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Title:
Architectures of Hate: U.S. Civil Society, LGBTQ+ Rights, and the Unraveling of Global Democracy

Core Theme:
U.S. civil society is often treated as sacred. Since Tocqueville, Americans have celebrated churches, charities, foundations, and advocacy groups as democracy's connective tissue. We built a bargain around that faith: public tax subsidies in exchange for public good. *Architectures of Hate* argues that this bargain is now being exploited, and that the consequences are global. Across the world, anti-gender politics has become a reliable route to roll back LGBTQ+ rights, stall gender justice, and weaken liberal democracy. Opponents speak in a familiar register. They claim restriction is necessary to protect children, defend the family, and save civilization. This book shows how U.S. civil society helps make that politics portable. American anti-gender organizations, empowered by tax-subsidized wealth and nonprofit privilege, have spent decades building transnational networks that largely escape public scrutiny. Through those networks, slogans arrive prepackaged, legal arguments arrive tested, and campaign strategies arrive ready for translation. What looks like local backlash is often a movement with supply lines. The book documents that architecture with evidence that matches its scale. I analyze millions of U.S. tax documents to trace the financial pathways that sustain these networks. I pair that mapping with 60 interviews across Ghana, Hungary, Taiwan, and Costa Rica to show how local actors adopt, adapt, and repurpose U.S.-linked resources for their own political projects. The stakes are not only moral. They are institutional. Anti-gender mobilization narrows citizenship, brands courts and rights groups as foreign elites, and normalizes exceptional measures in the name of fighting "gender ideology." The conclusion returns accountability to the United States. Civil society is not just private virtue. It is a publicly subsidized system. If the public good is an inclusive democratic project, then we must reconsider which organizations deserve public support and which are using it to export exclusion. The choice is not whether civil society matters. The choice is what we are willing to subsidize in its name.

Full Description:
Anti-gender politics are spreading across borders fast, and the consequences are not limited to symbolic "culture war" fights. In country after country, campaigns framed as protecting children, defending parental rights, or restoring the "natural family" are rolling back LGBTQ+ rights, stalling gender justice, and weakening liberal democratic institutions. The pattern is recognizable even when the language changes: restrictions on speech and education, new constraints on civil society, pressure on courts, and the recoding of equality as foreign contamination. What can look like disconnected local panics is increasingly driven by a transnational network that helps harden authoritarian governance while claiming the mantle of democracy.

Architectures of Hate argues that U.S. civil society is central to how this network is built and how anti-gender politics circulates. The United States does not "control" other countries, and backlash abroad is not simply an American export. But America's civic infrastructure is uniquely

positioned to supply what makes a movement portable. It combines a dense nonprofit sector, a vast philanthropic apparatus, and a tax system that subsidizes private civic action while keeping much of it out of public view. That combination has produced a durable engine for cross-border influence that often operates beyond foreign policy agendas, beyond election cycles, and beyond public scrutiny. The book's intervention is to show how a system celebrated as democracy's backbone can be used to undermine democratic membership and rights abroad.

The book traces what scholars call the transnational anti-gender network: an ecosystem linking activists, lawyers, funders, media entrepreneurs, political elites, and institutional allies around a shared claim that "gender" is a threat to children, family, sovereignty, and civilization. Because "gender" is elastic, the coalition can pivot across issues without losing coherence. Its animating logic is *restorative nostalgia*, a future-making project that presents itself as tradition and truth. The effect is political: it turns policy disputes into civilizational emergencies and makes repression rescue.

I show how U.S.-based organizations animate this system at two levels. The *rooting architecture* works quietly. Missionary circuits, faith-based development, and religious media reshape moral common sense over time, often through service that builds trust and access. The *flowering architecture* is overt and coordinated. It seizes openings, drafts bills, files cases, stages campaigns, and packages "child protection" and "national restoration" as governance. Together, these layers let anti-gender politics move through everyday institutional channels, sometimes under the cover of benevolence, sometimes under claims of religious exemption.

