proposed and imposed by the current left-wing movement at the local level.

The Dispute over the Naming of what is Human

Currently, the new right-wing movement has generated a comprehensive theoretical corpus surrounding the cultural battle—as argued in this article—through the manipulation and discursive reworking of contributions from cultural studies, which are closely linked to the political context. In various events, it was mentioned that the purpose of the cultural battle is to change subjectivities through the ideological indoctrination of populations, sustained through discursive creation, since

words have been instrumental in altering both the meaning and what defines reality. An illustrative example is the conference given by Javier Olivera at a private school in Mexicali:

The one who names has control over things, and the better one names, the more they become the owner of those things; philosophy has long understood this (...), from Pythagoras to the Frankfurt School, Marx himself and Engels recognized that the art of creating words serves as an instrument for the communist revolution. Gramsci was no exception, he stated: “ideas and opinions do not spontaneously arise in the brain of each individual; rather, there is a center of formation, of irradiation”. How can we change the world? As proposed by postmodernity or the Frankfurt School: it is a gradual way of changing the words (J. Olivera, personal communication, February 24, 2023).

For the new right, it is crucial to propose arguments through a theoretical corpus that intellectuals disseminate in conferences, congresses, or talks, as well as through bibliographic material, platforms, and social-digital networks. The objective of this material is to create a common language and, therefore, reinforce the discourse that counters the ideology of gender. In conferences and events held in Mexicali, intellectuals have strategically designated a genealogy of feminisms, distinguishing between good and bad feminisms (Rodríguez-Rondón & Rivera-Amarillo, 2020). An example of this is the course given by Agustín Laje, where he stated that the ideology of gender “is an intellectual effort of conceptualization through the academic production of contemporary feminisms” (personal communication, April 2, 2019), which distinguish themselves by articulating the sociological and political variable of gender in their discourse. The representative figures of the new right agree on dividing feminisms into stages and differentiate between those that advocate for women’s rights, compared to gender feminism, which they argue is an artificial construction based on gender rather than sex. In other words, the cultural construction of gender supersedes biological sex, as culture is relativized and politicized.

Gender, being perceived as a tool of power and domination, is classified as an ideology since it relies on scientific and political principles to establish itself based on common sense. At the same time, Agustín Laje agrees that it is through a set of irrational ideas that sexuality starts from merely cultural aspects, being stripped of its biological connotation (personal communication, September 19, 2019). Therefore, as Scala (2010) expresses, gender is not a theory or a perspective, but an ideology that will “destroy the human being” as a species (p. 7). Furthermore, this is also associated with a cultural war, as they believe that its forceful presence in the social sphere is not due to “the power of weapons but to the propaganda used to change the hearts and minds of people, without apparent bloodshed” (Scala, 2010, p. 7).

In addition, in current debates, it is explicitly articulated that gender ideology and cultural warfare are defining elements of culture—and at times they are considered synonymous—. Thus, by appropriating and manipulating literature from progressive authors, it is argued and justified that the world is currently engaged in a battle of language or a grammatical reengineering. Drawing from the contributions of Gramsci (2013), it is recognized that while culture encompasses diverse

worldviews and their cultural characteristics, these very worldviews, due to their lack of homogeneity, predispose contradictions and conflicts (Laje, 2022).

In a context of social crisis, as mentioned by the president of FNF, where the population lacks tools to recognize issues and discern what is imposed as truth, the new right sees failure and defeat as inevitable precisely because there is a war being waged on the symbolic and subjective level, which entails a particular type of power and submission (R. I. Cortés Jiménez, personal communication, October 20, 2021). As mentioned in various events, gender ideology is imposed as a way of life sponsored by national governments and international organizations, which undermines the ways of life in Latin American countries. An example of this was the March for Life on October 3, 2022, held in the city of Mexicali, where Pablo Muñoz Iturrieta was invited to take the microphone and exclaimed in front of hundreds of people:

(...) they must be aware of everything we are experiencing; it is nothing more than a deep attack to destroy the culture of this nation, and not only do they seek to destroy the culture, but they seek to destroy the human person, they seek to destroy the fact that we are men, that we are women. It is the denial of absolutely every reality, and this ideology is spreading, this ideology that in philosophy we call postmodernism, it is an ideology that comes with the support and financing of the powerful elites of this world, an agenda that is particularly manifested in the United Nations' Agenda 2030 (...) gender equality, what does it mean? Abortion. That is why we must expel from our countries this agenda that seeks to destroy our culture, that seeks to destroy our roots, to destroy our faith (P. Muñoz Iturrieta, personal communication, October 3, 2022).

