



**The construction and the deconstruction of the
concept of *gender* by Pope Francis on the
International scene**

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Epigraph

“Certaines connaissances sont propres à la femme et d’autres à l’homme”

— Platon, *Alcibiade* (428-348 ACN)

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It must be specified that this thesis is based on English and French sources. However, the word “genre” in French refers to the social role of sexes and the word “gender” in English refers to the social role of sexes, but also to the biological sex. In this thesis, we will consider that the word *gender* should be understood as the social role of sexes. That is why we have italicized the word *gender* throughout the text that follows.

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I would like to Thank my supervisors, Professors Emiliana De Blasio and Christophe Wasinski, for their advices and the space for reflection and self-questioning they gave me;

My Lions, for their Strength;

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*All these beautiful souls, connected from Istanbul to Avigliano, from Brussels to Montreal;
And those who found themselves in Rome.*

Eventually, thank you, my Family, Five&M, for giving me the space to think and the Courage to write,

To enable Empirics to be at the service of tomorrow's Vtopia.

ABSTRACT

This research is part of a double degree from LUISS Guido Carlo and Université Libre de Bruxelles. Its purpose is to study the construction and deconstruction of the concept of *gender* by Pope Francis on the international scene. The research highlights the strategy of deconstruction of *gender* concept, which passes through the reconstruction of meanings analyzed through the ‘Regime of Truth’ theorized by Michel Foucault. This strategy took root in 1995 on the occasion of the UN international conferences on equality between men and women, and is relayed by the Church and its various components. These actors are identified through the social-constructivist approach, considered as the cradle of research on the reception of *gender* by the Catholic Church. It is therefore a qualitative analysis of Pope Francis' discourses, whose aim is to highlight the continuity between them and those of the two previous popes and the Catholic Church. The theoretical approach on which this analysis is based is the post-structuralist approach, which emphasizes the notion of discourse, language and binary oppositions and elites, participating in the establishment of a dominant discourse that imposes a meaning, in this case the meaning of *gender*.

Key words: *Gender*, Pope Francis, International Relations, Power, Discourses, ‘Regime of Truth’, Foucault

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BICE: International Catholic Church bureau

C9: Council of Cardinal Advisers of Pope Francis

IOR: Institute for the Works of Religion

NGO: Non-governmental organization

UN: United Nations

USIG: International Union of Superiors General

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. Contextualization: Is Pope Francis, a progressive pope?

Pope Francis was elected bishop of Rome on the 13 March 2013 and became the 266th pope of the Catholic Church. This election brings back to life the perpetual questioning that accompanies the presence of a new pope. During an election, people wonder what a Pope's new policy on pressing actuality issues will be. The question of how he would preserve the Catholic tradition is also brought up. Thus, the appointment of the Argentine bishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio as successor of Benedict XVI seems to mark a turning point in the history of the Vatican. He is the first pope from the ranks of the company of Jesus and first non-European pope since the Syrian Pope Gregory III (8th century), making him the first pope from the American continent¹. Does the image of the new pope, a friendly and simple man whom is close to others foreshadow the need for renewal of the Catholic Church, often perceived as too conservative, anchored, especially following the pontificate of Benedict XVI?

One only need take a look at the numerous reforms initiated since the beginning of his pontificate to see that Pope Francis stands out from his predecessors. He created the Council of Cardinal Advisers (C9), composed by nine cardinals representing all the continents. Part of the curial apparatus, the C9 appears to be the symbol and the tool used by the Pope to initiate his deep reform of the Church. Its aim is to help the Pope to govern², draw a new "Constitution" for the Vatican administration and get the structures of the Church involved. It includes a decentralization of the competences and a transfer of reserved prerogatives of the Roman administration to national episcopal conferences³. This meets his wish to fit his action in the mandate that the cardinals entrusted to him, and their request formulated during the election, to change the functioning of the Vatican administration⁴. He immediately adhered to those

¹"Profile: Pope Francis", *BBC News*, 1/02/2017, Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21777141>, (accessed on 15/06/2018)

² This most symbolic decision will enter the annals of the Roman Church, used to expect ruling decisions only from the pope. "François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, Available online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrDA> (accessed on 3/03/2018)

³ Chambraud ,C., "Au Vatican, les embarras du C9, le cénacle chargé de transformer la curie", *Le Monde*, 10/03/2018, Available online : https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/international/article/2018/03/10/au-vatican-les-embarras-du-c9-le-cenacle-charge-de-transformer-la-curie_5268753_3210.html, (accessed on 15/06/18)

⁴ Pope Francis: "The steps I have taken during these four and a half months come from two sources: the content of what had to be done, all of it, comes from the General Congregations of the Cardinals. There were certain things that we Cardinals asked of the one who was to be the new Pope.", Press conference during the return flight, Pope Apostolic journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, Sunday,

requests by discharging the Cardinal Bertone, the controversial number two of the Vatican, who also was the State Secretary of previous Pope Benedict XVI⁵. He was replaced by a diplomat, the Cardinal Parolin. Pope Francis then created the new position of Secretary of Economy, given to the Australian Georges Pell, in order to break the stranglehold of the State Secretary on the Vatican⁶. This illustrates his will of collegiality in the exercise of power, which is quite new for the Vatican. Moreover, the Pope, surrounded by his new team, began to tackle the issue of the Institute for the Works of Religion⁷ (IOR), commonly known as the Vatican Bank. The IOR, one of the most secret banks in the world, is at the heart of many financial scandals for the last thirty years. For the first time in its history, a pope authorized the Italian police to arrest Monsignor Nunzio Scarano suspected of money laundering inside the Vatican⁸. In addition, he called upon lay experts to audit the institution, put an end to the opaque rules allowing the IOR to not comply with international banking regulations and thus ensure transparency⁹.

This set of measures are unacceptable for some of the members of the Roman Curia. Therefore, an opposition gets organized in the Vatican, led by the traditionalists who do not accept that the sovereign goes down from his throne. They express their discontent by spreading small murdering sentences in Rome, about a pope who dares desecralize his function. Indeed, they have to accept a change of culture of governance within the Roman Curia. Before, they had a pope who reigned, now they have a pope who governs, attends meeting, is visible and determined¹⁰. Pope Francis counter-attacked and answered them in an extremely violent speech

28/07/2013, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 10/06/2018)

⁵ Corcoran, L., "Pope Francis removes four cardinals in Vatican bank shake-up", *The independent*, 16/01/2014, Available online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/pope-francis-removes-four-cardinals-in-vatican-bank-shake-up-9064845.html>, (accessed on 15/06/2018)

⁶ "Toward a rapid reform of the Roman Curia?", *FSSPX NEWS*, (17/05/2013), Available online: <http://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/toward-rapid-reform-roman-curia-22714>, (accessed on 14/06/2018)

⁷ IOR website : <http://www.ior.va/content/ior/en.html>

⁸ Winfield, N., "Vatican official, Monsignor Nunzio scarano, arrested in corruption plot", *The Independent*, (23/06/2013), Available online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vatican-official-monsignor-nunzio-scarano-arrested-in-corruption-plot-8678273.html>, (accessed on 14/06/2018)

⁹ Dunglas, D., "Vatican : l'IOR, banque de tous les scandales", *Le Point*, 28/06/13, Available online : http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/vatican-l-ior-banque-de-tous-les-scandales-29-06-2013-1687274_24.php, (accessed on 14/06/2018)

¹⁰ Comments made by Sébastien Maillard, correspondent of the newspaper 'The Cross', in "François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, Available online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAY2K8nrDA>

addressed to his administration, in which in lists *the fifteen diseases of the Curia* and “invites his collaborators to examine their consciences¹¹”.¹²

Since his election, Pope Francis is followed closely by the media and has multiplied interventions on the international scene. As a real political actor, he makes the reception of migrants one of his favorite themes. Indeed, Pope Francis “called on world leaders to do more to help refugees and migrants, in an attempt to put pressure on politicians to improve what he called the “pathetic” situation facing people fleeing conflict, and said that states always [have

¹¹ “Pope Francis: “The fifteen ‘diseases’ of the Curia”, *Vatican Insider*, 22/12/2014, Available online: <http://www.lastampa.it/2014/12/22/vaticaninsider/pope-francis-the-fifteen-diseases-of-the-curia-ru2arcS66ljkmlQg8GF7OI/pagina.html>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

¹² Pope Francis: “However, since the Curia is a dynamic body, it cannot live without nourishment and care. (...) And yet, like any body, like any human body, it is also exposed to diseases, malfunctioning, infirmity. Here I would like to mention some of these probable diseases, “curial diseases”. They are the more common diseases in our life in the Curia. They are diseases and temptations which weaken our service to the Lord. (...) 1. **The disease of thinking we are “immortal”, “immune” or downright “indispensable”**, neglecting the need for regular check-ups. A Curia **which is not self-critical**, which does not keep up with things, which does not seek to be more fit, **is a sick body**. (...) 3. Then too there is the **disease of mental and spiritual “petrification”**. It is found in **those who have a heart of stone**, the “stiff-necked” (...). It is **dangerous to lose the human sensitivity** that enables us to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice! (...) 6. There is also a **“spiritual Alzheimer’s disease”**. It consists in losing the memory of our personal “salvation history”, our past history with the Lord and our “first love”. It involves a progressive decline in the spiritual faculties which in the long or short run greatly handicaps a person by making him incapable of doing anything on his own, **living in a state of absolute dependence on his often imaginary perceptions**. (...) 7. **The disease of rivalry and vainglory**. When appearances, the colour of our clothes and our titles of honour become the primary object in life, we forget the words of Saint Paul: “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others”. (...) 8. **The disease of existential schizophrenia**. This is the disease of those **who live a double life, the fruit of that hypocrisy typical of the mediocre and of a progressive spiritual emptiness which no doctorates or academic titles can fill**. It is a disease which often strikes those who abandon pastoral service and restrict themselves to bureaucratic matters, thus losing contact with reality, with concrete people. (...) 9. **The disease of gossiping, grumbling and back-biting**. (...) 10. **The disease of idolizing superiors**. This is the disease of those who court their superiors **in the hope of gaining their favour. They are victims of careerism and opportunism**; (...) They serve **thinking only of what they can get and not of what they should give. Small-minded persons, unhappy and inspired only by their own lethal selfishness**. (...) 12. **The disease of a lugubrious face**. Those **glum and dour persons who think that to be serious we have to put on a face of melancholy and severity and treat others – especially those we consider our inferiors – with rigour, brusqueness and arrogance**. In fact, a show of severity and sterile pessimism are **frequently symptoms of fear and insecurity**. (...) 13. **The disease of hoarding**. When an apostle tries to fill an existential void in his heart **by accumulating material goods, not out of need but only in order to feel secure**. (...) 14. The disease of closed circles, where belonging to a clique becomes more powerful than belonging to the Body and, in some circumstances, to Christ himself. (...) 15. The disease of worldly profit, of forms of self-exhibition. When an apostle turns his service into power, and his power into a commodity in order to gain worldly profit or even greater power. This is the disease of persons who insatiably try to accumulate power and to this end are ready to slander, defame and discredit others, even in newspapers and magazines.”, in “The Roman Curia and the Body of Christ”, Address of his Holiness Pope Francis, Presentation of the Christmas greetings to the Roman Curia, Monday, 22 December 2014, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html, (accessed 10/06/2018)

to] *prioritize personal safety over national security*¹³”, after the publication of a detailed policy document made by the Vatican on how states should approach the refugee crisis a year before the meeting of world leaders at the United Nations¹⁴. Besides that, he had chosen to visit the migrants that had recently arrived on the island of Lampedusa for his first visit outside Rome, where he denounced a “*globalization of indifference*”¹⁵.¹⁶

What he stated above is in concordance with the message in which he invites everyone to reach out to the peripheries: “*The Church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all forms of misery.*”¹⁷ It is interesting to note that with regard to the geographic peripheries, he deviates from Pope John Paul II who was focused on the East-West cut in a context of the Cold War, by being concerned by the North-South cut¹⁸. More importantly, the notion of *periphery* could be understood as a target of “*the asymmetries generated by the liberal version of globalization. From this point of view, the Pope’s discourse sounds as a critical appraisal of the world order (or disorder)*”¹⁹. It seems that the pope “*has used the concept of periphery as a metaphor for social marginality*”, and thus “*broader and deeper notions of exclusion, alienation and expulsion*”²⁰.

His interest for peripheries could be linked with his experience of the Argentinian revolution under the Peronist regime and military dictatorship (1976-1983) as *Provincial Jesuit of*

¹³ Kentish, B., “Pope Francis calls on politicians to do more to help refugees and migrants”, *The Independent*, 21/08/2017, Available online : <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-refugees-migrants-more-help-politicians-governments-europe-mediterranean-a7904341.html>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

¹⁴ *Ibidem*

¹⁵ Hooper, J., “Pope attacks ‘globalisation of indifference’ in Lampedusa visit”, *The Guardian*, 8/07/2013, Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/08/pope-globalisation-of-indifference-lampedusa>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

¹⁶ “The **culture of comfort**, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results **in indifference to others**; indeed, it even **leads to the globalization of indifference**. In this globalized world, **we have fallen into globalized indifference**. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!”, Homily of Holy Father Francis, “Arena” sports camp, Salina Quarter, 8/07/2013, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html, (accessed on 10/06/2018)

¹⁷ Pope Francis, “Remarks at the pre-Conclave General Congregation meetings of the Cardinals.” Available online: http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/03/27/bergoglios_intervention_a_diagnosis_of_the_problems_in_the_church/en1-677269, (accessed on 10/06/2018).

¹⁸ Comments made by Sébastien Maillard, correspondent of the newspaper ‘The Cross’, in “François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, Available online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrDA>

¹⁹ Ferrera, P.,” The Concept of Periphery in Pope Francis’s Discourses: A religion Alternative to Globalization?”, in *Religion Journal* 2015, 6, (2015), p. 43

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 42-43

Argentina. Criticized for his role played in the kidnapping of the two Jesuit priests Orlando Yorio and Francisco Jalics²¹, his authoritarian decisions and his lack of consultation²², he is also recognized by the journalist of investigation Nello Scavo for having helped a hundred people to hide and flee the dictatorship by imagining a network of exfiltration²³. But his tendency to the side of the poor definitely took place during his mandate as Archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998, during which he revolutionized the functioning of the Argentine Church by highlighting the slum areas as peripheries and transforming his seat in the cathedral of Buenos into a political forum, in which he denounces the social inequalities in Argentine²⁴.

His reforms, but also his stands on migrants and the oppressed, against opulence or concerning homosexuals, helped to build the image of Pope Francis as a progressive pope. Thus, what about his position concerning the *gender* concept?

One of his first trips abroad took place from 22 to 28 July 2013, on the occasion of the 28th World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. When he returned, he addressed the issue of the ordination of women that he believes is not relevant. Moreover, he declared: “*If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him? The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this in a beautiful way, saying: “no one should marginalize these people for this, they must be integrated into society”. The problem is not having this tendency, no, we must be brothers and sisters to one another (...) The problem is in making a lobby of this tendency*”²⁵. Therefore, this statement suggests that Pope Francis was ready to modernize the Church’s position on certain *gender* issues.

However, what is happening subsequently will relativize this *a priori*. Indeed, the controversy resurfaces at the launch of the French school program called *The ABCD of equality*. The purpose of this program was to make the students reflect on the themes addressed by *gender studies*,

²¹Legrand, C., “Le pape et les “années de plomb“ en Argentine, *Le Monde*, 16/03/2013, , Available online : https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/international/article/2013/03/16/la-polemique-sur-les-annees-de-plomb-en-argentine_1849406_3210.html, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

²² Comments made by Antonio Spadano S.J, Editor in Chief of the Jesuit Journal ‘Civiltà Cattolica’, in “François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, Available online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrdA>

²³ Comments made by Nello Scavo, Investigation journalist for “Avvenire”, in “François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrdA>

²⁴ Comments made by José Maria Poirier, managing editor of the Journal “*Critero*”, in François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrdA>

²⁵ Press conference of Pope Francis during the Return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html (accessed on 10/06/2018)

namely the attribution of a masculine or feminine character to social behaviors, in order to teach children about equality between sexes. Indeed, the main problem is that the program, which is a “*continuation of steps taken by the French state since the 1980s to change perceptions on gender stereotypes*”²⁶, contains the notion of *gender*²⁷. Following this, Pope Francis reacted strongly by declaring that this initiative was an “*ideological colonization*”²⁸ and an “*insidious indoctrination*”²⁹. The former French Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Research, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem replied “*I advise the Pope to the meet teachers from the French school and discuss with them, browse these textbooks, these programs and explain how there is a gender theory that by the way does not exist*”³⁰³¹.