A core claim of the book is that transnational influence is built through routine carriers. U.S.-based groups produce sermon guides, legal memos, messaging scripts, and model policy language, then distribute them through conferences, trainings, partner organizations, and online platforms. Local pastors and politicians do not need to be directed. They need materials that are ready to adapt. Lawyers copy arguments into briefs. Legislators lift definitions that have already been stress-tested. Advocates learn which phrases survive constitutional scrutiny and which frames make restrictions sound like protection. In international settings, small wording battles can later become official justification. Funding functions the same way. It is less a dramatic transaction than the steady financing of staff, travel, polling, litigation support, and media capacity that makes campaigns durable and coordinated. Over time, the repetition becomes visible: the same frames, the same legal strategies, the same policy templates appearing in places that otherwise share little.

The book also makes a blunt point about responsibility. U.S. civil society is a tax-subsidized system. Tax exemption, charitable deductions, and related privileges are policy choices that allocate public benefit to private actors. If American churches, nonprofits, and foundations are helping build and finance transnational campaigns that strip rights and weaken democratic institutions abroad, then condemnation of foreign parliaments is not an adequate response. The accountability problem sits at home, in the rules that subsidize civic power while limiting oversight.

Methodologically, the book pairs scale with texture. Alongside 60 interviews across Ghana, Hungary, Taiwan, and Costa Rica, I analyze millions of U.S. tax documents to trace financial pathways from American organizations to international partners. I draw on thousands of pages of newsletters, annual reports, donor communications, legal briefs, and policy memos, plus archival and digital materials including conference programs, websites, and training modules. This approach captures both the structure of the network and how it operates in ordinary institutional life.

The book unfolds across six empirical chapters. Part I explains how the American architecture was built and why it became globally consequential. Chapter 1 traces the demographic and political transformations that made "family" into statecraft and set the stage for transnational mobilization in opposition. Chapter 2 follows the missionary and civil society roots of U.S. capacity and shows how that capacity is reorganized through the World Congress of Families into a network designed to move anti-gender tools across borders. Chapter 3 maps the tax-subsidized funding

system that powers this infrastructure through Patronage, Procurement, and Pews, and shows how foreign investment accelerates after U.S. adopts marriage equality. Part II turns to international consequences. Chapter 4 explains how anti-gender actors justify the very foreign funding they condemn and shows what that money enables on the ground. Chapter 5 demonstrates policy effects with longitudinal models and four country cases, showing how network embeddedness raises the likelihood of repressive LGBTQ+ policy while institutionalizing a counter-norm that blunts the force of global equality expectations. Chapter 6 shifts to pro-LGBTQ+ organizers and documents what this new environment does to their strategy, safety, and lives, and how they continue to fight under asymmetric resources.

The conclusion returns to the question that runs beneath every chapter: what do Americans do with this knowledge? If one of the defining paradoxes of our era is that U.S. civil society can export democratic capacity and also export democratic harm, then the task is to rebuild the bargain. The book ends by arguing for a recalibrated civil society that is firmly on the side of democracy and a richer democracy that is firmly on the side of everyone.

Table of Contents and Chapter Outlines:

Part I

Chapter 1: Demography and Devotion

"[Hungary] won't let Europe commit suicide," Katalin Novák tells a World Congress of Families crowd, turning fertility into a civilizational ultimatum. Chapter One explains how a line like that became plausible, persuasive, and portable. It builds the book's historical engine: the chapter shows how "family" and "gender" were pulled out of private life and remade into modern statecraft, and how that shift created the conditions for a transnational anti-gender movement to harden into something organized, durable, and export-ready.

The chapter follows two forces colliding. One is the late–twentieth century transformation of intimate life. Fertility drops, marriage comes later and less often, divorce and cohabitation rise, and contraception separates sex from reproduction. The same changes that widened autonomy and made modern LGBTQ+ politics imaginable also produced a new kind of political raw material: anxiety that feels measurable. As I document, demographic facts stop being descriptive and start being moral evidence. A falling birthrate becomes a verdict about "decadence." A changing household becomes proof of national decline. Leaders learn to speak in the language of trends and survival, so that a chart can sound like a command.