Therefore, by appropriating and redefining concepts derived from critical perspectives, the new right paradoxically presents a discourse that—as a counteroffensive against feminisms—brings together various groups that reinforce a common morality. These moral values uphold a social organization where women and femininities are destined for reproduction, motherhood, and care, not only of other individuals but also of nations or what culturally defines the human.

The Anthropological War and the Fear of Human Displacement

The cultural battle associated with the ideology of gender has been linked to a notion of humanity that jeopardizes Judeo-Christian principles. Therefore, the war is not only cultural but also anthropological, as it undermines what is understood as human. As expressed in various congresses and workshops of the new right, gender ideology emerges as a set of closed conceptions that impose themselves like a dictatorship, acting against the human species. Within these conceptions, gender feminism is deemed unscientific and therefore a falsehood, as its theories prioritize culture over biology, dismissing what they consider true science. They assert their discourse through arguments based on disciplines such as medicine and psychology, or by employing new technologies in service of large corporations.

In the case of these disciplines—both in events and in the literature disseminated about the current cultural battle and/or gender ideology—there is often an emphasis, from a biologically deterministic perspective, that sex determines sexuality and not the other way around, as feminists assert. They reiterate that human beings are inherently destined for reproductive attraction. In this sense, anything that deviates from nature is considered an anomaly or illness. Therefore, for these groups, homosexuality is not an identity but rather a sickness that can be treated, as mentioned by Everardo Martínez:

Suppose that homosexuality was caused by biological factors. Does that mean it's healthy? Because people often say "I was born this way," does that imply it's healthy? No, if that were the case, there wouldn't be congenital diseases. So, there are birth problems and congenital predispositions, and what does it mean when someone says they were born that way? It means there are underlying causes that need to be addressed, mostly psychological, which is why homosexual attraction is reversible and heterosexuality can be developed (E. Martínez, personal communication, May 25, 2019).

In parallel, sexual identity and gender are also associated with a change in the human species that is made possible by technologies which, according to right-wing theorists, serve the interests of corporations or international organizations that increase their capital through bodily and reproductive modifications that transform people's identities, the organization of society, and therefore the anthropological understanding of human beings. In other words, the debate revolves around the essence of being, encompassing both identity and life, where the reproduction of the species is jeopardized by gender ideology or the rainbow agenda, which ideologically disseminate falsehoods to turn individuals into disposable objects.

Within the discourse used throughout these events, it is stated that humanity as a whole is in danger of being displaced by those who try to change their nature by modifying and redefining both the sex-gender classification of the person, man or woman, as well as the designated corporality. As an example of this, they take up the cases where men-to-female transitioners take advantage of the situation to commit rapes in female spaces (such as all gender restrooms and prisons), as well as winning sports competitions or becoming pregnant and naming themselves pregnant persons. These examples undermine the legitimacy of theories and acquired rights regarding sex-gender identities. Likewise, in the case of transgender individuals, it is often argued that changing the human body is unnatural and goes against the anthropology of being. In this regard, conference speakers have shown images of children mutilated by sex reassignment surgeries, as well as individuals who not only modify their sex-gender identity but also their human constitution, becoming beings that resemble animals more than humans.