The Pope's opposition to subjects covered by *gender studies*, such as bodies, identities and sexual orientation suffering from the heteronormativity domination, does not end there. Regarding the issue of abortion, even though Pope Francis's words are less extreme than those held by his predecessors John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who spoke about excommunication (for those who practiced it, or those who defended him), his position seems to be in the same line as these. Several example can be noted, such as his call the Christians to “*a renewed esteem of the human person and a more adequate care of life, from conception to natural death*”³² when he reaches out the pro-life movement in Italy in 2015 and added “*I extend my appreciation to the associations, movements and all those who defend human life*”³³. Thus, he perpetuates the Roman Church's pro-life stance expressed in 2013 in the *Evangelii Gaudium*³⁴, by promising that Church's opposition against abortion will never be compromised: “*I want to be completely honest in this regard. This is not something subject to alleged reforms or*

²⁶ Bridges, A., *The Conversation*, 07/07/2014, Available online : <http://theconversation.com/france-gives-way-to-opponents-of-gender-theory-in-schools-28641>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

²⁷ *Ibidem*

²⁸ News Wires, *France 4*, 10/03/2016, Available online: <http://www.france24.com/en/20161003-pope-gender-theory-studies-catholic-church>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

²⁹ *Ibidem*

³⁰ Trans. by Roxane Misk, Original: “Mais la réalité c'est que je conseille au Pape lors de ses prochains déplacements en France de venir à la rencontre d'enseignants de l'école française et de discuter avec eux, de feuilleter lui-même ces manuels scolaires, ces programmes et de m'expliquer en quoi il y aurait une théorie du genre qui n'existe pas par ailleurs”,

³¹ Toussay, J., “Najat Vallaud-Belkacem répond au Pape sur la théorie du genre dans les manuels scolaires: ‘Parole légère et infondée’”, *The Huffington Post*, Available online: https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2016/10/03/najat-vallaud-belkacem-pape-francois-theorie-du-genre_n_12304772.html, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

³² Sagorski, S., “Respect Human Life From Conception to Death” *New Life*, 2/02/2015, Available Online: <http://www.lifenews.com/2015/02/02/pope-francis-respect-human-life-from-conception-to-natural-death/>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

³³ *Ibidem*

³⁴ Ertelt, S., *New Life*, 26/11/2013, Available online: <http://www.lifenews.com/2013/11/26/pope-francis-catholic-churchs-pro-life-teaching-on-abortion-cant-change/> (accessed on 20/06/2018)

'modernization'. It is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life³⁵'.

He also defended Church's opposition to artificial contraception in a speech in Philippines, by urging families to be "*sanctuaries of respect for life*", families who are today "*threatened by growing efforts on the part of some to redefine the very institution of marriage, by relativism, by the culture of the ephemeral, by the lack of openness to life³⁶*", and destroyed by "*the ideological colonization*" with reference to the same-sex marriages right in countries all around the world³⁷.

At first glance, it seems that Pope Francis's progressivism is not relevant in terms of *gender* issues, while this topic is extremely present on the international scene. Since 2001, same-sex marriage has been legalized in twenty-five countries (nationwide or in some parts)³⁸. Almost all of them legalized the adoption for homosexual couples, which is actually legal in twenty-seven countries. In the United Kingdom, most jurisdictions have legalized same-sex marriage in 2014, except in Northern Ireland. As regards for future legislation, Legislative Yuan in Taiwan has until the 24 May 2019 to amend marriage law on the right for same-sex couples to marry³⁹. In Austria, same-sex marriage will become legal on January 2019 unless the Parliament decides to legalize it before⁴⁰.

The right to abortion is also a highly topical issue around the world. On the 25 May 2018, 66.4 % of Irish voted in favor of a constitutional change, in order to liberalize abortion on the occasion of an historical referendum⁴¹. The public consultation, aimed for the repeal of the 8th amendment that proclaimed "*the right to life of an unborn child equal to the one of the*

³⁵ Sagorski, S., *New Life*, (2/02/2015)

³⁶ Kirschgaessner, S., *The Guardian*, 16/01/2015 Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/16/pope-francis-catholic-church-contraception>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

³⁷ *Ibidem*

³⁸ The Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway (2009), Portugal (2010), Iceland (2010), Argentina (2010), Denmark (2012), Brazil (2013), France (2013), Uruguay (2013), New Zealand (2013, but not in Tokelau, Cook Islands and Niue), Luxembourg (2015), The United States (2015, except American Samoa), Ireland (2015), Colombia (2016), Finland (2017), Malta (2017), Germany (2017), Austria (2017), in "Same-sex marriage around the world", *CBC News*, Available online: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/same-sex-marriage-around-the-world-1.799137> (accessed on 20/06/2018)

³⁹ Wu, J.R., "Taiwan court rules in favor of same-sex marriage, first in Asia", *Reuters*, 24/07/2017, Available online: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-lgbt-marriage-idUSKBN18K0UN>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

⁴⁰ Agerholm, H., *The Independent*, 5/12/2017, Available online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/austria-same-sex-gay-marriage-legal-constitutional-court-lgbt-rights-start-date-couples-a8092516.html>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

⁴¹ "Les Irlandais votent à plus de 66% en faveur du droit à l'avortement", *L'Obs*, 26/05/2018, Available online: <https://www.nouvelobs.com/monde/20180526.OBS7244/les-irlandais-votent-a-plus-de-66-en-faveur-du-droit-a-l-avortement.html>, (accessed online 20/06/2018)

*mother*⁴²”, three years after the legalization by referendum of the same-sex marriage, which had provoked a cultural earthquake in the Republic⁴³. For some, it reflects the decline of Catholic Church’s influence, whose guardianship has been eroded due to the economic and social upheavals but also many scandals that have hit the religious institution, including pedophilia cases involving priests, protected by the Vatican authorities. According to Diarmaid Ferriter, professor of Irish History at University College Dublin, attitudes have changed profoundly since 1983. *“At the time, the debate was dominated by older, masculine voices, and the Church was clearly in a much stronger position than it is today. The profile of activists on both sides is much younger today*⁴⁴”. This was demonstrated during Pope Francis' visit to Ireland on 25 and 26 August 2018, on the occasion of the closing of the World Meeting of Family. Thirty-nine years after the visit of Pope John Paul II who was facing a deeply Catholic Ireland, where contraception was difficult to access, divorce was prohibited, abortion was punishable by life imprisonment and homosexuality by imprisonment, Pope Francis met another Ireland⁴⁵. According to *The Guardian*, the Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar expressed himself in a speech during the papal visit, in which he *“called for a new relationship between church and state in which religion is no longer at the centre of society*⁴⁶”. He focused on *“the failings of the church*⁴⁷” and the *“dark aspects of Ireland’s history*⁴⁸”, by saying: *“The failures of both church and state, and wider society, created a bitter and broken heritage for so many, leaving a legacy of pain and suffering. It is a history of sorrow and shame*⁴⁹”. The Prime Minister, openly homosexual, continued by explaining that the time has come *“for us to build a new, more mature relationship between church and state in Ireland – a new covenant for the 21st century”*, *“understanding that marriages do not always work, that women should make their own decisions, and that families come in many different, wonderful forms, including those headed by a grandparent, lone parent or same-sex parents, or parents who are divorced*⁵⁰”. Finally, civil society tends to move in the same direction. Indeed, an Irish association of

⁴² *Ibidem*

⁴³ *Ibidem*

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*

⁴⁵ Chambraud, C., “En Irlande, le pape François face aux scandales de pédophilie”, *Le Monde*, 25/08/2018, Available online: https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2018/08/24/en-irlande-le-pape-francois-face-aux-scandales-de-pedophilie_5345673_3214.html?, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

⁴⁶ Sherwood, H., “Irish PM: time to move Catholic church from the centre of society”, *The Guardian*, 25/08/2018, Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/25/arrival-of-pope-francis-in-ireland-brings-mixed-emotions>, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*

Catholic priests had asked many believers what they wanted to say to Pope Francis on the occasion of his trip to Ireland. The issue most often highlighted was the place of women in the Church, the ordination of married men, the place of homosexuals and the place of power in the Church⁵¹.

Moreover, another historic step in the struggle for the right to abortion can be highlighted. Indeed, on 14 June 2018, The Chamber of Deputies in Argentina voted a bill to legalize abortion during the first fourteen weeks of pregnancy, despite the strong opposition of the Church. The intervention of the Church to defeat the bill took the form of a threat of excommunication from bishops to parliamentarians, but also a letter from Pope Francis calling for the rejection of the project of law⁵². If in some countries, such as Poland⁵³ and the United States⁵⁴, the right to abortion and thus the right of women to dispose of their bodies declines, popular mobilizations that defend it increase all around the world. On the occasion of the International Women's Rights Day, mobilizations, demonstrations and strikes took place in more than 150 countries, such as Argentina, Ukraine, South Korea⁵⁵ or Spain, where more than five billion women stopped to work to demonstrate with slogans like "*my body, my choice*"⁵⁶.

This might lead to the conclusion that the Pope is a definite, innovative political leader who has been able to modernize the Church through his numerous reforms, and reintegrate it at the center of great international debates thanks to his numerous interventions on the international scene. However, it is difficult to consider as a "progressive" pope regarding his reactions to the so-called "*gender theory*", the right to abortion and the same-sex marriage right or the role of women in the Church.

⁵¹ Chambraud, C., "En Irlande, le pape François face aux scandales de pédophilie", *Le Monde*, 25/08/2018, Available online: https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2018/08/24/en-irlande-le-pape-francois-face-aux-scandales-de-pedophilie_5345673_3214.html?, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

⁵² "En Argentine, vote historique en faveur du droit à l'avortement", *Actu Orange*, 15/06/2018, Available online : <https://actu.orange.fr/monde/en-argentine-vote-historique-en-faveur-du-droit-a-l-avortement-CNT00000143Z5t.html>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

⁵³ "En Pologne, le gouvernement s'apprête à rendre l'avortement quasi impossible", *Le Monde*, 15/01/2018, Available online : https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2018/01/15/en-pologne-le-gouvernement-s-apprete-a-rendre-l-avortement-quasi-impossible_5241889_3214.html, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

⁵⁴ "Le droit à l'avortement en danger aux Etats-Unis", *La Dernière Heure*, 29/06/2018, Available online : <http://www.dhnet.be/actu/monde/le-droit-a-l-avortement-en-danger-aux-etats-unis-5b35bbcf5532692547cc1896>, (accessed on 29/06/2018)

⁵⁵ "8 Mars : mobilisations, manifestations et grèves dans plus de 150 pays", *Revolution Permanente*, 8/03/18, Available online : <http://www.revolutionpermanente.fr/8-Mars-mobilisations-manifestations-et-greves-dans-plus-de-150-pays>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

⁵⁶ "Espagne: mobilisation sans précédent pour défendre le droit des femmes", *RFI*, 8/03/2018, Available online : <http://www.rfi.fr/europe/20180308-espagne-mobilisation-precedent-defendre-droit-femmes-journee-internationale-droit-fe>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

I.2. Structure of the thesis

The previous section allows us to understand the main events that punctuated the beginning of this pontificate and the governance guidelines issued by Pope Francis, the main actor and subject of our study. It also allows us to glimpse the premises of his perpetuation of the Church's tradition on *gender* issues, which turns out to be a pressing issue among current events on the international scene.

More importantly, the notion of *gender* seems to be understood differently by the Church than by other actors, such as the former French Minister of National Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. How can this be explained? How did *gender* become such a controversial subject and how the Church became one of the main actors in this controversial debate?

These are the questions we will try to answer, through the exploration of the following problematic: **“How does Pope Francis build the *gender* concept on the international scene?”**

To do so, we will review the literature in the second chapter, which will allow us to situate ourselves in it. Thus, we will begin this state of the art by exploring Realism in International Relations, confronting two well-known authors and their understanding of power: Raymond Aron and Hans Morgenthau. This will allow us to understand that the *gender* notion is not a material issue but a question of representation. This is why we will continue the exploration of literature with in social- constructivist theory, the cradle of the Catholic Church's reception of *gender*. This will allow us to refine our problematic into a research question:

- **“How does Pope Francis represent and relay the *gender* concept in his international discourses?”**.

This brings us to our third chapter. We will use the Post-structuralist approach to understand the notions of discourse and language, but also considers the notion of dominant discourse, imposed by the authority of an elite who constructs meaning and knowledge. In particular, we will mobilize the 'Regime of Truth', theorized by Michel Foucault, which consists of the articulation of three elements: elites, language and binary oppositions and discourses, which allows the study of the production of a truth. This will then allow us to turn our research question into a central question:

- **“How does Pope Francis build his “Truth” of the *gender* concept, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”**.

We also deduce our hypothesis, which will be as follows:

- **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate in a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the *gender* concept through the construction of his “Truth” of *gender*.**

To test our hypothesis, we will proceed to a qualitative analysis discourses of Pope Francis, a corpus of texts composed of 388 pages. Our analysis would be separated in three parts, entitles “*Gender Theory*” and “*Gender Ideology*”, “Men and Women’s representation”, and “Free sexual orientation and human rights”. Our approach will be to understand the construction of a truth by the Pope for each of the themes addressed in the axes, in order to verify our hypothesis. We will therefore try to rely on the “Regime of Truth” of Foucault and analyze the extracts of the speeches selected through it. Finally, we will analyze our results in a summary table, which will allow us to gather the information and, eventually, to verify our hypothesis. Then, we will conclude our work, try to identify its limits and put forward ideas for future research.

II. STATE OF ART: THE GENDER NOTION AND THE CHURCH IN LITERATURE

II.1. Realism in International Relations: a starting point

For the majority of politics' or international politics' concepts are fixed once and for all. This is also true for the discipline of International Relations, which is understood through general theories or theoretical approaches. One of the most important theories in this field is Realism, which emphasizes the conflictual and competitive side of international politics⁵⁷. Realism contains general features that had been constructed and commented by many authors, such as John Herz, Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan, who are considered as "classical" realists⁵⁸. Even though their views have been profoundly analyzed and discussed, especially with regard to their articulation or contradiction to each other, "classical" realists agree on a number of key assumptions, such as proposed by Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations*⁵⁹ in 1948⁶⁰. Indeed, their starting point to understand International Relations is Human nature that is inherently egoistic and self-interested. The primary determinant of international political outcomes is *anarchy*, due to the absence of government⁶¹. Here, anarchy has to be understood as a lack of legal superior authority⁶². The main actors in the international area being *states*, each one of them is responsible for its own survival and pursue power in the name of national interest. Moreover, considering their own security as a central issue, states tend to increase their power on the international scene shaped by the *balance of powers*, while wars are used to prevent the increasing of military forces of their competitors⁶³. Finally, classical realists are generally skeptical and critical of moralism – i.e. abstract moral discourses - and ethical norms in international politics⁶⁴.

Raymond Aron, a French theorist of International Relations, published in 1962 "*Paix et Guerre entre les Nations*", which became one of the French references in the realm of International Relations. Sometimes considered as a "classical" realist, sometimes as "neoclassical realist⁶⁵",

⁵⁷Julian Korab-Karpowicz, W., "Political realism in international relations.", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2010).

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*

⁵⁹ Morgenthau, H., *Politics Among Nations*, New York, Knopf, (1948), 752 pp.

⁶⁰ Keaney, Brian A., "The Realism of Hans Morgenthau", *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* (2006), p. 3

⁶¹ Julian Korab-Karpowicz, W., *A history of political philosophy: from Thucydides to Locke*. Global Scholarly Publications, 2010, p. 10.

⁶² Keaney, Brian A., *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁶³ Julian Korab-Karpowicz, W., *op cit.*

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*

⁶⁵ Battistella, D., "Raymond Aron, réaliste néoclassique", *Études internationales*, 43(3), pp. 371–388

the author who criticized Morgenthau for his definition of the concept of power⁶⁶, yet agrees with him when it comes to enumerate *the elements of power*. Thus, Aron classifies them into three categories: “*the environment, relative to the space occupied by the political units; resources, in the sense of materials and men likely to be transformed into weapons and soldiers; collective action, which refers to the capacity of a state to organize an army, to the discipline of the combatants, to the quality of the civilians and military command, to the solidarity of the citizen facing the test of fire* ⁶⁷”. However, if Morgenthau understands the search for power as always being the immediate goal of a state's foreign policy⁶⁸, Aron understands it as a goal among others⁶⁹. Therefore, for Aron, the end of war, even if is the last resort, is “*to impose its will*”⁷⁰, and “*the power is the ability to impose its will*”⁷¹. In addition, **force is “*the whole material resources immediately available in the event use of violence*”⁷².**

For Realists, material resources shape “force” and “power”, central issues to understand International Relations. Even if this theoretical approach enables to understand and analyze a large number of events or problematics in International Relations, it cannot be mobilized for our subject. Indeed, the main actor who is going to be questioned in this thesis is not a state but Pope Francis, a political and spiritual leader. Moreover, the *gender* issues are not material issues but rather a question of *representation* shaped by *discourses*, which also have political consequences. These are the reasons why we reject this theoretical approach, considered as non-relevant to understand the building of *gender* by Pope Francis on the international scene.

⁶⁶ Ramel F., “De la puissance militaire : Aron revisité”, *CERISCOPE Puissance*, (2013), p. 1

⁶⁷ Trans., Roxane Misk, Original: “le milieu, relatif à l’espace occupé par les unités politiques; les ressources, au sens de matériaux et d’hommes susceptibles d’être transformés en armes et en soldats; l’action collective, qui renvoie à la capacité d’un État à organiser une armée, à la discipline des combattants, à la qualité du commandement civil et militaire, à la solidarité des citoyens confrontés à l’épreuve du feu”, Aron, R., *Paix et guerre entre les nations*, Paris, 1962, p. 65 et s., in Battistella, D., “Raymond Aron, réaliste néoclassique”, *Études internationales*, 43(3), (2012), p. 375

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 374

⁷⁰ Duroselle J-B., “Paix et guerre entre les nations : la théorie des relations internationales selon Raymond Aron”, *Revue française de science politique*, 12e année, n°4, (1962). pp. 964

⁷¹ *Ibidem*

⁷² *Ibidem*

II.2. The social-constructivist approach: cradle of the *gender's* understanding by the Church

II.2.1. From feminist theories to *gender* studies

Anthony Favier, Doctor of Modern History in University of Lyon and specialist of the “catholic *gender* in France”, draws the history of the reception of *gender studies* by the Catholic Church. While most authors agree that the first real encounter between *gender* and the Church took place during the UN conferences from 1975 to 1995, he nevertheless underlines the relative Catholic indifference to the birth of *feminist studies* and *theories*. In fact, they can be considered as the ancestors of *gender studies* because they work on the social construction of the sexes. Thus, Feminist theories are considered as discourses that underlie women's emancipation struggles, or more commonly, what is referred to as the *second wave of feminism*⁷³. Indeed, according to Joke Swiebel: “*In the 1970s, ‘gender’ – first only a technical term in grammar and biology – became a new catchword, indispensable for the feminist agenda, to indicate the quintessence of women’s issue. The concept was ‘invented’ to highlight that women’s and men’s roles are not given or fixed, but may vary across time and place and can be chosen. These roles are social constructions, and do not stem from one’s biological sex*⁷⁴”.