The other force is institutional. Gender and sexuality move into the machinery of global governance. Development agencies and human rights bodies increasingly treat women's equality and reproductive autonomy, and later LGBTQ+ inclusion, as markers of modern legitimacy. "Gender" becomes standard policy language. Opponents do not simply protest from the outside. They professionalize within the same arenas, learn the rules of global conferences and legal drafting, and recast gender as an ideology smuggled into treaties and reports that no one explicitly agreed to. That reframing is what makes anti-gender politics travel across countries that share little else.

Chapter One then shows how these forces produced the World Congress of network in the 1990s, including the unlikely bridge between Russian pronatalist demography and American "natural family" intellectuals. By the time Novák is on stage in 2018, demographic decline is no longer a statistic. It is justification for constitutional redesign, sovereignty claims, and an illiberal model that can be taught, funded, and exported.

Chapter 2: An Enduring American Architecture Recalibrates

In Tainan, Taiwan, the first thing I noticed inside Center for Mother's Hope was not politics. It was butter and sugar, cookies cooling somewhere down the hall, slippers set neatly by the door. Then my

eyes adjusted to what the room was really stocked with: bilingual pamphlets, campaign materials, a crucifix on the wall, fetal models small enough to fit in a palm. In explaining why she runs this Christian family organization, the American director used the phrase that has become a passport in this movement: stop "gender ideology." Chapter Two explains how an American civic infrastructure makes moments like this possible, when familiar American language and materials find themselves mixed with Taiwanese hospitality, and why that infrastructure now matters for anti-gender politics.

The chapter traces U.S. civil society as an outward-facing project from the start. Long before today's coalitions, American churches, charities, and philanthropic organizations built missionary circuits that trained people to think globally, move resources across borders, and translate moral commitments into repeatable institutions. Those circuits produced an architecture that scales. It is decentralized but coordinated. It is locally embedded and locally trusted but internationally connected and internationally resourced. It expands through churches, schools, media, relief work, and professional associations that can travel without looking like official foreign policy. Yet it is a more impactful reflection of how Americans influence the world day in and day in. Chapter Two's claim is that this missionary inheritance did not disappear. It recalibrated into modern infrastructure, and it helps explain why U.S.-anchored actors can build transnational networks designed to move anti-gender politics quickly and keep it moving.

The World Congress of Families is where that infrastructure becomes visible. WCF is the main circuit for this transnational coalition—the one built at the end of Chapter One. WCF gives activists, lawyers, funders, and politicians recurring places to meet, standardize language, and coordinate across borders while presenting their work as common sense defense of "the natural family." Using original data assembled from WCF programs and affiliated materials, the chapter shows how this field expands over time. Across the conference programs from 1997 through 2022, I identified 1,398 individuals representing 1,078 organizations across 90 countries. That scale matters because it reveals a movement that is professionalized, international, and built for repetition.

The chapter closes by showing what, exactly, travels through the circuit. It is not only belief. It is organizational function. Research and "expertise" that can be carried into legislatures and courts. Legal capacity that turns values into arguments and model text. Messaging pipelines that make restriction sound like protection. Service channels that build trust and access long before a policy fight breaks open. The point is simple: ideology moves through American civic machinery.

Chapter 3: The Subsidized Empire

Betsy DeVos sat before the Senate in 2017 and insisted, "I fully embrace equality." The line was to reassure senators that despite her family's philanthropic foundations giving to Christian advocacy organizations, she can be a secretary for everyone. In Chapter Three, this line is evidence of something larger: a funding system that can bankroll politics while remaining publicly legible as charity. This chapter shows why anti-gender mobilization has staying power. The message travels through circuitry, but it is the money, and the rules that shelter it, that make the movement durable at home and scalable abroad.

The chapter's core claim is clear: U.S. civil society is tax-subsidized. When donors deduct gifts and organizations operate tax-exempt, the public shares the cost of private civic projects. This is the bargain embedded in U.S. tax law: public subsidy for public good. Chapter Three shows that this subsidy disproportionately benefits the institutions powering anti-gender politics, turning what can look like scattered activism into a standing apparatus built to endure over time and space. It also shows why that apparatus is hard to track. The same legal privileges that make civil society vibrant also make its cross-border influence opaque.