In Miklos Lukacs's conference (personal communication, September 30, 2022), it was argued that new technologies are creating a new anthropology that endangers humanity, as gender ideology promotes a new type of species that aspires to improve humanity—represented by the figure of man—, as it is seen as something useless and in need of modification. It is reiterated that reproductive control aims to diminish the species and establish the foundations of a new one; that

is, to create transhuman individuals who aspire to be superior to God both physically and morally. According to this speaker, in the face of these changes, the new species differs from the human species in that it no longer reproduces sexually, it is asexual, its body combines animal and human genes to make it stronger, and reproduction takes place in laboratories. These changes have implications for social organization, specifically for the family, and shape the experiences and roles of men and women, which complement each other for reproduction, and are central to the survival of the human species.

Under the discourse of cultural and anthropological warfare, the new right directs and instills fear towards those groups or individuals it considers a danger to humanity, and disapproves of the theories and ideas that support them. Therefore, under the principles of the right to sex and gender changes, sexual identities, or abortion, the ideology of gender imposes the idea of a species different from the human species, that is, a new anthropology. According to these groups, humans are at risk of becoming objectified bodies that will be disposable for the current political and economic system, as they would be deemed unnecessary in the face of a new species considered the strongest and most suitable for a postmodern world dominated by technologies.

In order to confront the anthropological battle that highlights the symbolic changes of the era and the resistances that this generates, it is important to foster a sentiment that identifies with the new right. Therefore, for these groups, it is crucial to promote a political stance aimed at safeguarding an order they perceive as being in danger, emphasizing and redefining their theoretical and political concepts and proposals.

The Role of the Intellectual in the New Right

One of the strategies proposed by the new right to undertake and win the cultural battle focuses on strengthening leadership both in the short and medium term. This is associated with a group of individuals who are self-aware and knowledgeable about the current power dynamics, as stated by Agustín Laje (personal communication, September 19, 2019). Additionally, there is a need to place groups that culturally guide individuals in order to confront the current authoritarianism. Therefore, the production of knowledge and its practical implementation in politics will be crucial functions of intellectuals within a renewed right-wing movement.

In this regard, in agreement with Rodríguez-Rondón and Rivera-Amarillo (2020), the actions of intellectuals are not homogeneous, nor is there a theoretical coherence in their arguments and positions. However, there is, in general, a manipulation and redefinition of concepts derived from the progressive wing according to local particularities and the political moment. It is for this reason that they strategically present their discourses and legitimize their theoretical framework, which, although ambiguous, shapes and strengthens the new political figures of the right at the transnational level.

However, the fact that the new right proposes a cultural battle aimed at promoting a new culture in the Gramscian sense does not mean that new narratives are being created by its intellectuals. According to Crehan (2018), a new culture cannot be generated from the right-wing perspective;

instead, it can only disseminate and strengthen the existing discursive framework that is deeply rooted in the “foundational narratives forged by the intellectuals of the dominant classes” (p. 165). These narratives are presented in a novel way when discourses are updated according to the prevailing grievances of the moment.

For the new right, it is crucial to strengthen discourse and argumentation, which entails disseminating their political proposals, since, as Rodrigo Iván Cortés Jiménez stated, “we are experiencing a lack of social intelligence that hinders people from realizing the problems or recognizing the effects of their own actions” (personal communication, October 20, 2021). Therefore, representative intellectual figures emerge and are strengthened, gaining followers, becoming media figures and creating a media sensation.

The strengthening of representative figures of the new right is part of a global project aimed at positioning the right-wing from a more updated perspective in order to attract the public and increase their political factions. Therefore, they have appropriated and manipulated elements of culture to reshape a narrative that continues to reproduce what is presented as common sense. Their leaders acknowledge that the new left, through their own intellectuals, is working on a language reengineering to influence people’s thinking, actions, and political legitimacy. For this reason, they acknowledge that the current left gained strength and succeeded after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as they repositioned their battle from different angles. On the other hand, Javier Milei (2022), leader of the ultra-conservative party *Libertad Avanzada*, in his speech at the Conservative Action Political Conference (CPAC-Mexico), stated that cultural Marxism attributed to the ideas of Antonio Gramsci has been crucial for the cultural battle that, in the form of feminism or environmentalism, seeks to indoctrinate people. In this regard, Javier Olivera mentioned in his conference that he cited Gramsci not because he sympathized with communism, but because there was a need to learn from it (personal communication, February 24, 2023).