II.2.2. United Nations Conferences: the first meeting of *gender* and the Church

At the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995 in Beijing, which is part of a series of conferences organized in the 1970s by the United Nations, 189 governments and more than 2,000 NGOs were present to dedicate the true introduction of the word *gender* in the United-Nations working documents and in the final report of the UN⁷⁵. The acceptance of this term by the United Nations is immediately perceived as a threat by the Holy See, whose criticisms relate to “*views which assert that sexual identity can be adapted indefinitely to suit new and different purposes*⁷⁶”, as it prefigures in the Report of the Conference⁷⁷. Moreover,

⁷³ Favier, A., “La réception catholique des études de genre : Une approche historique, en contexte francophone... Le genre, approches dépassionnées d’un débat”, *HAL Archives ouvertes*, (2012), p. 1 (<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00765786>)

⁷⁴ Swiebel, J., “Recognizing Gender and Sexuality at the United Nations”, in Van Der Dussen, S., Piette V., Paternotte D., “Habemus gender ! Déconstruction d’une riposte religieuse”, *Sextant*, Vol. 31, (2015), p. 26

⁷⁵ Favier, A., (2012) *op cit.*, p. 5

⁷⁶ United-Nations (1996): Report of The Fourth World Conference on Women: Beijing China 4-15, (1995), p. 162

⁷⁷ Favier, A., (2012), *op cit.*, p. 6

some elements of the final decisions of the Beijing meeting were deplored by the Holy See, such as the minimization of motherhood in the conception of femininity, the breakthrough of individualism and "*libertarian rights*", and "*disproportionate attention to sexual and reproductive health*"⁷⁸⁷⁹". Furthermore, the Holy See canted "*accept ambiguous terminology concerning unqualified control over sexuality and fertility, particularly as it could be interpreted as a societal endorsement of abortion or homosexuality*"⁸⁰". Thus, the Holy See explained its position by referring to the 1988 apostolic letter of John Paul II *Mulieris dignitatem*, and thereby, continued to forcefully expose a Catholic anthropology of terms based on the notion of nature:

*"Pope John Paul insists on the **distinctiveness and complementarity** of women and men. At the same time, he has applauded the assumption of new roles by women, stressed the degree to which cultural conditioning has been an obstacle to women's progress, and exhorted men to assist in "the great process of women's liberation."*⁸¹"

*In his recent "Letter to Women", the Pope explained the Church's nuanced view in the following way: "One can also appreciate that the presence of a certain diversity of roles is in no way prejudicial to women, provided that **this diversity is not the result of an arbitrary imposition, but is rather an expression of what is specific to being male and female.**"*⁸²

Siewel's contribution, compared to Favier, is the identification of actors hiding behind this strategy emphasized by other authors. This can be explained by her experience as a participant and eyewitness as member of the Netherlands's government delegation to the Third and the Fourth World Conferences of Women (Nairobi, 1985; Beijing, 1995)⁸³. Indeed, she highlighted the surprise of Western delegations and NGOs who didn't expect the first move of the Holy See to ask to put the word *gender* between square brackets, but also to link the notion of *gender* to the *sexual identity*⁸⁴. Therefore, the main argument of the Holy See, reinforced by its allies such as Honduras, Malta, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan and Sudan, was that "*the use of gender [in the UN documents] was an attempt by Western countries to reclassify different sexual orientations into heterosexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality and transsexuality*"⁸⁵". The Holy See used the same argumentative against feminism. Instead of attacking it and its demands

⁷⁸ United-Nations (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 166

⁷⁹ Favier, A., (2012), *op cit.*, p. 7

⁸⁰ United-Nations (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 161

⁸¹ John Paul II, ("Letter to Women", 6), in United-Nations (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 162

⁸² *Ibidem*

⁸³ Swiebel, J., (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 26

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*

directly (especially reproductive and sexual rights), it “*tried to marginalize feminism by constructing it as Western-dominated, unrepresentative of women in the South, overemphasizing sexual rights issues and neglecting issues like poverty, tropical diseases, and presenting old-fashioned, with its stress on equality the expense of ‘the right to be different, i.e. the right to be a woman’*”⁸⁶. Finally, while the sexual orientation issue was debated within the Main Committee of the Beijing conference thanks to the intervention of the delegations of the Netherlands and Sweden, co-sponsored by Canada, the Holy See and some Islamic members states had also asked “*to put into these words into square brackets*”⁸⁷.

All this information indicates that the underlying strategy of the Holy See to prevent the introduction of the word *gender* in the international scene has been to annex *gender* with the right to choose their sexual orientation and feminism, synonym of Western domination.

II.2.3. Gender: From a broad notion to a single “*gender theory*” or “*gender ideology*”

Since 1995, the Catholic apprehension of *gender studies* almost exclusively passes through the expression “*gender theory*”. In fact, this lexical choice to use the word “theory” in the singular is not a coincidence. First, this expression may be subject to a certain ambiguity in social sciences because it can designate what is theoretical, and not yet demonstrated, or what is empirical and validated by experience. Second, it suggests that there is one single “*gender theory*”, which is actually not exact, with regard to how *gender* is differently modelled in academic literature⁸⁸. Indeed, *gender* is rather understood as a scope of studies, a general axis of method, and a concept for naming the role of the social sex⁸⁹.

Romain Carnac identifies the “*gender theory*” as the specificity of the most recent developments in the Catholic discourse on *gender*, sex and sexuality. Called “*gender*” in the French literature, “*gender ideology*” or “*gender feminism*”, it seems all the time raised as a controversial subject, accompanied by a lamentation and anxiety mood⁹⁰. The use of this

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30

⁸⁸ Favier, A., (2012), *op cit.*, p. 7

⁸⁹ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., (2012), *op. cit.* p. 8

⁹⁰ Carnac, R., “L’Eglise catholique contre « la théorie du genre »: construction d’un objet polémique dans le débat public français contemporain”, *Synergies Italie*, n°10, (2014), p. 127

expression is thus an object of discredit because it allows its detractors to impose it a direct unscientific character. Therefore, it is easier to equate it as an opinion or an ideology⁹¹.

This famous “*feminist gender ideology*” is denounced by psychoanalyst and Monsignor Tony Anatrella as “*unrealistic and disembodied*”⁹². This Catholic thinker, close from the Vatican hierarchy under John Paul II, is known for his writings against “*the gender theory*”, especially for his comparison of “*the totalitarian ideology*” of gender to Marxism: “*The gender theory will cause more damage than was caused by Marxist ideology. This one proposed to collectivize man and to uproot him from his culture and thus, impoverishing him, whereas the gender promises us the subjective emancipation of the sexual difference to alienate us to the economy of the sexual tendencies, source of all denials and all violence*”⁹³.

He goes further, by declaring: “*Marxism, through communism and socialism, promised us a new man with the depressive idea of “changing life” instead of assuming it. Nazism appealed to a superior race. We know how much these misconceptions have been lethal in many ways. And now the theory of gender wants to free us from the condition of our sexual body and sexual difference*”⁹⁴.

Hence, the construction of the definition of *gender*, passes through the *gender theory*, Marxist ideology, Nazism or through the negation of the sexual differences and the natural condition of our sexual bodies. This image of imposition and domination is reinforced by the strategy used at the Beijing Conference, namely the “*Western neo-colonialism of thought*”⁹⁵ which aims to impose to the world the “*intellectual cynicism of the West*”⁹⁶. In addition, the Church's discourse would insist on the “*Western and North American*” character of *gender*, a concept born in

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 135

⁹² *Ibidem*

⁹³ Trans. by Roxane Misk, Original : “La théorie du genre provoquera davantage de dégâts que ceux occasionnés par l’idéologie marxiste. Cette dernière se proposait de collectiviser l’homme et de le déraciner de sa culture au point de l’appauvrir, alors que le gender nous promet l’émancipation subjective de la différence sexuelle pour nous aliéner à l’économie des tendances sexuelles, source de tous les dénis et de toutes les violences”, Anatrella, T., “Le Lexique et les enjeux de la sexualité”. Conférence au Sénat. *La Documentation catholique*, n°2339, (2005), p. 665

⁹⁴ Trans. by Roxane Misk, Original : “Le marxisme à travers le communisme et le socialisme, nous promettait un homme nouveau avec l’idée dépressive de « changer la vie » au lieu de l’assumer. Le nazisme en appelait à une race supérieure. Nous savons combien ces fausses idées ont été meurtrières à bien des égards. Et maintenant la théorie du gender veut nous libérer de la condition de notre corps sexué et de la différence sexuelle », in Anatrella, T., “La Théorie du genre et l’origine de l’homosexualité”, in Favier, A., (2012), *op cit.*, p. 12

⁹⁵ Sarah, R., “Contribution du secrétaire de la Congrégation pour l’évangélisation des peuples”. Bulletin de la IIe Assemblée spéciale pour l’Afrique du Synode des évêques, (2009), pp. 4-25, in Carnac, R., *op. cit.*, p. 135

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*

American and Anglo-Saxon universities. It is opposed to an “*equally fantasized and stereotyped Africa, preserved from the loss of contact with nature, the sacred and family values*”⁹⁷. Thus, *gender* is constructed by the discourse that denounces it and becomes the object of the discourse or as Frédérique Sitri explains it, “*a discursive entity, i.e. constituted of discourses, and built in and by discourses*”⁹⁸.

This is explained by the Church's desire to transform this extremely complex concept, which it considers as vague and fleeting, into a more homogeneous and substantial adversary to which the Catholic Church will be able to oppose more easily⁹⁹. This homogenization of the Catholic discourse raises the question of the interest hidden behind it. Some authors stress the Church's problem of the massive secularization of society and its need to create a discourse of universal scope¹⁰⁰ in order to reintegrate the Church into the international political debate¹⁰¹.

An important step in this strategy of homogenizing the discourse on *gender* was the publication in 2003 of the “*Ambiguous and debatable terms regarding family life and ethical questions*”¹⁰², now called “*The Lexicon*”¹⁰³. In the preface, cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo stresses:

“Many expressions are used in parliaments and world forums with concealment of their true content and meaning even for the politicians and members of parliament who use them, due to their weak background in philosophy, theology, law, anthropology, etc. This represents the greatest obstacle for a correct understanding of certain terms. The purpose of the Lexicon is to assist in such cases and to awaken interest in order to promote serious and objective information, and stimulate the desire for a deeper formation in this field where several sciences and critical disciplines converge. (...) With the escalation of ambiguity, new rights have even been proposed, not as victories for previously unrecognized issues that deserve serious consideration, but as new forms of manipulation. (...)”

The Holy Father [John Paul II] has described “a society which is sick” from many points of view, since “our society has broken away from the full truth about man, from the truth about what man and woman really are as persons”. (...) Later on, an interesting case with regard to the term “gender” was the preparation and the actual event of the

⁹⁷ Anatrella, T., “Préface: La théorie du genre comme un cheval de Troie”. *Gender, la controverse*, collectif, Conseil Pontifical pour la famille, Paris : Téqui, (2011), in Carnac, R., *op. cit.*, p. 135

⁹⁸ Sitri F., *L'Objet du débat. La construction des objets de discours dans des situations argumentatives orales*, Paris : Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, (2003), p.

⁹⁹ Carnac, R., *op. cit.*, p. 128

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131

¹⁰¹ Pattemote, D., “Habemus gender! Autopsie d’une obsession vaticane”, *Sextant*, Vol. 31, (2015), p. 17

¹⁰² Catholic Church. Pontificium Consilium pro Familia, *Ambiguous and debatable terms regarding family life and ethical questions*, (2006), pp. 946

¹⁰³ Cf. Appendices for the index of *The Lexicon*

*Beijing Conference on Women. The Pontifical Council for the Family drew attention to the **ambiguous and ideologized use** of it that was being introduced, despite the fact that the Holy See Delegation had been assured of the intention to use this term with its "**traditional**" meaning. It did not take long for people to realize the serious implications of this issue and the great **need for clarification**. (...) **The family and life are being literally bombarded by a deceptive language** that does not encourage but complicates dialogue between individuals and peoples. Without **the pursuit of the truth**, the universe of freedom is contaminated and in **serious danger**. **There is no freedom without truth**. Thus we have **listed 78 terms**. (...) The text, edited by **competent professionals**, gathers the contributions into a single volume, published in accord with technical and lexicographical criteria (...)¹⁰⁴".*

Martine Gross analyzes the book "*Gender: La Controverse*", a collective work edited by the Pontifical Council for the Family and published in 2011, which summarizes the thinking of the Catholic Church on the question of *gender* and sexuality by repeating the chapters of this same *Lexicon*. It is a clear reminder of the Church's condemnation of same-sex unions and adoption by homosexuals or same-sex couples. In addition, the Catholic Magisterium considers as "disorderly conduct" and "anomalies", sexual behaviors and identities that are in accordance with the norms that it prescribes¹⁰⁵

Another discourse analysis was made by Anne-Charlotte Husson on *the lexical and argumentative strategies* of the central pillar of anti-*gender* discourse in France: *VigiGender*, an association which, according to the French Ministry of Education, is presented as "*a collective of parents committing to promote a school that excludes gender (...)*¹⁰⁶".

Thus, Husson proposes an analysis of the meta-discourse of *the Lexicon* produced by *VigiGender* on its website, that she considers as an example of "*linguistic purism, based on the opposition between good and bad lexical practices, a critique of the loss of the meaning of words and the dissociation between words and things that would characterize the "language of gender" and its hidden ideological agenda*¹⁰⁷". Henceforth, she stresses the method used by the

¹⁰⁴ Catholic Church. Pontificium Consilium pro Familia, *Ambiguous and debatable terms regarding family life and ethical questions*, (2006), pp. 946

¹⁰⁵ Gross, M., "Le rapprochement du Grand Rabbinat et de l'Église catholique contre « la théorie du genre » : union sacrée ou stratégie politique ? ", in Van Der Dussen, S., Piette V., Paternotte D., (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 144

¹⁰⁶ Message from the Ministry of National Education, relayed by the Toulouse Academy, (2016), Available online: https://web.ac-toulouse.fr/automne_modules_files/pDocs/public/r32756_61_vigi-gender-lmen-oct2016.pdf, (accessed on 5 July 2018)

¹⁰⁷ Trans. by Roxane Misk, Original : «purisme linguistique, reposant sur l'opposition entre bonnes et mauvaises pratiques lexicales, une critique de la perte du sens des mots et de la dissociation entre mots et choses qui caractériserait le « langage du genre », ainsi que la mise en évidence de son programme idéologique caché », in Husson, A-C., "Stratégies lexicales et argumentatives dans le discours anti-genre : le lexique de VigiGender", in Van Der Dussen, S., Piette V., Paternotte D., (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 93

association based on the separation into two columns of the lexicon that contains thirty-one words¹⁰⁸.

The titles of these columns are respectively “language of “reality”” and “language of *gender*”. It is interesting to note the paradox raised by this *lexicon*, which at first glance, does not directly refer to Catholic theology. His affiliation with *the Lexicon* aforesaid is clear in light of the definitions given to words: for example, the distinction between “*kinship*” (in the “language of “reality”” column) and “*parenthood*” (in the “*gender* language” column). The first word is defined as “*the state of man and woman who **procreated***”, the second as “*the educational role of adults who are not necessarily the parents of the child*”. To understand this affiliation with theology, the catholic discourse must be studied in advance, especially to identify it in the definition of “*procreation*” as a “*gift of life*”, and understand that this underlies the definition of “*complementarity*”, opposed to “*stereotype*”.

This is confirmed by the presentation of this *lexicon*, in which we can read “*that a society cannot, without weakening its own foundations, put on the same level homosexuality and heterosexuality, “parenthood” and “kinship”*”¹⁰⁹.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100

¹⁰⁹ Trans. By Roxane Misk, Original: « une société ne saurait, sans affaiblir ses propres fondements, mettre sur le même plan homosexualité et hétérosexualité, “parentalité” et “parenté” », *Ibid.*, p. 104

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104 -105

II.3. John Paul II and Benedict XVI facing women and *gender* issues

The discourses of the two previous popes, their encyclicals or Letters are constantly resumed in the literature we analyzed above, but also in the literature on the reception of *gender* by the Catholic Church in general. In this last part, we would like to underline the relationship of the two previous popes with the notion of *gender*.