To make that structure concrete, the chapter organizes the evidence around three financial channels that reinforce one another. *Patronage* is long-horizon private wealth that behaves like patient

capital. Family foundations and donor networks fund staff, legal shops, research products, trainings, and convenings that keep operating long after a news cycle ends. *Procurement* is the quieter channel, where government contracting and faith-based service provision strengthen organizational muscles. Public dollars professionalize nonprofits, expand administrative capacity, and add legitimacy that later carries into politics and transnational partnerships. *Pews* provide the baseline: the giving economy of American religion, which can shelter advocacy inside service work and fund it with low friction and limited visibility given the special status churches have in U.S. tax law.

Then comes the most important international pivot: marriage equality. This landmark event did not close this chapter of politics. It redirected it outward. Using hundreds of thousands of tax returns and standardized foreign spending measures, the chapter shows overseas spending rising after 2008 and surging through the 2010s, peaking around 2020 at roughly $80 billion. The shift is not a one-time spike; it persists year after year. The chapter follows that pattern into the details of how visibility can vanish as well. When organizations gain church status, routine public filings can disappear, even as the work continues. The takeaway is direct: the United States is not only exporting ideas. It is subsidizing the infrastructure that lets anti-gender campaigns professionalize, travel, and endure. And, given their religious foundations, can suddenly switch legal status and shut out all accountability into their financial operations.

Part II

Chapter 4: When Money Moves with Meaning

By eight in the morning, cars were already inching into Comunidad PAS, an evangelical mega-church complex in a working-class neighborhood of San José. Volunteers in branded polos waved drivers toward a gravel lot. Teenagers spilled off a bus from a nearby congregation. Men in suits with blue lanyards rolled carry-ons behind them, fresh off red-eye flights from Mexico City, Washington, Madrid. A banner stretched across the façade: "La Familia: Presente y Futuro de Costa Rica." Beneath it sat a row of logos, including the World Congress of Families. Chapter Four begins here because it captures the movement's most useful contradiction: anti-gender networks move money across borders while insisting that foreign funding is proof LGBTQ+ groups are illegitimate "Western puppets."

The chapter asks the question of how this contradiction can be: If foreign money disqualifies rights advocacy, how do anti-gender actors justify their own foreign funding? The answer is not denial. It is moral reclassification. The same cross-border dollars condemned as interference on one side are reframed as fellowship, protection, or shared defense on the other. "Foreign" becomes a stigma reserved for opponents, not a geographic fact. Money for rights is cast as corruption. Money for "family" is cast as solidarity and "God's will." The chapter shows how this boundary is built and enforced through sermons, media, political speeches, and organizational practice.

Chapter Four then follows what morally justified money does once it lands. It rarely functions as a bribe. It functions as capacity. It funds training that teaches what language survives constitutional scrutiny. It pays for legal support that turns values into litigation strategy and model text. It underwrites convenings that synchronize campaigns and introduce local actors to a larger field. It finances messaging that makes restriction sound like child protection and parental rights. It supports social service channels that build trust and provide access to communities that later become political constituencies. In this chapter, money becomes legitimacy because it finances expertise, professionalism, and repeated presence. Across Costa Rica, Ghana, Hungary, and Taiwan, the chapter tracks this process in real time.

Chapter 5: The Undoing of LGBTQ+ Rights and Democracy

Inside the United Nations in 2023, anti-gender leaders were not trying to escape global institutions. They were fluent in them. Badges hung at the right angle. Room assignments were navigated like second nature. Stefano Gennarini of Center for Family and Human Rights read from a laptop in the cadence of an indictment: "for thirty years," he said, the UN had "shamelessly promoted" abortion, "gender ideology," and the "redefinition of the family." Chapter Five begins with that scene to make its claim unavoidable. Transnational anti-gender networks have professionalized to inhabit global institutions and are having material consequences. As countries become more embedded in these infrastructures, the probability of adopting repressive LGBTQ+ policies rises, and the democratic project weakens along with it.