The intellectuals of the new right question cultural Marxism, but at the same time, they adopt the concept of culture from a Gramscian perspective to position themselves in a moment of dispute over the definitions of culture and, consequently, of lifestyles and prevailing common sense. That is why they encourage their sympathizers to work on their discourses and defend their ideas in order to reach the minds and emotions of people, particularly those who, due to lack of education, can be easily indoctrinated.

Likewise, they present their discourse as counter-hegemonic or counter-revolutionary against a gender ideology portrayed as totalitarianism, which they aim to combat through political argumentation. The discourse employed by intellectuals to strengthen themselves and gain followers taps into the feelings of discontent, whether they are economic or political, that lie within society.

Another characteristic that defines the intellectual from a Gramscian standpoint—which has been adopted by figures such as Agustín Laje, Pablo Muñoz Iturrieta, Javier Olivera, Rodrigo Iván Cortés Jiménez, or Javier Milei—is that they assume leadership by positioning themselves

critically towards the system. In various events, emphasis has been placed on the need for the population to become informed about the fallacies imposed by the gender ideology, which is presented as a dictatorship. Attendees are encouraged to read and understand feminist theories in order to counter-argue what is imposed as truth in educational institutions, public spaces, within families, and within the community in general. Those who remain informed have a responsibility to guide populations towards an awakening, which is being enforced by the current power of the new communism. For these leaders, these elements imply a greater moral responsibility, both in revealing and exposing the “truth” against the lies of the time—as they assert in their various activities—and in influencing the population.

Likewise, leadership goes hand in hand with the reinforcement of a political identification, individual and collective, as the new right-wing. Thus, the disarticulation or differences, both partisan and religious, that arise within or between different groups or associations identified as conservative or right-wing often strategically reinforce their positions on common issues currently encompassed by the gender ideology. Therefore, in these events, attendees are often encouraged to identify themselves as part of the new right-wing, as Agustín Laje has mentioned:

we must stop being ashamed of being conservative, we are not a minority (...) stand up, go out, wake up, we are in a cultural war! (...) we cannot be confined to churches or schools, we must challenge politicians, unite with people of all faiths who defend life, and oppose the establishment (A. Laje, personal communication, September 19, 2019).

A new right is one that is far from the cowardly center-right, like Macri in Argentina or PAN in Mexico. There are no right-wing parties left (...) Why is there a problem with defining oneself as right-wing? They (the left-wing) have no shame. We must reclaim the right. Let us redefine ourselves as the New Right! (A. Laje, personal communication, September 5, 2021).

While for the representative figures of the new right, the revolutionary sense of transforming society is not the primary element they promote in their speeches—which is associated with the left and Marxism—, they do take up elements such as: the production of knowledge from the understanding of the discontent towards the ideology of gender; the active construction of a new culture—as an analogy based on the legacy of Antonio Gramsci (2013)—to speak of a new right that differentiates itself from the previous one; plus, the audience is encouraged to identify with and take pride in being right-wing. That’s why adopting a political stance is crucial to win the cultural battle. The conference of Father Javier Olivera serves as an example, as he concluded by quoting and paraphrasing Gramsci (Marxismo Crítico, 2011) to argue that a counter-revolution is necessary to restore peace and Christian civilization, which is in crisis due to postmodernism. Olivera encouraged the audiences to take a political position both in their personal lives and in the public sphere, without hesitation:

I’ll end with a text from Antonio Gramsci, a communist leader. You’re going to think that Father Javier is a communist because he quotes a communist [laughs], but no, what I’m showing is how he had the strength that we don’t have. Gramsci wrote a text called «I Hate the Indifferent Ones» and I’m going to read it with a few changes: “I hate the indifferent ones

because to live means to take sides. Whoever wants to truly live in Mexico today cannot think of a life of paralytics, anonymous Christianity, or sweetened Catholicism, no, because there is no longer room for apathy or parasitism. That's why I hate the indifferent ones because indifference is the dead weight of history (...) I hate the indifferent ones because with their half-measures and their non-confrontations, they collaborate with evil (...) but at the same time, I love the uncompromising ones, those who rise proudly to rebel against the system of political correctness. I love the uncompromising ones who feel, cry, and rejoice when they are contradicted in their faith (...) I love those who know they are different from the world and are not afraid to die standing" (J. Olivera, personal communication, February 24, 2023).