To do so, we can stress the article of Romain Carnac: “*The naturalist argument in the discourses of the Vatican on the difference between the sexes (John Paul II - Benedict XVI)*”. Thus, the author explains that since 1960, the Vatican builds a discourse in reaction to the issue of *established sexual morality*. The Church stands against the definition of social roles or sexual orientations that go beyond biological sex, invoking *the superiority of the natural law* dictated by the Creator on the human will.¹¹¹ According to Carnac, John Paul II has multiplied speeches, apostolic letters, general audiences and messages that deal with the relationship between man and woman, meaning of marriage and femininity. His reflection on these themes was recovered and extended by Benedict XVI. The impression of a hardening of the Church under the pontificate of Benedict XVI with regards to sexual and identities issues or the role of the sexes is more due to the difference in style between the two popes than to a real divergence on the substance of the speech¹¹².

However, the difference of context that they had to face pushed them to position themselves on different issues, which eventually meet up in the light of the Holy See's strategy of using *gender theory* as a summary of their opposition to the difference between social sexes that undermines the traditional image of family based on heterosexual marriage. If John Paul II sought to speak up the Church's voice in the debate on the status of women and the achievement of equality between the sexes, Benedict XVI had to position himself on the very definition of the word *sex*¹¹³.

¹¹¹ Carnac, R., “L'argument naturaliste dans le discours du Vatican sur la différence entre les sexes (Jean-Paul II-Benoît XVI)”, in, Bertina, L., Carnac, R., Fauches, A., Gervais M., (dir.), *Nature et religions*, Paris, CNRS Editions, (2013), p. 131

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 132

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 133

John Paul II, on the vocation of women:

*“In the name of liberation from male **“domination”**, women must not appropriate to themselves **male characteristics contrary to their own feminine “originality”**. There is a well-founded fear that if they take this path, women will not “reach fulfilment”, but instead will deform and lose what constitutes **their essential richness**. It is indeed an enormous richness¹¹⁴”.*

Benedict XVI, on the collaboration between man and woman in the Church and in the world:

*“To avoid any supremacy of one or the other sex, we tend to erase their differences, taken as simple effects of a historical and cultural conditioning. In this leveling, the **body difference, called sex**, is minimized, while the purely cultural dimension, called gender, is underlined as much as possible and considered as paramount. The occultation of the difference or the duality of the sexes has enormous consequences at various levels. Such an anthropology, which intended to favor egalitarian aims for women by freeing them from all biological determinism, has in fact inspired ideologies that, for example, promote the questioning of the family, which is by nature bi-parental, that means is composed of a **father and a mother**, as well as placing **on the same level homosexuality and heterosexuality**, a new model of polymorphous sexuality¹¹⁵”.*

Romain Carnac interprets it as a:

*“reproach to the perspective of the gender to **put on the same level, under cover of feminism, heterosexuality and “pathological” forms of sexuality** whose **homosexuality** would be part. The object of concern would be the legal translation of this “leveling” that is therefore the legal recognition of same-sex marriage and same-sex parenting¹¹⁶”.*

The argumentation of Benedict XVI also passes through the concept of nature created by God, which cannot be denied:

¹¹⁴ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the dignity and vocation of women on the occasion of the Marian Year, (1988), Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html, (accessed on 5 July 2018)

¹¹⁵ Trans. by Roxane Misk, Original : « Pour éviter toute suprématie de l'un ou de l'autre sexe, on tend à leurs différences, prises comme des effets simples d'un conditionnement historique et culturel. Dans ce nivelage, la différence corporelle, appelée sexe, est minimisée, tandis que la dimension purement culturelle, appelée genre, est soulignée au maximum et considérée comme primordiale. L'occultation de la différence ou de la dualité des sexes a des conséquences énormes à divers niveaux. Une telle anthropologie, qui entendait favoriser des visées égalitaires pour la femme en la libérant de toute déterminisme biologique, a inspiré en réalité des idéologies qui promeuvent par exemple la mise en question de la famille, par nature biparentale, c'est-à-dire composée d'un père et d'une mère, ainsi que la mise sur le même plan l'homosexualité et l'hétérosexualité, un modèle nouveau de sexualité polymorphe », in Ratzinger, J., La collaboration de l'homme et de la femme dans l'Église et dans le monde: Lettre de la Congrégation pour la doctrine de la foi aux évêques de l'Église catholique, n°2320 :775, n°2, (2004), in Carnac, R., (2013), op. cit. p. 135

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*

“[The Church] must not only defend the earth, water and air as gifts of creation belonging to all. (...) The tropical forests deserve, indeed, our protection, but human does not deserve it less as a creature. (...) It is necessary that there exists something like an ecology of human, understood in a right way¹¹⁷”

Many authors rely on this discourse analysis that we have just presented. However, other authors analyzed discourses from Benedict XVI, such as Marlene Lapulus. In her article “*Femicide: how the discourse on gender theory enters in the definitional arena of violence against women in Mexico*”, she confronts two discourses corpus. The first is the one from two Mexican feminist intellectuals, Marcela Lagarde and Julia Monarrez, and the second, the one from Benedict XVI and various Mexican religious authorities and associations. Thus, she proposes to identify the *enunciative strategies* that underlie the counter-definition that the Catholic and some elites ‘speech built around femicide and violence against women¹¹⁸.

II.4. Relevance of social-constructivist approach: research question

The state of art operated above enabled us to review the reception of *gender studies* by the Catholic Church, and more broadly, to understand its relationship with the Holy See and its various components since the two previous pontificates. This allows us both to highlight the Holy See's strategy of deconstruction of the *gender* notion through the reconstruction of its definition made possible by the discourses, but also to understand the evolution of the position of the previous popes regarding women's issues and sexual issues. The essentialist and naturalist argument are the guideline that makes the Church able to counter and to avoid any evolution in the analysis of the sexes and their social role.

As a first step, this strategy is being used on several levels: within international organizations at Conferences about equality between men and women since 1975; within the Holy See, which harmonizes its discourse and internationalizes it thanks to the popes' interventions on the international scene; within anti-*gender* associations such as *VigiGender*, which intervenes

¹¹⁷ Trans. By Roxane Misk, Original: “[L'Eglise] ne doit pas seulement défendre la terre, l'eau et l'air comme des dons de la création appartenant à tous. (...) Les forêts tropicales méritent, en effet, notre protection, mais l'homme ne la mérite pas moins en tant que créature. (...) Il est nécessaire qu'il existe quelque chose comme une écologie de l'homme, comprise de manière juste.”, in Benoit XVI, Discours du Saint Père devant la Curie à l'occasion des Vœux de Noël, (2008), in Carnac., R., (2013), *op.cit.*, p. 137

¹¹⁸ Lapalus, M., “Féminicide: comment le discours sur « la théorie du genre » entre dans l'arène définitionnelle de la violence contre les femmes aux Mexique”, in Van Der Dussen, S., Piette V., Paternotte D., (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 200

directly in schools; in the literature through the production of writings and commentaries by Catholics “*gender experts*” such as Monsignor Tony Anatrella.

If agents are extremely diversified, their definition of *gender* and their alarmist message related to the danger it represents are identical. Therefore, they reduce the concept of *gender* to the *gender theory or ideology* that includes:

- (1) The imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is supposed to be only biological.
- (2) The reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage.
- (3) The danger of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples.

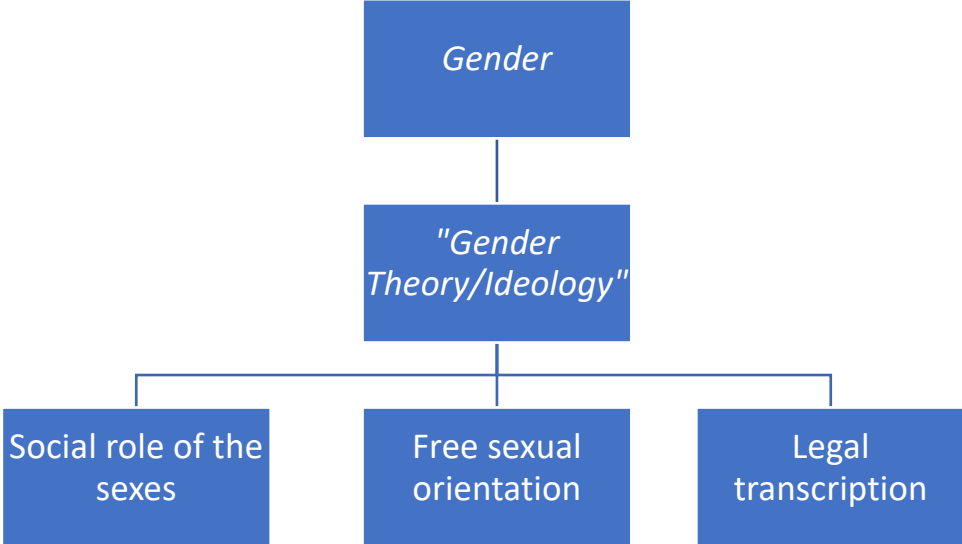


Figure 1: Mapping of the construction of a *gender*'s definition by the Church

To implement these definitions, several techniques are also mobilized. Indeed, through language and discursive strategy, Church attacks:

- (1) The “unscientific”, “vague”, and “floating” nature of *gender*
- (2) The “ambiguous” character of the word *theory* in the social sciences
- (3) The “Western domination” character of *sexual orientation*, *gender identity* and the *social construction of sexes* where homosexuality that is presented as an “anomaly”.

This contributes to the construction of a lexical field of controversy and imposition from those who attack the foundations of the Church, which justifies the need to defend oneself, to avoid the harmful consequences for the whole society.

The interests hidden behind this strategy seem political. In this way, the Church seeks to reintegrate the international debate in an increasingly secularized society. If the secularization of society implies a diminution of the power of the Church on the international scene, would the struggle of representations not be a political stake and of power? In any case, the Holy See is positioned as an actor that must be considered on the international scene, reinforced by its allies and a leader who, since two pontificates, perpetuates a negative image of the notion of *gender*.

Before concluding on the relevance of this theoretical approach, it is important to note the last point that social-constructivism has allowed us to develop, namely what we expect by *gender*. Indeed, we have never stopped highlighting the possible “deconstruction” of this concept by the Church, without however deeply defining what this concept would cover. The purpose of this thesis is in not to oppose a “true” definition of *gender*, elaborated by academics, to a “false” definition of *gender*, elaborated by the Church. First, it would not be a scientific procedure. Second, trying to develop a “real” definition of *gender* is an impossible undertaking, given that it is an extremely debated concept within the literature itself, which takes different forms and interpretations depending on the authors. This is what makes *gender studies* extremely rich and diversified, particularly in terms of the number of subjects they cover.

The purpose of this thesis is to treat *gender* as it is understood by the Church. It is nevertheless a question of defining it “to a certain extent”, given that the understanding of the concepts mobilized here is fundamental for the rest of our analysis, but also for the elaboration of our hypothesis to come. Moreover, the literature review also allows us to deduce a kind of definition on which all the authors seem to agree on when we have been confronted with different understandings. As such, Brigitte Esteve-Bellebeau and Arnaud Alessandrin explain in their collective book:

"How could a text that claims to speak of gender contain articles that elevate the notion to the rank of a concept not carry the famous "gender theory"? Such seems to be the paradox posed by this book and overcome by these authors (...) If it is a question of gender in this work, it is more accurate, however, to speak of genders, that is to say theoretical constructions elaborated from this notion. (...) The multiplicity of both theoretical practices and studies using this concept cannot be called gender theory, because it would be to reduce to a single elaboration, a single intellectual orientation, a cultural swarming that never ceases to generate new questions¹¹⁹".

¹¹⁹ Trans. by Roxane Misk : « Comment un texte qui prétend parler du genre, contient des articles qui élèvent la notion au rang de concept pourrait-il ne pas être porteur de la fameuse « théorie du genre » ?! Tel semble être le paradoxe posé par ce livre et surmonté par ces auteurs (...) S'il est question du genre dans cet ouvrage, il est plus

This is confirmed by the interventions of academics, such as Eric Fassin, Bruno Perreau or Roland Pfefferkorn, who explain that a unified “*gender theory*” does not exist, at least not if the question is to reduce the *gender* concept to a single theory:

“The “gender theory” exists only in the minds of opponents of equal rights. This belief is based on the fantasy that sex and sexuality could be determined by a simple discourse... The opponents of “gender theory” prefer to imagine enemies whose project would be to abolish all social - even anatomical - distinctions between men and women. They deliberately confuse equality with identity, [and] difference with hierarchy. And to better convince, they back their reasoning to a nationalist discourse, the “gender theory” necessarily coming from the United States¹²⁰”. – Bruno Perreau

“It is neither a doctrine nor an ideology, it is a field of work that questions social representations linked to gender differences¹²¹”. – Roland Pfefferkorn

“Gender is a concept. It is not a theory or an ideology, but a tool that helps people to think¹²²”. – Eric Fassin

Above, we mentioned the fact that, at the very least, the *gender* concept cannot be reduced to one single theory. This is explained by the fact that even though some authors believe that “*gender theory*” does not exist, probably referring to the definition actually used by the Church, some authors nevertheless use this formula in the scientific literature. Thus, Anthony Favier indicates that for “*Christine Delphy, ‘gender theory’ would be patriarchy, for Judith Butler's*

juste cependant de parler des genres c’est-à-dire des constructions théoriques élaborées à partir de cette notion. (...) On ne peut nommer théorie du genre la multiplicité tant des pratiques théoriques que des études utilisant ce concept, car se serait vouloir réduire à une seule élaboration, une unique orientation intellectuelle un fourmillement culturel qui ne cesse d’engendrer de nouvelles questions », in ALESSANDRIN, A., et ESTEVE-BELLEBEAU (*dir.*) Genre! L’essentiel pour comprendre, Paris, Editions « Des ailes sur un tracteur », (2014), p. 19

¹²⁰ Trans. by Roxane Misk: “« La "théorie du genre" n'existe que dans la tête des opposants à l'égalité des droits. Cette croyance repose sur le fantasme selon lequel le sexe et la sexualité pourraient être déterminés par un simple discours.(...) Les adversaires de la "théorie du genre" préfèrent imaginer des ennemis, dont le projet serait d'abolir toutes les distinctions sociales - voire anatomiques - entre hommes et femmes. Ils confondent à dessein égalité et identité, différence et hiérarchie. Et pour mieux convaincre, ils adossent leur raisonnement à un discours nationaliste, la " théorie du genre " venant nécessairement des Etats-Unis », in Battaglia, M., "Théorie du genre", "études sur le genre" : quelle différence ? », *Le Monde*, 22/04/2013, Available online : http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/ecole-primaire-et-secondaire/article/2013/04/22/theorie-du-genre-etudes-sur-le-genre-quelle-difference_3163940_1473688.html, (accessed on 25/05/2018)).

¹²¹ Trans. by Roxane Misk: « Ce n’est ni une doctrine, ni une idéologie, c'est un champ de travail qui interroge les représentations sociales liées aux différences de sexe », in Pfefferkorn, R., “Sexe et genre. De quoi parle-t-on ? Pourquoi une campagne dénonçant une supposée ‘théorie du genre’ s’est-t-elle développée via sms..”, *Hal Archives ouvertes*, (2014), p. 2, (<https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01294721/document>)

¹²² Trans. by Roxane Misk: Eric Fassin : « le genre est un concept. Ce n’est pas une théorie ni une idéologie, mais un outil qui aide à penser », in Soullier, L., Roucaute, D., *Le Monde*, “Masculin-Féminin : cinq idées reçues sur les études de genre”, Available online : https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2013/05/25/masculin-feminin-cinq-idees-recues-sur-les-etudes-de-genre_3174157_3224.html, (accessed on 25/05/2018)

*'gender theory' would be performativity*¹²³". Here, we see how this formula can however designate a precise concept, developed, understood and interpreted by a particular author, discussing a concept in a field of scientific study. As we have mentioned, the aim is not to take stock of scientific discussions on *gender* itself, but rather to highlight the "plural nature" of this concept, which the aim is not to impose a 'fixed ideology', but rather to allow reflection on the notion of the social role of the sexes and the way in which they are constructed. In light of this information, we will consider ***gender as a scope of studies, a general axis of method***¹²⁴, **allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction.**

To conclude this section, the social-constructivist approach is relevant for addressing *gender* issues and the Church. Nevertheless, this theoretical approach is singled out by its consideration of various actors, and this is confirmed in the works analyzed above that deal with the Church and its components in the broad sense. Since our main actor is clearly identified, we would like to go further in this notion of actor, in order to understand the power he exercises through speeches. This is not highlighted in the social-constructivist approach, or at least in view of the information we have founded. For this reason, we do not completely reject this theoretical approach, but wish to go further, using the post-structuralist approach to focus on the unique study of the discourses of the new pope in office, Pope Francis.

Finally, this section allows us to elaborate our research question: **"How does Pope Francis represent and relay the *Gender* concept in his international discourses?"**, but also the premises of our analysis axes, which will be based on the definition of *gender* by the Church we identified.