The chapter shows how networks change outcomes by reshaping the force of global norms. For decades, gender mainstreaming and pro-LGBTQ+ scripts were productive. They gave reformers language, legitimacy, and leverage, and they raised reputational costs for repression. Chapter Five argues that anti-gender actors learned to blunt that productivity by institutionalizing a counter norm that recodes equality as coercion, rights as colonialism, and liberal constraint as elite capture. Once that counter norm hardens, international legitimacy stops pulling in one direction. The same global language that once empowered reformers becomes evidence opponents use to claim foreign contamination and to frame restriction as sovereignty. Another UN statement promoting LGBTQ+ equality is no longer productive, today, it is more likely to motivate repression.

This is where the *flowering architecture* becomes decisive. Anti-gender politics shifts from slow cultural groundwork to overt, coordinated campaigns. Conferences and partnerships supply operational capacity that makes escalation easier and safer. Model bills, litigation strategies, messaging frames, procedural know-how, and international allies reduce improvisation and isolation. What looks like spontaneous backlash often arrives as a synchronized push tied to elections, court decisions, and moments of institutional vulnerability.

Methodologically, the chapter links pattern to mechanism. It draws on an LGBTQ+ policy index I constructed for 152 countries from 1991 to 2020 and uses longitudinal models to estimate how network embeddedness changes the likelihood of progressive expansion, regressive restriction, or drawn-out contestation over time. The results show a world that no longer moves as a one-way tide. Pro-LGBTQ+ policy rises, but anti-LGBTQ+ policy rises too, sharply after the mid-2000s. The chapter then walks through Ghana, Hungary, Costa Rica, and Taiwan to show what the same mechanisms look like on the ground. Sovereignty narratives become legislative justification. Child protection becomes legal cover. Democratic procedures get repurposed to narrow membership. The takeaway is direct: these networks spread idea and change the odds of repression through an organized, international project of lawmaking.

Chapter 6: LGBTQ+ Advocacy Reconsidered

As we were talking, Elijah's phone wouldn't stop vibrating. One message after another came in. Sometimes it arrived as a half-whispered voice note recorded in a bathroom stall. Other times it was a screenshot of a threat from a landlord wanting to evict. Elijah's work was constant in Ghana as an anti-LGBTQ+ bill upended queer life. Chapter Six follows Elijah and other pro-LGBTQ+ organizers across Ghana, Hungary, Costa Rica, and Taiwan to show what the backlash does to the people living inside it. The chapter asks a human question with political consequences: what happens to movements when the ground is deliberately reshaped to make organizing risky, exhausting, and suspect?

The argument is that response is not only strategy, but survival. Anti-gender campaigns target more than laws. They target the conditions that allow civil society to function. Organizers describe being pulled into constant defense, spending time on security, legal triage, and reputational

repair instead of outreach and coalition-building. Uncertainty becomes governance. Burnout and attrition become outcomes, not accidents, because exhaustion is one way movements lose capacity.

Money sits at the center of that unevenness. In Ghana, Elijah laughed when politicians claimed the West was pouring millions into LGBTQ+ groups. In 2023, he told me, "everything that we were doing was from my pockets, literally." Then he described watching foreign activists arrive for WCF conferences, and later seeing videos of them "inside parliament" lecturing Members of Parliament, and hearing MPs repeat the same message "because it is the same template." Across cases, funding for pro-LGBTQ+ work arrives slowly, conditionally, and with a target painted on it. Donors want photos, reports, open social media. In places where visibility invites violence, ordinary transparency becomes forced exposure. Meanwhile, the anti-gender opposition often benefits from infrastructures that make coordination cheap and cash fast, including church networks and professional convenings. Chapter Six ends with a sober takeaway: anti-gender politics wins not only by passing laws, but by raising the cost of defending rights until constant risk management becomes the job and the burdens to acquire the necessary resources are too high.

Conclusion

Kojo, a Ghanaian LGBTQ+ organizer I met during this research, asked the question that closes the book: "What are Americans doing to hold your own groups accountable?" The question was a piercing indictment. It also reflected the reality this book uncovers: U.S.-based organizations are instrumental in building networks and transfers ideas, funds, and resources that make anti-LGBTQ+ crackdowns possible. Crackdowns not just on LGBTQ+ communities, but on the very liberal democratic project that makes U.S. civil society itself possible.