Knowledge and ideas are derived from the speeches given at events, conferences, and mobilizations that take place both locally and transnationally. Similarly, representative figures of the conservative factions encourage political leadership by promoting individuals who can strengthen the new right-wing movement. In this sense, according to statements made in various events, the intellectual for the right-wing is not an individual in themselves, but rather different people who have the responsibility to produce and transmit knowledge, connect with the sentiments of the population, and strengthen their political actions to reclaim what they believe has been taken from them, engaging in a cultural war. However, their goal is not to create a new culture, but rather to reproduce the prevailing common sense under an updated narrative.

CONCLUSION

Since the second half of the 20th century, the concept of culture became central to both the political demands of social movements that called for recognition of identity differences, and the theorizations around culture and power emerging from anthropology and the burgeoning field of cultural studies. However, it was from this latter field of study that culture, seen as an abstraction that enhanced the relationship between theory and praxis, was taken up by the new right. While the importance of linking theory with practice and questioning the role of the intellectual was already evident in critical theory, strongly influenced by Marxism, it was not until the late 1970s that reflections on this concept took on such a nuance and were amplified by conservative factions to counter the emerging social movements advocating for identity recognition, including feminism.

The relationship between culture and power, stemming from the legacy of Gramsci (2013), was not only due to the political fervor that arose as various social movements questioned the welfare state, but it was also defined by a paradigmatic and subjective shift regarding aspects such as sexuality, family, reproduction, and education of children. These pivotal elements put into tension notions of tradition, values, morality, and nation. This tension was no longer limited to the material realm but also extended to the symbolic and subjective domains, which was further amplified by the new right-wing movement.

With the rise of the feminist movement and sexual diversity, a counteroffensive was generated by a new right to counteract their presence and proliferation. Thus, gender—understood by culture as something flexible, relativistic, and malleable, and accepted and articulated in the agendas of

international organizations, States, and civil society organizations—was considered a totalitarian threat, which these groups believed they must resist and combat in order to win a symbolic battle. In this sense, resistance or counterrevolution were concepts co-opted and reworked according to the interests of groups that felt challenged by the proposals of both movements and the theoretical frameworks emphasized by feminisms.

Similarly, from more reactionary perspectives towards feminism, it was argued that gender not only sought to replace culture—in the symbolic and subjective realm—but also to change and displace humanity through a new culture, which was associated with a new species. Thus, the so-called anthropological war goes beyond the cultural battle to instill fear and rejection towards feminisms, and specifically reinforce the understanding of life, family, and sexuality based on Judeo-Christian conceptions.

On the other hand, the figure of the intellectual has been shaped and redefined according to the interests of the new right in order to gain followers who identify themselves as part of the new right, to expand and strengthen their groups, and to gain political presence within States and international organizations. At the same time, their media presence has been crucial in popularizing their ideas among various social sectors. These intellectuals become ideologues who, under the rhetoric of counter-revolution, war, or resistance—concepts borrowed from progressive positions—seek to maintain a common understanding regarding family, sexuality, and reproduction based on the power that originated them.

Finally, the intellectuals of the new right have amplified the feelings of discontent among a population living in contexts of crisis; they have turned this discontent into a central strategy to convince the audience, gain followers, and strengthen their factions with the intention of maintaining a particular understanding of the world and a way of life based on narratives forged from positions of power. Therefore, discourse becomes the primary element to guide the sensations of discomfort among diverse social groups, inspiring the collective to adopt arguments and stances in relation to what is identified as the cause of current misfortune. Thus, the new right articulates knowledge with emotion as a shared project against the ideology of gender. Additionally, they approach gender not only as a concept, but as something that encompasses various ideas, theories, and political stances that become ideologies and must be combated in the realm of the symbolic and the subjective.

Translation: Erika Morales.

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