¹²³ Trans. by Roxane Misk : « (...) la « théorie du genre » chez Christine Delphy serait le patriarcat, la théorie du genre » chez Judith Butler serait la performativité » (...), in Favier, A., "La réception catholique des études de genre : Une approche historique, en contexte francophone... Le genre, approches dépassionnées d'un débat", *HAL Archives ouvertes*, (2012), p. 8 (<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00765786>)

¹²⁴ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., (2008), *op. cit.* p. 8

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FROM FOUCAULT TO POPE FRANCIS

III.1. Relevance of the Post-Structuralist approach: discourses as material tools of power

Post-Structuralism is often connected to the theoretical positions developed *in* and *from* the work of Althusser, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, and Foucault. Even though this theoretical approach consists of different practices and political applications, several fundamental assumptions are shared about language, meanings and subjectivity¹²⁵. These elements are mobilized in *discourses*, in which “*certain accepted ‘facts’ and beliefs’ actually work to reinforce the dominance and power of particular actors within International Relations*¹²⁶”. Indeed, this theoretical approach allows for an analysis of the world and International Relations that questions what is accepted as “*truth*” or “*knowledge*”. Moreover, truths and knowledge, that could be transformed in universal laws, are seen by poststructuralists as a set of interpretations that actually shape the world. In this regard, Foucault wrote that “*we must not imagine the world turns toward us as legible face which we would only have to decipher*¹²⁷”.

This introduces the criticism and skepticism that researchers must exercise, both toward theories that claim to be able to identify objective facts and toward universal messages that claim to offer objective view of the world or a universal truth. These truths are in fact the result of the influence of pre-existing hypotheses of what truth or knowledge are, which turn out to be subjective entities that are not *discovered*, but *produced*. Critics are therefore focused on the lack of consideration for the diversity of international relations by certain theories, but also on the notion of power, which is understood as the power imposed by certain actors, known as 'elites', on others to make them accept this “knowledge” they build¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ Weedon, C., *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*, Cambridge and Oxford, Basil Blackwell, (1987), p. 20

¹²⁶ Mc Morrow, A., “Postructuralism”, in McGlinchey, S., Walters, R., Gold, D., (dir.), *International Relations Theory*, E-International Relations, England, (2017), p. 56

¹²⁷ Foucault, M. “The Order of Discourse”, in Shapiro, M., *Language and Politics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, (1984), p. 127, in, *Mc Morrow, A.*, (2017), *op. cit.*, p. 56

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*

These elites are multiple and have different roles in society. They can either be government ministers, business leaders, media, from the moment they influence society by the choices they make. It can also be Church¹²⁹, since elites could be seen as “*experts within society, giving them the authority to further reinforce their viewpoints that serve their best interests to a wide audience*”¹³⁰. Moreover, post-structuralists stress the authority of the elites, who puts it into practice by manipulating discourses to increase their power. Thus, discourses able to increase power are called *official*, or *dominant*. Their strength is their ability to oust other discourses, options or opinions, which are thus seen as irrational¹³¹, or as we have seen previously, unscientific.

Language is a central notion of poststructuralist approach, because it creates and perpetuates the dominant discourse. Moreover, it is composed of *binary oppositions* which are hierarchical pairs. In these binary oppositions, one element of the pair is emphasized and favored over the other. This provides the creation or perpetuation of meanings¹³². That reminds us the famous *Lexicon* written by *VigiGender*, which opposed two terms supposed to be “synonyms”, one being part of the column “language of reality”, the other in the “language of *gender*” column. We can observe a hierarchy made between the pairs, by having one favorable or preferred meaning, and one considered as irrational, or at least “not true”. This is a good example of one of the most common binary opposition, that establishes two different groups in term of “us” – here, these parents marked with Christianity, fighting *gender* and being part of the “language of reality” – versus “them”, namely the supporters of *gender*, who created the “language of *gender*”.

Finally, the last important element to highlight about post-structuralism is:

“its ability to not only identify and uncover power relations that dictate political events but also make space for alternative discourses to emerge that can also affect the course of events. By examining elite actors, we can see how commonly accepted facts about the political system are not ‘natural’ but, instead, constructed in order to favour a dominant discourse”¹³³.

¹²⁹ Weedon, C., (1987), op. cit., p. 35

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56-57

¹³¹ *Ibidem*

¹³² *Ibidem*

¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 68

III.2. Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Norms, Sexuality and Gender

Chris Weedon, in “Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory”, explains that “*a theory is useful if it is able to address the question of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed. This implies a concern with history, absent from many poststructuralist perspectives but central to the work of Michel Foucault*¹³⁴” Indeed, Michel Foucault is known for his work and historical analyzes on how power is exercised, and the way the criminal system, psychiatry and more importantly, the control of sexuality govern individuals¹³⁵. Moreover, discourses are not only:

*“ways of thinking and producing meanings, they constitute the “nature” of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects to which they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings **have meaning outside their discursive articulation**, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases*¹³⁶”.

Foucault worked on the discursive production of homosexuality as a subject position that he analyzed in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1.*, whose aim is “*to define the regime of power-knowledge-please*¹³⁷, *sustaining the discourse on human sexuality in the West*¹³⁸”. In fact:

*“There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of **homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and 'psychic hermaphroditism'** made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of 'perversity'; but also made possible the formation of a 'reverse' discourse: **homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturalness'** be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified*¹³⁹”.

Indeed, the body and sexuality are central elements in the work of the philosopher, who does not focus solely on the perception and the meaning of the body, but also “*the manner in which what the most material and most vital in them has been invested*¹⁴⁰”. Thus, “*sex has become a*

¹³⁴ Weedon, C., (1987), *op cit.*, p. 20

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108

¹³⁷ Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, (1979), p. 11, in Weedon, C., (1987), *op cit.*, p. 118

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119

focal point of the exercise of power through the discursive constitution of the body [but also] a focal point in subjective identity¹⁴¹”.

The analysis of Foucault's work is relevant for two reasons. First, because his work allowed the emergence of critical works, including feminist works, from academics who developed sexuality politics in the theoretical field. This allowed sexuality and *gender* to belong in the public area, while they were mainly considered as being part of the private area. Second, Foucault's works are related to those of Judith Butler, who is also a theoretician of *gender*, body and sexuality and considered by the opponent of *gender* as the “*female pope of the ideology they denounce*¹⁴²”. Butler's angle of analysis is the rejection of the notion of *gender* identity, but also of a stable sexual orientation¹⁴³. She advocates the notion of “performance” and “performativity”.

Indeed, these two notions are explained in her famous book *Gender Trouble. Feminism and subversion of identity*, published in 1990, in which she proposes a “*genealogical criticism of gender, in ‘Foucauldian’ comprehension*¹⁴⁴”. Thus:

*“To expose the foundational categories of sex, gender, and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a form of critical inquiry that Foucault, reformulating Nietzsche, designates as “genealogy.” A **genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender, the inner truth of female desire, a genuine or authentic sexual identity that repression has kept from view; rather, genealogy investigates the political stakes in designating as an origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin. The task of this inquiry is to center on—and decenter—such defining institutions: phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality***¹⁴⁵.

As such, compulsory heterosexuality is seen as a norm, participating to the construction of *identity categories*, which is actually produced by *institution, practices and discourses*. This is relevant regarding the compulsory heterosexuality imposed by the institution of the Church as a ‘natural’ norm, relayed in the discourses of its components.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*

¹⁴² Paternotte, D., “Habemus Gender! Autopsie d’une obsession vaticane, *Sextant*, Vol. 31, (2015), p. 19

¹⁴³ Thiel, M., « Queer Theory », in, McGlinchey, S., Walters, R., Gold, D., (dir.), *International Relations Theory, E-International Relations*, England, (2017), p. 98

¹⁴⁴ Jami, I., “Judith Butler, théoricienne du genre”, *Cahiers du Genre*, N °44, (2008), p. 208-209

¹⁴⁵ Butler, J., *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London, Routledge, (1990), p.xxix (Preface), (221 pp.)

Hence, Judith Butler uses “*genealogical and anti-naturalistic approach*”¹⁴⁶:

- (1) To introduce the notion of *performance* and *gender performativity* that she will explore in *Bodies That Matters*¹⁴⁷ in 1993;
- (2) To theorize “*identity as dialectic, in permanent construction*”¹⁴⁸;
- (3) To present “*homosexual and heterosexual identities as unstable*”¹⁴⁹.

She differentiated the two notions by defining that:

- (1) performance must “*substitute “essence” for a better understanding of the nature of identities*”¹⁵⁰ and “*presupposes the prior existence of a subject*”¹⁵¹,
- (2) performativity “*is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration*”¹⁵² and “*challenges the very notion of the subject*”¹⁵³.

To resume, concepts have to be understood as dependent of the behavior and that:

*“behavior can generally be understood as the performance of well-established social norms. The roles played by our body are fully informed and regulated by discursive disciplinary regimes which, in turn, use these performances to justify the established pattern, while claiming to deny the performative component”*¹⁵⁴.

¹⁴⁶ Jami, I., (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 215

¹⁴⁷ Butler, J., *Bodies That Matters*, Routledge, New York and London, (1993), 288 pp.

¹⁴⁸ Jami, I., (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 215

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*

¹⁵⁰ Kharoubi, L., “Judith Butler: performance et performativité”, *Labo LAPS*, (2014)

¹⁵¹ Jami, I., (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 209

¹⁵² Butler, J., (1990), *op. cit.*, p. xv.

¹⁵³ Jami, I., (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 209

¹⁵⁴ Kharoubi, L., *op. cit.*, (2014)

III.3. Pope Francis and the ‘Regime of Truth’

The two previous sections lead us to the precise theory that we will use in the analysis that will follow, and which will be the point of reference for the rest of this work. In fact, we would like to use the concept of “Regime of Truth” developed by Michel Foucault, whose concepts have already been explained in the first section concerning the relevance of post-structuralism. In this case, the articulation of elites, dominant discourse and the power of the language shaped by the binary oppositions constitute together the “Regime of Truth”, because they allow the creation of a truth that “*that serves the interest of the favored actors*¹⁵⁵”. Moreover, “*this model applies to the ruling discourse that operates unquestioned within society, masquerading as the truth or fact*¹⁵⁶”.

This concept is developed in *Discipline and Punish*¹⁵⁷, but also in “The political function of the intellectual”, an interview given in 1976, in which Foucault said: “*truth is not outside the power, or deprived power (...) truth is created by the virtue of multiple constraints and the effects of power*¹⁵⁸. Daniele Lorenzini explains in his article that:

“Before 1980, the concept of regime of truth clearly refers to the well-known **circularity Foucault establishes between power and knowledge**: we should speak of a 'regime' of truth because truth is produced, sustained, valorized and regulated by a series of mechanisms, techniques and procedures that are 'political' (...) and at the same time truth itself reinforces and induces effects of power. A regime of truth is thus the strategic field within which truth is produced and becomes a tactical element in the functioning of a certain number of power relations¹⁵⁹”.

Later, Foucault refines his concept, in particular by linking it with the dimension of *subjectivity*, but also by “*putting it at the heart of his historical study of Christianity*¹⁶⁰”. To conclude, Lorenzini highlights the possible *free-examunist* dimension of this concept, by showing us that:

¹⁵⁵ Mc Morrow, A., (2017), p. 58

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*

¹⁵⁷ Foucault, M., *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, New York, Vintage books, (1977), 334 pp.

¹⁵⁸ Lorenzini, D., “What is a ‘Regime of Truth’?”, *Le Foucauldien*, 1/1, (2015), p. 2

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2-3

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

*“We are **not obliged to accept the scientific or epistemological regime of truth**, and more importantly that we are not obliged to **shape our subjectivity and our way of life on it**. On the contrary, we should try to choose other values (...) on which to shape ourselves. The idea that truth gives us no choice, that truth necessarily forces us to accept it and build up our conduct in accordance to it, is **an extremely dangerous ethico-political trap** (...)”¹⁶¹”.*

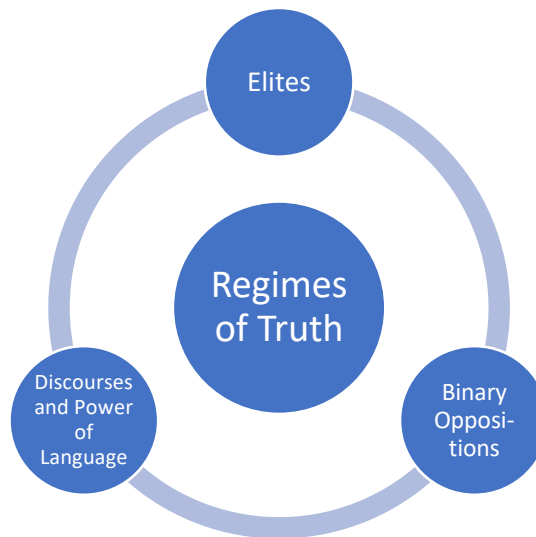


Figure 2: ‘Regime of Truth’ – Foucault

If Post-Structuralism’s main purpose is to question what is perceived as ‘truth’, conveyed by dominant discourses of certain elites, we will not question this theory that we have chosen as a reference for the understanding and analyzing of Pope Francis’s discourses. Indeed, we will especially use the ‘Regime of Truth’, developed by Foucault for the analysis that will follow. Here, Pope Francis will be the elite who tries to impose the power of the Church institution through binary oppositions that shape the language of his discourses. This ‘Regime of Truth’ applied to our research question is relevant regarding the fact that this theory emphasizes the strategic field in which truth is produced. This is directly connected to the strategy of the Church to deconstruct the *gender* by constructing a new definition of it and thus, try to implement what it considers as true.

This leads us to the refinement of our research question, which turns into our central question: **“How does Pope Francis build his Truth of *gender*, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”**.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

Hence, the hypothesis we will try to verify in the analysis of the discourses of Pope Francis is: **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the *gender* concept through the construction of his Truth of *gender*”**.

IV. METHODOLOGY

IV.1. Methodological approach of discourses: “discourse productivity”

In our research, we have chosen to understand discourse through the notion of “productivity”, as Milliken explains it: “*Discourse productivity: the second theoretical commitment is to discourses as being productive (or reproductive) of things defined by the discourse. The point here is that beyond giving a language for speaking about (analyzing, classifying) phenomena, discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular regime of truth while excluding other possible modes of identity and action*¹⁶²”.

Our approach will therefore be to determine who the elite is and how its authority is reflected in the discourse. We are aware that the elite, which must be understood through Foucault's ‘Regime of Truths’, has already been identified in the person of the Pope, and this is the analysis of his discourses. But as we will see shortly afterwards, a document that is part of our empirical material reflects a certain vision of the Church, and more particularly of the clerics and bishops, even if it is a discourse of the Pope. Our approach will be to ask ourselves what language is used through the words chosen to form the discourse, and who/what is included or excluded from that discourse, and thus to identify a group of people, actions or discourse that would be considered as opposing the official and dominant discourse. Moreover, we will ask ourselves what is the relationship between people, and how these relationships define them and their role in society, thus constituting a representation of reality considered as “true”. Finally, we will try to identify binary oppositions, namely what is considered as “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. abnormal, “good” vs. “evil” or “us” vs. “them”.

We have chosen to divide the structure of the analysis into three axes. The first axis is entitled “*Gender theory/ideology*”, the second “*Men and women's representation*” and the third “*Freedom of sexual orientation and human rights*”. These three axes are based on the Church's definition of *gender*, which we have identified in the state of art. Indeed, the strategy of

¹⁶² Milliken, J., “The Study of Discourse in International Relations”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2), (1999), p. 229

deconstruction of the *gender* concept by the Holy See and its components first passed through the transformation of the concept of *gender* into the “*gender theory*” or “*gender ideology*”. That is why we chose to name the first axis in this way, in order to verify whether we could indeed detect a special language emerging around this “*gender theory*” axis, or if there was room for the word *gender* without being juxtaposed with the word “theory” and “ideology” in Pope Francis’s discourses. The notions of representation of men and women, and of free sexual orientation and human rights also cover elements of the Church's definition of *gender*. Indeed, all these themes are approached together, in mirror or juxtaposed, under the aegis of this famous *gender theory*. We will try to understand how these themes fit together, in order to test our hypothesis

IV.2. Case selection and temporality

In our analysis, we will mobilize discourses that were delivered between 2013 and 2018, even if most of the selected discourses date from 2016 and 2017. This temporality covers the pontificate of Pope Francis, elected on 13 March 2013. Moreover, our corpus of texts amounts 388 pages. Indeed, we used a particular document: the *Amoris Laetitia*. This brings us to the need to define what we mean by “discourse”. Our corpus of text includes:

- Discourses that can be considered as “classical”, which are entitled “*Addresses*”;
- Press Conferences given in planes, on the occasion of flights that brought Pope Francis back to Rome after an official trip;
- “Interviews”. We put the word interview into brackets because the title of the document is also entitled “*Addresses*”, but it is more an exchange, questions and answers between Pope Francis and the Polish bishops on the one hand, and the Pope and the International Union of Superior General on the other;
- General Audience, which is the Pope's meeting with those who wish to listen to him, and which takes place every Wednesday in St Peter's Square in Rome;
- Homely, which is a commentary following a reading a scripture during Mass.
- Press articles containing the Pope's words. At the beginning, we wanted to avoid press articles, and try as much as possible to find the entire official speeches. Nevertheless, the withdrawal of a sentence pronounced by Pope Francis at a press conference in the flight back from Ireland caused the need to use press articles that transcribed this sentence;

- And finally, the *Amoris Laetitia*, the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, which is our most important document, consisting of 264 pages. The *Amoris Laetitia* dates from the 19th of March 2016 and was published on 8th April of the same year, following two synods on the family held in 2014 and 2015, which consist of deliberative meetings of clerics whose aim is to reflect on the main branches of Christianity. It is composed of nine chapters, and is about love in the family. Finally, it is addressed “to bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful”¹⁶³, even if it is accessible to all on the official website of the Holy See, which gathers all the speeches delivered by Pope Francis and the previous popes, but also the biographies, photos, videos and social networks of the Pope and various members of the Roman Curia. It seemed relevant to select this text which we consider as a discourse. Firstly, because it is considered as a message to the whole community of the faithful, inviting them to follow this common vision that has emerged from the two synods. Secondly, because it reflects the Pope's conclusion on the theme of family, marriage, men and women and sexuality, namely on love. Thirdly, because Pope Francis appealed to the opinions of the faithful throughout the world through questionnaires distributed in bishoprics and churches.