The conclusion argues that the response is not one policy fix. It is a bold reimagining of the bargain at the heart of U.S. civil society: public tax subsidies in exchange for public good. That bargain has to be reconsidered when some organizations use public privilege to finance exclusion and weaken democratic institutions. In this book's terms, that is not the public good. The public good is an inclusive democratic project. If the United States can realign its civic bargain around that premise, Kojo's question becomes answerable with honesty, and U.S. civil society can be rebuilt to no longer be an architecture of hate, but a system for inclusive democracy the world needs.

<u>Comparison to Similar Titles:</u>

Sociology and adjacent fields are increasingly concerned with challenges to the liberal international order. Recent examples include *Global Discord* by Paul Tucker (Princeton 2022), *Human Rights for Pragmatists* by Jack Snyder (Princeton 2022), and *Rights as Weapons* by Clifford Bob (Princeton 2019). Each of these works highlights contestations between liberalism and emergent illiberalism from distinct points of view. Newer work also seeks to add more detail as to how these macro, world cultural models circulate internationally, especially from a U.S. point of view. For example, *Empire of Purity* by Eva Payne (Princeton 2024) and *Underground Empire* by Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman (Henry Holt & Co 2023) reveal the internal workings of extensive, U.S.-led networks and their ability to shape global understandings of sex work and information technologies, respectively. But both of these lines of research focus on the liberal values advanced by the United States and an American-led international order. Alternative new work highlights the illiberal tenets within the U.S. itself. *Laboratories Against Democracy* by Jacob M. Grumbach (Princeton 2022) investigates the rollback of voting rights and other democratic principles across U.S. states. Robert Kagan underscores these points in *Rebellion* (Alfred A. Knopf 2024) – arguing that anti-liberalism is just as consistent throughout American political life as liberalism. *Architectures of Hate* extends this burgeoning field, then, in two important ways. First, it demonstrates that U.S. civil society organizations are contributing to (il)liberal contentions through the promotion and advancement of illiberal beliefs

and transnational advocacy networks. Second, it leverages the essential case of LGBTQ+ rights to illuminate these global processes. Research like *The Global Fight Against LGBTI Rights* by Phillip Ayoub and Kristina Stoeckl (NYU 2024) uses qualitative data to showcase the emergence of anti-LGBTQ+ networks, especially between the U.S. and Europe. But *Architectures of Hate* draws on extensive quantitative data and interviews from non-Western countries to highlight the truly global ramifications of changing cultural norms regarding gender and sexuality. Doing so helps demonstrate the fundamental role LGBTQ+ rights play in producing contentions over liberal democracy at a global level.

Market/Audience:

This book's subject matter is targeted to readership in sociology, political science, international relations, civil society, and gender/sexuality. Generalist and specialist journals across these disciplines will likely all want to review this book.

While the arguments developed from this book are built on top of rigorous scientific evidence, the style of the book is intended to be more accessible to general audiences (see: *Long Live Queer Nightlife* by Amin Ghaziani, Princeton, 2024). This accessible form of writing means that this book will carry wide appeal. Undergraduate courses related to globalization, comparative political science, and gender/sexuality will all find *Architectures of Hate* suitable for their students. Graduate courses on global and transnational sociology, social movements, and research design will each find the empirical addendums and theoretical interventions suitable for their students as well. Beyond the academy, there will be great interest in this book by LGBTQ+ rights advocates and policymakers. I have presented aspects of this research already to such international audiences. For example, in 2024, I presented work at ILGA World—the largest global gathering of LGBTQ+ advocates – and recorded a podcast interview with Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights that generated significant interest from LGBTQ+ advocates. I can draw on not only my academic networks to solicit book talks but, also, my advocacy and policy-making networks to extend the book's reach to these alternative outlets as well.

Author Qualifications:

I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, where I am also an affiliate with the Program in Gender & Sexuality Studies and the Office of Population Research. My academic writing has been published in several top journals, such as *American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*. Additionally, I have received awards from the American Political Science Association, American Sociological Association, International Studies Association, and the Academy of Management. Much of these awards were for aspects of the research underlying this book. Additionally, I have received funding from the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Princeton's Data-Driven Social Sciences Institute to help advance aspects of this project.

Manuscript and Delivery Date:

The estimated length of this manuscript is 80,000 words. I will deliver a complete manuscript by fall 2026.