If we have evoked the temporality and the nature of the texts that we consider as discourses, it remains for us to approach the subject of space. Indeed, since our problematic concerns the question of how Pope Francis constructs or deconstructs, *gender* on the international scene, we wanted to mobilize speeches delivered on each continent. We have managed to gather speeches delivered in the Vatican, Ireland, Brazil, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Italy, Poland, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. We regret that we have not achieved our objective, even though some speeches have been delivered in airplanes, which could give a broader, perhaps even transnational, character to our corpus of texts¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶³ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁶⁴ Cf. the overview of texts in Appendix

V. DISCOURSES ANALYSIS: HOW DOES POPE FRANCIS BUILD HIS TRUTH ABOUT *GENDER* CONCEPT, BASED ON FOUCAULT’S ‘REGIME OF TRUTH’?

The purpose of this section is to test our hypothesis through the empirical analysis of the Popes' discourses that we will operate. For this, we have chosen to define three axes, whose titles are related to a dimension of *gender* as it is constructed by the Church. Indeed, we have highlighted in the state of the art the way in which the Church constructs its definition of *gender* by juxtaposing it directly with the “*theory of gender*”. The latter covers the imposition of the concept of social construction of the sexes and their role, the free choice of your identity which is not especially based on biological sex, a free sexual orientation and the need to translate it legally. While it was necessary to delineate axes to facilitate the empirical analysis and the verification of our hypotheses, axes are not watertight. In fact, we will see how these axes are interconnected in Pope Francis’s discourses and how this contributes to the reinforcement of the meanings attributed to these different notions and, in the long run, to the construction of a truth through a dominant discourse that is intended to be relatively homogeneous.

V.1. Axiological analysis: Pope Francis and the *gender* trinity

V.1.1. Axe 1: ‘Gender Theory’ and ‘Gender Ideology’

V.1.1.1. The “Gender theory”: an “ideological colonization”

On the 19th of January 2015, upon his return from his trip to Sri Lanka and the Philippines, Pope Francis mentioned the “*gender theory*” in a discourse for one of the first times ever. He explained during an interview on the plane what he meant by “ideological colonization” and how “*gender theory*” is an example of it. To do so, he told a story of a woman who has agreed to introduce a certain book into the program in exchange for funds to open a school for the poor.

*“Ideological colonization. I’ll give just one example that I saw myself. Twenty years ago, in 1995, a minister of education asked for a large loan to build schools for the poor. They gave it to her on the condition that in the schools there would be a **book for the children** of a certain grade level. It was a school book, a well-thought-out book, didactically speaking, in which gender theory was taught. This woman needed the money but that*

was the condition. Clever woman, she said yes and made another book as well and gave both of them. And that's how it happened¹⁶⁵.

The beginning of the extract is interesting from several points of view. First, it makes this story real by placing himself as a witness through the “*that I saw myself*”. The elite is directly present in the discourse, which gives it legitimacy and even authority. Then the woman in question is called “*clever*”, who has chosen to accept an agreement in exchange for money. He goes on, by defining what he considers “ideological colonization” to be.

“This is ideological colonization. They introduce an idea to the people that has nothing to do with the people. (...) And they colonize the people with an idea which changes, or means to change, a mentality or a structure. (...) Why do I say “ideological colonization”? Because they take, they actually take the need of a people to seize an opportunity to enter and grow strong — through the children. But this is nothing new. The same was done by the dictatorships of the last century. They entered with their own doctrine. Think of the (...) Hitler Youth.... They colonized the people, they wanted to do it. So much suffering — peoples must not lose their freedom. Each people has its own culture, its own history. Every people has its own culture. But when conditions are imposed by colonizing empires, they seek to make these peoples lose their own identity and create uniformity¹⁶⁶”.

Colonization is therefore done through ideas that are inserted into minds through a strategy that uses children. The language used is extremely violent in view of the analogy he makes with the words “dictatorship”, “Hitler Youth”, “suffering”, “empires”, “loss of freedom”, and thus constitutes a warlike language. The consequence would be “the loss of identity”, and the imposition of “uniformity”. In addition, Pope Francis uses the same analogy to the dictatorships of the 20th century that was noted in the speech of an important actor of the Church under John Paul II, Monsignor Anatrella, which constitutes a continuity in the speech. Finally, the use of “they”, repeated several times, marks an opposition between “us” versus “them”, it is a binary opposition that places the other as an enemy that tries to “colonize us”. The extract ends with the notion of globalization, also mentioned in the introduction:

“This is spherical globalization — all points are equidistant from the center. And true globalization — I like to say this — is not a sphere. It is important to globalize, but not like the sphere but rather, like the polyhedron. Namely that each people, every part,

¹⁶⁵ In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from the Philippines to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and The Philippines, Papal Flight, 19/01/2015, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁶⁶ In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from the Philippines to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and The Philippines, Papal Flight, 19/01/2015, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

preserves its identity without being ideologically colonized. This is 'ideological colonization'¹⁶⁷.

Indeed, it refers to the globalization that the Pope criticizes. We saw that conversely, he wanted to highlight the peripheries. Finally, the link with identity is strengthened, so “*gender theory*” would imply a violent imposition of a certain identity.

The second extract chosen is a meeting between the Pope and Polish Bishops that took place on 27 July 2016, during the Pope's visit to Krakow for the World Youth Days. Pope Francis continues his implementation of the definition of “*gender theory*”, which he links again with the education of children.

“In Europe, America, Latin America, Africa, and in some countries of Asia, there are genuine forms of ideological colonization taking place. And one of these - I will call it clearly by its name – is [the ideology of] “gender”. Today children – children! – are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the persons and institutions that give you money. These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this is terrible!”¹⁶⁸ ”.

He uses a figure of insistence by repeating the word “children” twice, as for insisting on the gravity and dangerousness of this ideological colonization. “*Gender ideology*” is defined as the choice of one’s sex. Moreover, the word “money” and “influential countries” refer to this strategy that we have been referring to since the beginning, which consists in situating “*gender theory*” as a Western influence.

“*Gender theory*” is linked in discourse to children and identity but also to families. This will be repeated several times in his interventions, including at a meeting between the Pope and families that took place in Naples on 21 March 2015.

“The family is in crisis: this is true and it’s not news. (...) The crisis of the family is a societal fact. There are also ideological colonializations of the family, different paths

¹⁶⁷ In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from the Philippines to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and The Philippines, Papal Flight, 19/01/2015, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁶⁸ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis in meeting with the polish bishops, *Apostolic journey to Poland on the occasion of the XXXI World Youth Day*, Cathedral of Kraków, 27/07/2016, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco_20160727_polonia-vescovi.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

*and proposals in Europe and also coming from overseas. Then, there is **the mistake of the human mind — gender theory — creating so much confusion. So, the family really is under attack. What can we do in this active secularization? What can we do with ideological colonialization?***¹⁶⁹”.

We can again detect extremely negative language a lexical field of ‘danger’ with the words “crisis”, “mistake”, “confusion”, “under attack”. This attack is also geographically located as coming from “Europe” or “from overseas”, which makes us think of this threat “from the West”. Finally, he uses the word “true” to indicate that “family crisis” is a reality that cannot be questioned, and that this reality is extended to society since it is a “societal fact”.

He said the same in Tbilisi on 1 October 2016 during his trip to the Caucasus, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The difference between the two speeches is the audiences to which they are addressed. In this case, it is addressed to the local clergy, namely priests, religious, seminarians and pastoral workers.

*“(…) a **great enemy to marriage today: the theory of gender. Today there is a world war to destroy marriage. Today there are ideological colorizations which destroy, not with weapons, but with ideas. Therefore, there is a need to defend ourselves from ideological colorizations***¹⁷⁰”.

Here, “*theory of gender*” is defined as a “great enemy”. It is stressed by the words “destroy”, which is repeated two times, and the words “world war” and “weapons” that fall under the lexicon of war again. This construction of the “enemy”, destructive, which colonizes the minds with “ideas”, makes it possible to place oneself as a victim of this enemy, and thus the necessity and legitimacy to defend oneself. This is even stronger when we take into consideration the public to whom it is addressed: members of the Catholic Church. This discourse insists on the separation of two camps: “We” the Catholic Church, and marriage as we define it, victims of the world war that generates the “*theory of gender*”, versus “them”, those who attack us and destroy marriage with ideas. This refers to the binary oppositions, component of the 'Regime of Truth', which allows the establishment of an 'official' discourse, as illustrated here.

¹⁶⁹ Address of the Holy Father for the meeting with young people on the Caracciolo Seafront, Pastoral visit to Pompei and Naples, Naples, 21/03/2015, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150321_napoli-pompei-giovani.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁷⁰ Address of the Holy Father in a meeting with priests, religious, seminarians and pastoral workers, apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Tbilisi, 1/10/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161001_georgia-sacerdoti-religiosi.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018)

This time he links the “ideological colonization” that “*gender theory*” is to marriage. He will continue on this subject:

“Marriage is the most beautiful thing that God has created. The Bible tells us that God created man and woman, created them in his own image (cfr Gen 1:27). That is to say, the man and woman who become one flesh, are the image of God. (...) the difficulties that arise so often in marriage: the misunderstandings, the temptations. (...) It is true, there are more complex situations, when the devil gets involved and entices the man with another woman who seems more beautiful than his wife, or when the devil entices the woman with another man who seems better than her husband. Ask for help straightaway. When this temptation comes, ask for help immediately¹⁷¹”.

“Marriage” is put on a pedestal in that it is created by God and in His image. It is defined as the union of a “man and a woman”. We therefore understand, via the concept of binary opposition, that any configuration other than “male-female” is not possible concerning to marriage. “Complex situations”, “misunderstandings” and especially, “temptations”, are explained by the intervention of the “devil” who takes hold of men and women. The temptation for a man will be a “more beautiful” woman, while the temptation for a woman will be a “better man”. We observe here a definition of temptation in terms of beauty for the female sex, and in terms of “best” for the male sex. The sexes are therefore defined in terms that would be inherent to their sexes.

We will continue this analysis of the sexes representation and their roles in the following axis. Nevertheless, we chose to keep this extract in the “*gender theory*”/ “*gender ideology*” axis to show how *gender theory* was almost systematically linked to another axis. If we want to highlight this intertextuality in the discourse, we also wish to maintain a certain structure in our analysis, by trying to use a discourse only once as much as possible, just to keep in mind the spatio-temporal situation and not to have to recontextualize the extract each time. The only speech we will mobilize in each axis will be the “Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*” of the Holy Father to bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful on love in the family, dated 19th march 2016. Indeed, we consider it as a discourse because it was published following an episcopal synod, which brings together bishops from different parts of the world. It reflects the pope's conclusion on

¹⁷¹ Address of the Holy Father in a meeting with priests, religious, seminarians and pastoral workers, apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaidjan, Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Tbilisi, 1/10/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161001_georgia-sacerdoti-religiosi.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018)

the theme of the Synod on the family and the common vision that emerged from it. This is the reason why some parts of the extracts are already in quotation marks, because the Pope sometimes takes up ideas developed by bishops. If Pope Francis lends himself to the game of references, he nevertheless signs the paper which serves as the conclusion and a “ratification” of all the ideas which are developed there. This document is interesting in that it advocates engagement in a certain activity through a certain vision¹⁷². Finally, it reflects a certain collegiality and a culture of compromise between the Pope and the bishops, because it is the Pope who addresses the world, but this exhortation is the fruit of collective reflection. The last extract of this axis is as follows:

“Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family”¹⁷³.

“Gender ideology” is defined as a “challenge”, implying the idea that it must be overcome. For the first time, a clear definition is given, referring to the natural difference between a man and a woman by evoking “nature”, which refers to the biological argument used by the Church and previous popes. Using the formula “the anthropological basis of the family” suggests that *gender ideology/theory* attacks an institution that cannot be questioned, which refers to the authority that the elite has to implement in its discourse.

“This ideology leads to educational programs and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time”. It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated”¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷² Donata, G., “Qu’est-ce qu’une exhortation apostolique”, *La Croix Croire*, Available online : <https://croire.la-croix.com/Definitions/Lexique/Pape/Qu-est-ce-qu-une-exhortation-apostolique>, (accessed on 30/07/2018)

¹⁷³ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Pres, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 44 -45 (264 pp.)

¹⁷⁴ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Pres, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 44 -45

Again, there is a clear separation and opposition between the Pope's vision which promotes biological differentiation between the sexes, and this ideology which implies a personal choice of identity which, moreover, can evolve. He warns against the danger that the translation of this ideology into education or into law can provoke, presented as an argument of authority through the use of words “radically”, “absolute”, “unquestionable”, “dictating”. The last sentence is quite interesting. He concludes this extract by emphasizing the difference between the distinction and separation of the “biological sex” and the “socio-cultural role of sex”, namely “gender”. This is the first sentence in which he does not associate “gender” with “gender theory”, even though the ideology in question is present a few lines above. On the contrary, the word “gender” is associated with the definition “socio-cultural role of sex”, which seems to come close to the definition that academics have of “gender”. If it appears clearly in all his speeches that the Pope's line of conduct is an opposition to the *theory of gender*, he nevertheless seems to assimilate this notion in a more “neutral” way in this sentence. Nevertheless, accepting the idea of a distinction does not mean that he changes his point of view regarding the impossibility of separating biological and social sex.

V.1.1.2. Preliminary findings

This part allows us to verify that the concept of *gender* in Pope Francis can only be understood through the *theory of gender*, which consists of ideological colonization. Moreover, it is directly linked to the themes of marriage, as an attack to its foundations, and children, victims of this colonization. This allows us to test this strategy to include all of these topics under the aegis of the *gender theory*.

V.1.2. Axe 2: Men and Women's representation

The first extract of this axis is again a mix between the themes of family, representation of the sex and ideology. This time, the first two components are much more present. That is the reason why we chose to place this extract in the axis: men and women's representation. The Pope addresses this time to the International Catholic Church bureau (BICE), on 11 April 2014.

“On a positive note, we must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child's development and emotional maturity. Continuing to grow up and mature in a correct relationship represented by the masculinity and femininity of a father and a mother and thus preparing for affective maturity¹⁷⁵”.

The Pope attributes roles to the sexes through marriage. Thus, family can only consist of a father and a mother, the only possible configuration for the child's development which, according to him, proves to be a right for the child. He uses the words “reaffirm”, “correct relationship”, “represented by” “masculinity”, “femininity”, while the words “father” and “mother” appears two times. We are witnessing a construction of truth, through the definition and its implementation of what is a “correct relation”: a man and a woman. From the right of the child, he passes to the right of parents to choose the religious education of their offspring:

“At the same time, this implies supporting the right of parents to decide the moral and religious education of their children. And in this regard I would like to express my rejection of any kind of educational experimentation on children. We cannot experiment on children and young people. They are not lab specimens! The horrors of the manipulation of education that we experienced in the great genocidal dictatorships of the 20th century have not disappeared; they have retained a current relevance under various guises and proposals and, with the pretense of modernity, push children and young people to walk on the dictatorial path of “only one form of thought”. A little over a week ago a great teacher said to me... “At times with these projects — referring to actual educational projects — one doesn't know whether the child is going to school or to a reeducation camp¹⁷⁶”.

Here, “religious” or “moral” education, is opposed to “a kind of educational experimentation”, that is rejected by the elite. We recover the negative language and danger paradigm present in

¹⁷⁵ Address of Pope Francis to members of the International Catholic Bureau (BICE), Friday, 11 april 2014, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018), 3 pp.

¹⁷⁶ Address of Pope Francis to members of the International Catholic Bureau (BICE), Friday, 11 april 2014, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018), 3 pp.

the first axis: “lab specimens”, “horrors”, “manipulation”, “great genocidal dictatorships” “dictatorial path”, “reeducation camps”. While the Pope defines exactly and clearly the only possible form of marriage, and links it to a religious and moral education, which constitutes a line of conduct and his truth, he nevertheless points the finger at the “manipulation” of education that pushes children to a “only one form of thought”. This is, at the very least, paradoxical. Indeed, he denounces the imposition of a only one form of thought while he constructs, in the meantime, a fixed definition of only one form of marriage, namely between a man and a woman, which turns to be the truth.

He made the same point on the 2nd of October 2016, in front of journalists on the plane taking him back to Rome, following his apostolic journey in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

*“When we speak of marriage as a union between man and a woman, as God established it, as an **image of God**, it is a man and a woman. The **image of God is not the male: it is both man and woman. Together. They become one flesh when they are united in marriage. This is the truth. It is true that, in this culture, conflicts and any number of problems are not well handled, and there are also philosophies like “Today I’ll enter this [marriage], and when I get tired of it, I’ll enter another, then a third, then a fourth...” This is the “world war” against marriage you were talking about. We need to be careful not to let these ideas take hold in us. But first of all, marriage is the image of God, man and woman in one flesh. When this is destroyed, the image of God is “marred” or distorted**”¹⁷⁷.*

The definition of marriage is reaffirmed as one between man and woman only, as God created it. War language is still mobilized through the words “destroy” and “world war”, which are not directly linked with “gender theory” but with the word “philosophies”. What is interesting here is the imposition of the established conception of marriage as a truth, reaffirmed through “this is the truth”. One can also note the extremely strong words of “marred” and “distorted” applied to the image of God. If this configuration of marriage, and therefore this truth is not respected, then the image of God is marred and distorted. One can deduce from this that same-sex marriage is tantamount to a flawed marriage, and therefore not the image of God. We are faced with a construction of the representation of marriage, which is the truth, opposed to what amounts to destruction.

¹⁷⁷ Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis From Azerbaijan to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Papal Flight, 2/10/2016, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018)

When Pope Francis speaks of destruction, it is not always related to marriage or the one implied by *gender theory*. In this case, he talks about the destruction of the environment. He takes the opportunity of his trip to Sri Lanka and the Philippines to remind the importance of the respect of the environment in his discourse during a giant mass in Manila on 18 January 2015.

*“A second key area where you are called to make a contribution is in **showing concern for the environment**. This is not only because this country, more than many others, is likely to be seriously affected by climate change. You are **called to care for creation not only as responsible citizens, but also as followers of Christ! Respect for the environment means more than simply using cleaner products or recycling what we use. These are important aspects, but not enough. We need to see, with the eyes of faith, the beauty of God’s saving plan, the link between the natural environment and the dignity of the human person. Men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, and given dominion over creation (cf. Gen 1:26-28). As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling**”¹⁷⁸.*

The environment is the “creation” of God, just like “men and women” are created in His image. Here, we can observe the strong message sent by the Pope who positions himself as a leader by enjoining the Filipinos to behave “as responsible citizens”, by using the formula “you are called”. The Pope thus asserts his authority, and perpetuates with the last sentence of this extract, the speech delivered by Benedict XVI before the Curia on the occasion of Christmas vows in 2008 which figures in the state of the art: *“The tropical forests deserve, indeed, our protection, but human does not deserve it less as a creature”¹⁷⁹*. Indeed, he had already discussed the subject a year earlier:

*“The crisis of the family has produced a **human ecological crisis, for social environments, like natural environments, need protection**. Although humanity has come to understand the need to address the conditions that **threaten our natural environment, we have been slow — we have been slow in our culture, even in our Catholic culture — we have been slow to recognize that even our social environments are at risk. It is therefore essential that we foster a new human ecology and make it move forward**”¹⁸⁰.*

In the same speech, he addresses the question of marriage and male/female complementarity:

¹⁷⁸ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis for a meeting with young people, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and the Philippines, 18/01/2015, Sport field of Santo Tomas University, Manila, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150118_srilanka-filippine-incontro-giovani.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), 8 pp.

¹⁷⁹ Benoit XVI, Discours du Saint Père devant la Curie à l’occasion des Vœux de Noël, (2008), in Carnac., R., (2013), *op.cit.*, p. 137

¹⁸⁰ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the international colloquium of the complementarity between man and woman sponsored by the Congregation for the doctrine of faith, Synod Hall, 17/11/2014, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141117_congregazione-dottrina-fede.html, (accessed on 27/07/2018), 3 pp.

*“In effect, this **complementarity lies at the foundation of marriage and the family**, which is the first school where we learn to appreciate our talents and those of others, and where we begin to acquire the art of living together. For most of us, the family is the principal place in which we begin to “breathe” values and ideals, as we develop our full capacity for virtue and charity. At the same time, as we know, in families tensions arise: between egoism and altruism, between reason and passion, between immediate desires and long-term goals, and so on. But families also provide the environment in which these tensions are resolved: this is important. **When we speak of complementarity between man and woman in this context, we must not confuse the term with the simplistic idea that all the roles and relationships of both sexes are confined to a single and static model. Complementarity assumes many forms, since every man and every woman brings their personal contribution — personal richness, their own charisma — to the marriage and to the upbringing of their children. Thus, complementarity becomes a great treasure. It is not only an asset but is also a thing of beauty**¹⁸¹”.*

He defines “complementarity”, “term” that “we must not confuse with the simplistic idea that all the roles and relationships of both sexes are confined to a single and static model”, but rather be understood as assuming “many forms”, shaped by the “personal contribution” of “every man and every woman”. Moreover, He uses the words “charisma” and “great treasure”. He continues:

*“(…) as you **reflect on the complementarity between man and woman, I urge you to emphasize yet another truth about marriage: that the permanent commitment to solidarity, fidelity and fruitful love responds to the deepest longings of the human heart***¹⁸²”.

Here, it fits into the discourse thanks to the formula “I urge”. This refers to the authority he demonstrates, referring to the concept of elite developed by post-structuralism and juxtaposed with language, binary oppositions and discourses by Foucault, thus theorizing the “Regime of Truths”. Moreover, Pope Francis uses the word “truth” directly when referring to the “complementarity between a man and a woman”. He thus builds a definition of marriage, based on the complementarity between man and woman, enriched by the varied forms and charisma

¹⁸¹ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the international colloquium of the complementarity between man and woman sponsored by the Congregation for the doctrine of faith, Synod Hall, 17/11/2014, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141117_congregazione-dottrina-fede.html, (accessed on 27/07/2018), 3 pp.

¹⁸² Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the international colloquium of the complementarity between man and woman sponsored by the Congregation for the doctrine of faith, Synod Hall, 17/11/2014, Available online: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141117_congregazione-dottrina-fede.html, (accessed on 27/07/2018), 3 pp.

that each man and woman bring, which he considers to be a truth. Marriage that does not meet this definition is therefore not considered, he thus excludes any other configuration of marriage.

The same remarks on male/female complementarity and marriage were made in other discourses, namely on 5th January 2018 at the Holy See¹⁸³, and on 14th June 2015 at the Rome's Diocesan Conference¹⁸⁴.

V.1.2.1. Women are XX and Men are XY...

The discourse mobilized just above is actually divided into two speeches: a prepared speech that we have just analyzed, and an “impromptu” speech:

“And the small... the small representation of women. Too small! Women have much to say to us in today's society. Sometimes we are too “machista”; we don't make room for women. Women are able to see things differently than men. Women can ask questions that we men just don't get. Pay attention¹⁸⁵”.

The representation of women is “too small”, men are sometimes too “machista”. This seems to be a criticism that the Pope is not the only one to scold in society. If it is through these kinds of comments that he seems progressive, this extract is nevertheless a typical example of the allocation of an ability attributed to one sex. By saying that women are “able to see things differently than men”, or that “women can ask questions that men just don't get”, Pope Francis defines what is a woman in mirror with what would be a man, or in this case, would not be able to do, or less well than a woman. This suggests that there would be a "feminine" way of thinking, and a "masculine" way of thinking, and therefore that the differences between men and women would be both biological in the way they conceive reality. Thus, he builds a representation of the sexes, based on a nature that would be inherent to them, and participates

¹⁸³Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Italian association of catholic teachers, Clementine Hall, Holy See, 05/01/2018, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180105_maestri-cattolici.html, (accessed on 03/09/2018), 3 pp.

¹⁸⁴Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in Rome's diocesan conference, Saint Peter's Square, 14/06/2015, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html, (accessed on 03/09/2018)

¹⁸⁵Address of His Holiness Pope Francis for a meeting with young people, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and the Philippines, 18/01/2015, Sport field of Santo Tomas University, Manilla, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150118_srilanka-filippine-incontro-giovani.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), 8 pp.

in the construction of a truth that contradicts and deconstructs the *gender concept* that proposes, on the contrary, to reflect on the social construction of the sexes and their roles.

The representation of women, of their role and their capacities will be extremely present in the speech that will follow. Indeed, Pope Francis addresses to participants of a plenary session of The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in a discourse entitled “The role of women in education towards universal fraternity”:

*“Unfortunately we see that today **the figure of woman as an educator** towards universal fraternity is **obfuscated and often unappreciated**, as a result of the many **evils** that afflict this world and which, in particular, **strike women in their dignity and in their role**. **Women, and even children, are in fact among the most frequent victims of indiscriminate violence**. There, where hatred and violence gain the upper hand, [these evils] lacerate families and society, impeding women from carrying out, in communion of intent and of action with men, **their mission as educators in a peaceful and effective manner**¹⁸⁶ (...)”.*

Here, women are the victims of an “indiscriminate violence”. He uses the formula “figure of the woman”, which therefore relates to representation. The woman is represented as “educator” who is “obfuscated” and “unappreciated” and their “role” is associated with their “mission as educators”. He continues by stressing the importance of “appreciating the role of women”:

*“1. **Appreciating the role of women**. In today’s complex society, characterized by **plurality and globalization**, there is **need for a greater appreciation of women’s capacity for educating** towards universal fraternity. When women have the opportunity **to fully pass on their gifts** to the entire community, the very manner by which society is understood and organized becomes positively transformed by it, **managing to better reflect the substantial unity of the human family**. The **growing presence of women in the social, economic and political life at local, national and international levels, as well as the ecclesial, therefore, is a healthy process**. Women have **the full right to be actively included in all areas, and their right must be affirmed and protected, even through legal instruments wherever it may be necessary**. It is a matter of **making more room for a more incisive feminine presence**. There are many, **many women who, in the roles they perform daily, with dedication and integrity, at times with heroic courage, have made and do make the most of their accomplishments, their valuable traits in the most varied, specific and specialized skills, joined with the real experience of being mothers and formators**¹⁸⁷”.*

¹⁸⁶ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Consistory Hall, 9/06/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁸⁷ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Consistory Hall, 9/06/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

He begins by contextualizing the role of women, namely in a globalized world that he has already criticized before. The role of women is seen through their ability to educate and women would have “gifts”. The words “women” and “in their roles” are constantly linked. Together they are linked to the words “dedication”, “integrity”, “heroic courage”, “specific and specialized skills”. He is also talking about “their accomplishment” and the “real experience of being mothers and formators”. Thus, women are not only educators thanks to their skills inherent to their sexes, but also educators in the sense of motherhood. He therefore defines what a woman is, and affirms, on the basis of this definition, the right of women to participate in public life, which would also make it “healthier”. He continues with a second statement:

*“2. Educating towards fraternity. **Women, as educators, have a particular vocation, making it possible for new forms of welcome and mutual esteem to be created and to grow. The female figure has always been at the center of family education, not exclusively as mother. Women’s contribution in the field of education is priceless. Education carries a wealth of implications for woman herself, for her way of being, and for her relationships, through the way she offers herself in regard to human life and to life in general**¹⁸⁸”.*

The formula “women, as educators” is repeated. It could be understood as way of delineating the woman in a well-defined field. Here, it is a question of the “particular vocation” of women. He joins the “female figure” to the “center of family education”, but he specifies “not exclusively as mother”. The woman is defined through education that would have “implications for woman herself”, for “her way of being”, for “her relationship”. Finally, he joins the word woman to “offers herself”. The rest of the discourse deals with the representation of women and men, together, before returning to the definition of the representation of women:

*Ultimately, all — **men and women** — are called to contribute to education towards universal fraternity which is then, in the final analysis, **education for peace in the complementarity of diverse sensitivities and of proper roles**. In this way women, ***intimately bound to the mystery of life, can do much to promote the spirit of fraternity, with their care for the preservation of life and with their conviction that love is the only power that can render the world livable for everyone.*** Indeed, ***women are often the only ones who accompany others, especially those who are weakest in the family and in society, the victims of conflict and those who must face everyday challenges. Thanks to their contribution, education towards fraternity —****

¹⁸⁸ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Consistory Hall, 9/06/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

*through its inclusive and bond-producing nature— can overcome the throw-away culture*¹⁸⁹.

In this passage, the Pope speaks of “complementarity of diverse sensitivities and of proper roles”, whereas women are “intimately bound to the mystery of life”, which refers to procreation, and thus to motherhood. Women’s “conviction” is also defined, which is that “love is the only power that can render the world livable for everyone”. In addition, women are “accompaniers”, whose “contribution” “can overcome the throw-away culture”. Finally,

*“Women are **engaged, often more than men, at the level of the “dialogue of life” in the interreligious sphere, and thus contribute to a better understanding of the challenges typical of a multicultural reality. But women are also able to fully integrate in exchanges at the level of religious experience, as well as in those at the theological level. Many women are well prepared to take on encounters of interreligious dialogue at the highest levels and not only on the Catholic side. This means that women’s contribution must not be limited to “feminine” topics or to encounters only among women. Dialogue is a journey that men and women must undertake together. Today more than ever, it is necessary that women be present***¹⁹⁰”.

Women and men are defined again in the mirror through the formula “women are engaged, often more than men”, but located in the “dialogue of life”. The team they form is once again put in advance thanks to the formula “man and women must undertake together”. The most important sentence in this extract is the one we have underlined: “women’s contribution must not be limited to “feminine” topics or to encounters only among women”. We may ask ourselves what he means by “feminine topics”. It suggests that there would be “feminine topics” and “male topics”. This discourse has the particularity of not ceasing to define the woman, and sometimes the man that the Pope opposes her. It defines as follows “their accomplishment”, “their consideration”, “their condition”, “their conviction” and thus, “their role”.

If the Pope uses interreligious dialogue as an opportunity to build a representation of women and to attribute characteristics and capacities to them, he also does so through religious texts.

¹⁸⁹ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Consistory Hall, 9/06/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁹⁰ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Consistory Hall, 9/06/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

Thus, during a general audience at the Vatican on 25th January 2017, he used the figure of Judith, a woman whose courage gave hope to the people of Israel besieged by Nebuchadnezzar's army:

*“Among **the figures of women** presented to us by the **Old Testament**, one great heroine stands out among the people: **Judith**. (...) It is in this situation that Judith appears on the scene. A **widow**, a woman of great beauty and wisdom, she speaks to the people with the language of faith. Courageously, she reproaches the people to their face (...) And with the strength of a prophet, Judith rebukes the men of her people to restore their faith in God; with the gaze of a prophet, she sees beyond the narrow horizon proposed by the leaders, and which fear limits even further. (...) Thus, a woman full of faith and courage restores strength to her people who are in mortal danger, and guides them along the paths of hope, also pointing them out to us. And, if we reflect a little, how often have we heard the wise, courageous words of humble people, of humble women who are thought of as — without disregarding them — perhaps ignorant... However, they are words of God’s wisdom! The words of grandmothers... how often do grandmothers know the right thing to say, the word of hope, because they have life experience. They have suffered greatly; they have entrusted themselves to God, and the Lord gives this gift of encouraging us to hope¹⁹¹”.*

Judith, considered by the Pope as a “figure of the woman” in the Old Testament, is described through the following words: “heroine”, “widow”, “great beauty”, “wisdom”, “language of faith”, “courageously”, “strength of a prophet”, “with the gaze of a prophet”, “full of faith and courage”. Her action is described as follows: “rebuke the men”, “restore faith in God”, “see beyond”, “restore strength”, “guides them”. This description of Judith is not just a metaphor, it is an example of the courage, faith and wisdom that women show today. He uses it to criticize the lack of attention sometimes given to women, perhaps taken as “ignorant”. Women, and their words, are thus linked to the words: “humble”, “God’s wisdom”, “grandmothers”, “right thing to say”, “word of hope”, “life experience”, “suffered greatly”, “hope”.

If women and their roles are represented through the Pope's definition built through the language he uses in his speeches, we also have seen that men are defined through the opposition to women, through their differences. In the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, however, man and his role are dealt with in a very precise paragraph:

¹⁹¹ Pope Francis, “Christian hope- 8. Judith: the courage of a woman restores hope to a people”, General Audience, Paul VI Audience Hall, 25/01/2017, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170125_udienza-generale.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

55. Men “play an equally decisive role in family life, particularly with regard to the protection and support of their wives and children... Many men are conscious of the importance of their role in the family and live their masculinity accordingly. The absence of a father gravely affects family life and the upbringing of children and their integration into society. This absence, which may be physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, deprives children of a suitable father figure¹⁹²”.

Here, Pope Francis insists on the role of the man in the family, which is equal to the one of the woman and “decisive”. Men’s roles are particularly described as “protection” and “support” to their “women and children”. Thus, these “many men” are described as “conscious” “of the importance of their role” and “masculinity” can flourish in this configuration. The following deals with the consequences of a father's absence for a child, which are described as “affect[ing] family life”, affects “the upbringing of children”, “their integration into society” and “deprives children of a suitable father figure”. This role of the father in the family as described is a fixed definition and representation. Any other configuration is rejected in that it is not even considered. One might wonder what the father's role would be in a same-sex parenting involving two fathers, or if that insinuates that a same-sex parenting involving two mothers would prevent the integration of children into society, or “gravely affects” “the upbringing of children”.

V.1.2.2. Women in the Church

We have seen that women and their roles can be defined according to the nature inherent to their sex, and mainly through the family and marriage. It is also interesting to try to understand how women and their role can be defined and represented in the Church. This is interesting in view of the news that appeared in the press in 2018, but also in view of the new governance policy of the Pope. Moreover, we have noticed that when Pope Francis speaks of women, they are located either in marriage and family or in the Church. We therefore continue our empirical analysis through this new “room” of women. The following extract is from the Pope's trip to Sri Lanka and the Philippines that we mobilized above. As previously mentioned, we have tried to use speeches only once as much as possible to facilitate the understanding of the spatio-temporal situation. Nevertheless, we have decided to separate this speech in order to favor this time a structure more “thematic”, namely women in the Church:

¹⁹² Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Pres, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 44

“When I say it is important that women be given more consideration in the Church, it’s not only to give them a position as secretary of a dicastery, although this might be fine. No, it’s so that they may tell us how they experience and view reality. Because women view things from a different richness, a larger one”¹⁹³.

Pope Francis advocates an evolution in the assignment of women's roles in the Church. We learn that a role of “secretary of a dicastery” “might be fine” for the Pope. But what is interesting here is rather the way in which he defines the woman's vision of reality which he describes as a “different richness”, as “a larger one”. This suggests, in contrast, that men have a view less rich and large of things.

The problem of the representation of women in the Church, and more particularly in the Church's decision-making processes, was raised by the Pope during a meeting with representatives of the International Union of Superiors General on 12 May 2016 at the Vatican. The Pope then answers a question about the insertion of women in the life of the Church and requests for the clarification of what would be the “female genius” that he had previously mentioned.

“The question is linked to functionality, it is closely linked to functionality, while the role of women goes beyond this. (...) It is true that women are excluded from decision-making processes in the Church: not excluded, but the presence of women is very weak there, in decision-making processes. We must move forward. (...) For me the process leading to decisions is very important: not only the execution, but also the development, and therefore that women, whether consecrated or lay, become part of the reflection process and part of the discussion. Because women look at life through their own eyes and we men are not able to look at life in this way. The way of viewing a problem, of seeing anything, is different for a woman compared to a man. They must be complementary, and in consultations it is important that there are women. I experienced a problem in Buenos Aires: looking at it with the priests’ council – therefore all men – it was well handled, but then looking at the matter with a group of religious and lay women brought great benefit, and this helped the decision by offering a complementary view. (...)”¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹³ In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from the Philippines to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Sri Lanka and The Philippines, Papal Flight, 19/01/2015, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁹⁴ Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the International Union of Superiors General (USIG), Paul VI Audience Hall, 12/05/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_usig.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

The question of functionality that Pope Francis mentions has to do with the ordination of women. He answers that the “role of women goes beyond this”. The following sentence is interesting. First, because he says that the exclusion of women from the Church and its decision-making processes is a reality through the use of the formula “it is true”. Then, because he takes it up again by going back on what he said by the “not excluded, but”. We find again this idea that women have a different view of life than men, who “are not able to see life in this way”. Moreover, the comparison between men and women is textually highlighted through the sentence “is different for a woman compared to a man”. We also find the notion of complementarity, repeated twice in the extract. Finally, we put in bold the passage where he talks about his personal experience in Buenos Aires, to emphasize what could be understood as a “technique”, namely to fit into the speech as a witness to what he is talking about, and to tell stories. This could be interpreted as an attempt to support his comments, to make it true and legitimate as a spiritual leader, authority and de facto expert of the Catholic religion regarding his position.

*“Now there are two **temptations** here, **against which we must guard**. The **first is feminism: the woman’s role in the Church is not one of feminism; it is a right! It is a right as a baptised person, with the charisms and the gifts that the Spirit has given. We must not fall into feminism, because this would reduce a woman’s importance**¹⁹⁵”.*

We learn here that for Pope Francis, “feminism” is a “temptation” in which we “must not fall”, because feminism “reduces a woman's importance”. “The role of women in the Church” is a “right”, and “not one of the feminism”. One might have expected that the word “right” and “feminism” would be connected, they are but rather in an opposed perspective: what the role of women in the Church is, and what it is not. We are witnessing here a construction of what feminism is for Pope Francis.

*“The **consecrated woman is an icon of the Church, an icon of Mary**. The priest is not an icon of the Church; he is not an icon of Mary; he is an icon of the Apostles, of the disciples who were sent out to preach. But not of the Church or of Mary. When I say this I want to make you reflect on the fact that **“she” the Church is feminine; the Church is woman: it is not “he” the Church, it is “she” the Church. But she is a woman married to Jesus Christ; she has her Bridegroom, who is Jesus Christ. And when a bishop is chosen for a diocese, the Bishop – in the name of Christ – marries that local Church. The***

¹⁹⁵ Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the International Union of Superiors General (USIG), Paul VI Audience Hall, 12/05/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_uisg.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

Church is woman! And a woman's consecration makes her the very icon of the Church and the icon of Our Lady. And this we men cannot do. This will help you to deepen, from this theological foundation, a great role in the Church. I hope this does not elude you¹⁹⁶.

Here, the “consecrated woman” is elevated to the rank of “icon of the Church”, while the Church is seen as “feminine”. We can note the following formulas: “consecrated women”, “icon of the Church”, “icon of Mary”, “Church is feminine”, “the Church is a woman”, repeated twice, “the icon of Our Lady”. The Church is therefore defined through a feminine character.

“what women's consecrated life can do”. It is a point which you must take up again, which the Church too must look at again. Your work, my work and the work of all of us, is one of service. (...) his is the criterion: a work that involves service and not servitude! When your Superiors are asked for something that is more servitude than service, have the courage to say ‘no’¹⁹⁷

Here we find the word “courage”, associated with saying “no” to the “servitude” possibly imposed by “superiors”. The “criterion” is “service” and not “servitude”, in reference to “what women' consecrated life can do”. The choice of this passage is due to its extremely current dimension. Indeed, an article was published on the website “The Cross” on 2 March 2018 about testimonies of nuns, who denounced the abuses of power from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The article, published in the monthly women's journal of *Osservatore Romano*, “Donne, Chiesa, mondo”, highlights the perception of nuns as “volunteers” doing “work almost free”, “in the service of cardinals and bishop”¹⁹⁸.

The last extract from this section comes from a press conference given by the Pope during the flight back to Rome, after his trip to Rio on the occasion of the World Youth Days, on 28th July 2013. This is one of his first official trips. Place this extract at the end of the section may seem illogical given that this speech was delivered at the beginning of his pontificate. Nevertheless, we see that he is saying the same things than in the previous speech. The difference again lies in the audience to which it is addressed. In this case, it is to journalists:

¹⁹⁶ Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the International Union of Superiors General (USIG), Paul VI Audience Hall, 12/05/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_usig.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁹⁷ Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the International Union of Superiors General (USIG), Paul VI Audience Hall, 12/05/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_usig.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

¹⁹⁸ Malzac, M., “Le journal du Vatican dénonce l’exploitation des religieuses dans l’Église, *La Croix*, 02/03/2018, Available online : <https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Catholicisme/Monde/Le-journal-Vatican-denonce-exploitation-religieuses-lEglise-2018-03-02-1200917743>, (accessed on 03/08/2018)

“Second, about women. A Church without women is like the college of the Apostles without Mary. The role of women in the Church is not simply that of maternity, being mothers, but much greater: it is precisely to be the icon of the Virgin, of Our Lady; what helps make the Church grow! But think about it, Our Lady is more important than the Apostles! She is more important! The Church is feminine. She is Church, she is bride, she is mother. But women, in the Church, must not only... I don't know how to say this in Italian... the role of women in the Church must not be limited to being mothers, workers, a limited role... No! It is something else! But the Popes.. Paul VI wrote beautifully of women, but I believe that we have much more to do in making explicit this role and charism of women. We can't imagine a Church without women, but women active in the Church, with the distinctive role that they play¹⁹⁹”.

By saying “the role of women in the Church is not simply that of maternity, being mothers, but much greater”, he says that the role of women in the Church is “maternity” and “being” a “mother”. Thus, he defines woman through the Church and motherhood again, even if he wishes to extend it to other “virtues”, if we may express ourselves like this, as the “charism of woman” that allows the Church to “grow”. The formulas “icon of the Virgin”, “of our Lady”, “Church is feminine”, “she is Church” are repeated, while the word “bride” appears for the first time in our empirical analysis. We ask ourselves which “women” the Pope talks about in this extract. Indeed, he uses the figure of Mary and the “feminine” Church who are “bride” and “mother” to define the role of woman. Yet, if it is women in the Church in the sense of nuns, we do not understand how they can be “mothers” given their vows of chastity. They may be “women” as part of the family of the Church, who can then flourish in motherhood. If we are a little confused with regard to the exact meaning of what Pope Francis says, the construction of the image of the woman still takes place thanks to these mobilizations of female images of the “Virgin”, or “Our Lady”. The main question in the end, is the way in which Pope Francis speaks of women in his speeches, the mobilization of a particular language that allows the construction of a regime of truth through the representation that he builds, and considered as true. Here we highlight when and how he talks about women, and this section has allowed us to understand that he talks about them either as being in the family or as being in the Church. Women who are neither mothers, nor married to a man or nor religious, are not represented in the Pope's speeches. In the last extract, the Pope tries to make his point that the role of women goes further than that of mothers and brides, by mobilizing a historical example that he tells:

¹⁹⁹ Press Conference of Pope Francis during the return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

*“I think of an **example** which has nothing to do with the Church, but is an **historical example**: in Latin America, Paraguay. For me, the **women of Paraguay are the most glorious women** in Latin America. Are you Paraguayan? After the war, there **were eight women for every man**, and **these women made a rather difficult decision**: the decision to **bear children** in order to **save their country**, their culture, their faith, and their language. In the Church, **this is how we should think of women**: taking **risky decisions, yet as women**. This needs to be better explained. I believe that we have not yet come up with a profound theology of womanhood, in the Church. All we say is: **they can do this, they can do that**, now they are **altar servers**, now they **do the readings**, they are **in charge of Caritas** (Catholic charities). But **there is more!** We need to develop a profound theology of womanhood. **That is what I think**²⁰⁰”.*

The word “women” is associated with the words: “the most glorious”, “save their country”, “risky decisions”, which is part of the idea of “courage” that women particularly show according to Pope Francis. The formula “yet as women”, just after those ideas, deeply inscribes women in who they are, or rather in what they are as the Pope defines them.

V.1.2.3. Preliminary findings

In this section, we have seen how the Pope constructed a representation of women and men, separately or together through mirror opposition, sometimes hierarchizing them according to their capacities which would be inherent to their sexes, to their nature. The Pope, through these binary oppositions and this language sometimes warlike, sometimes “virtuous”, creates a truth of what would be the woman and what would be the man, but also what would be their interaction. Thus, the woman is courageous, listening, wise, sees life in a wider way. She is a mother, grandmother or bride. She must be considered by the Church and in its decision-making processes, but in her role, because the Church is feminine, the Church is a “she”. If the woman must be protected and supported by the man in the family, she must be brought to light in the Church, because it is a need, but also because it is a right.

How does Pope Francis understand women's rights? What do these human rights mean and how does he build them? These are the questions we will try to answer in the following section.

²⁰⁰ Press Conference of Pope Francis during the return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

V.1.3. Axe 3: Freedom of sexual orientation and human rights

V.1.3.1. *Women's rights*

“I would like to stress the fact that, even though significant advances have been made in the recognition of women’s rights and their participation in public life, in some countries much remains to be done to promote these rights. Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union. I think of the reprehensible genital mutilation of women practiced in some cultures, but also of their lack of equal access to dignified work and roles of decision-making. History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior, yet in our own day, we cannot overlook the use of surrogate mothers and “the exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture” There are those who believe that many of today’s problems have arisen because of feminine emancipation. This argument, however, is not valid, “it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism”. The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity. If certain forms of feminism have arisen which we must consider inadequate, we must nonetheless see in the women’s movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women²⁰¹”.

Pope Francis stresses the importance of “the recognition of women's rights and their participation in public life”. He positions himself against violence against women, “domestic violence”, and “various forms of enslavement” which he criticizes as “craven acts of cowardice”. He insists on the weight and excesses of “patriarchal cultures”, and in a way rejects the inferiority of women. He criticizes in part feminism, whose “certain forms” are considered “inadequate”, “we must nonetheless see in the women's movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women”. At first sight, his words could be interpreted as a “feminist” discourse, if we understand by feminism the equality of rights in the public space or even the rejection of patriarchy, since he speaks about it. Moreover, he does not seem as radical towards feminism, as he was in the previous discourse in which he said that feminism “reduces a woman’s importance”. What is interesting in this extract is the relationship to the body, and more specifically the control of the woman's body. Indeed, the Pope speaks only of the woman's body, and includes a certain dimension of control of it, denouncing “the

²⁰¹ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 235-236 (264 pp.)

exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture”, but also “surrogate mother”. This dimension of “control of the woman's body” is an important element in our attempt to understand the apprehension of women’s right by Pope Francis. His subject here is nuanced, almost “mediator”. Nevertheless, it includes a notion of control of the woman's body that we will continue to analyze.

The next extract is taken from the press conference in front of journalists during the flight back from Rio that we mentioned and analyzed above. The transcript consists of twelve pages of text. That is why we have mobilized this discourse in several sections of our empirical analysis. In this case, Pope Francis answers the Brazilian journalist Patricia Zorzan’s question. We have chosen to deliver the extract as it is, including the journalist's intervention, because the exchange is short and this form is interesting for analysis. The initials “P.Z” are those of the journalist, the initials “P.F”, those of Pope Francis. The font of the extracts is different in order to fully understand the interaction:

*P.Z: “Speaking on behalf of the Brazilians: society has changed, young people have changed, and in Brazil we have seen a great many young people. You did not speak about **abortion, about same-sex marriage. In Brazil a law has been approved which widens the right to abortion and permits marriage between people of the same sex. Why did you not speak about this?**”*

P.F: “The Church has already spoken quite clearly on this. It was unnecessary to return to it, just as I didn’t speak about cheating, lying, or other matters on which the Church has a clear teaching!”²⁰²”

P.Z: “But the young are interested in this ...”

P.F: “Yes, I though it wasn’t necessary to speak of it, but rather of the positive things that open up the path to young people. Isn’t that right! Besides, young people know perfectly well what the Church’s position is”²⁰³”.

P.Z: “What is Your Holiness’ position, if we may ask?”

P.F: “The position of the Church. I am a son of the Church”²⁰⁴.

²⁰² Press Conference of Pope Francis during the return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

²⁰³ Press Conference of Pope Francis during the return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

²⁰⁴ *Ibidem*

This extract shows the Pope's total rejection of talking about abortion and same-sex marriage. The exchange is short, the journalist tries to insist through the “but the young are interested in this”, and “What is Your Holiness' position, if we may ask?”, but the Pope avoids the subject. First by saying that the Church has already taken a position on the subject, then that it is not necessary to speak about it, and finally by saying that he has the Church's position. By saying “I am the son of the Church”, he clearly marks himself as part of an entity from which he will not dissociate himself, and will follow the line of conduct regarding the subjects of abortion and same-sex marriage. The continuity between the Church and the Pope in the present is clearly affirmed, it can be the sign of continuity between the Pope and the Catholic Church in time, and thus between the pontificates. Finally, he makes an opposition between abortion and same-sex marriage, and “the positive things that open the path to young people”, which suggests that this is not the case for the two controversial subjects if we refer to the binary oppositions. In addition, he implicitly compares abortion and same-sex marriage to “cheating”, “lying”, thanks to their common point which is that these are subjects on which the “Church as a clear teaching”.

We have chosen to continue this analysis with an extract from the Post-Synodal Apostolic exhortation on the family, which deals with adoption and abortion:

*“179. Adoption is a very generous way to become parents. I encourage those who cannot have children to **expand their marital love** to embrace those **who lack a proper family situation**. They will never regret having been generous. **Adopting a child is an act of love**, offering the **gift** of a family to someone who has none. It is important to **insist that legislation help facilitate the adoption process, above all in the case of unwanted children, in order to prevent their abortion or abandonment**”²⁰⁵“.*

The Pope's opinion on abortion is demonstrated through adoption, but in a context of “marital love” and a family as he constantly defines it in this text and in all his speeches, namely composed by a father and a mother. “Adopting a child” is “an act of love”, a “gift”, but this does not apply to a gay or lesbian couple as long as they do not respect the correct configuration issued by the Pope, which can be understood as a truth that he imposes. Moreover, legislation

²⁰⁵ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 136

for adoption procedures should be facilitated “above all in the case of unwanted children, in order to prevent their abortion or abandonment”.

42. (...) *“the decline in population, due to a mentality against having children and promoted by the world politics of reproductive health, creates not only a situation in which the relationship between generations is no longer ensured but also the danger that, over time, this decline will lead to economic impoverishment and a loss of hope in the future. The development of bio-technology has also had a major impact on the birth rate”*. Added to this are other factors such as *“industrialization, the sexual revolution, the fear of overpopulation and economic problems... Consumerism may also deter people from having children, simply so they can maintain a certain freedom and life-style”*.¹⁹ *The upright consciences of spouses who have been generous in transmitting life may lead them, for sufficiently serious reasons, to limit the number of their children, yet precisely “for the sake of this dignity of conscience, the Church strongly rejects the forced State intervention in favour of contraception, sterilization and even abortion”. Such measures are unacceptable even in places with high birth rates, yet also in countries with disturbingly low birth rates we see politicians encouraging them. As the bishops of Korea have said, this is “to act in a way that is self-contradictory and to neglect one’s duty”*²⁰⁶.

The Pope's opinion, supported by the Church, regarding abortion, contraception and sterilization is extremely clear: “the Church strongly rejects the forced State intervention in favor of contraception, sterilization and even abortion”, which he describes as “unacceptable” “measures”. The sentence “for the sake of this dignity of conscience” makes abortion, contraception and the sterilization questions of conscience and morals. Here is therefore described the “good conscience”, the “good morality”, which makes it a truth constructed by the Pope through his discourse, his language and his authority. Thus, the consequences of the world politics of reproductive health are “the decline in population” a “danger” leading to “economic impoverishment” and a “loss of hope for the future”. We have a lexicon of “danger and serious consequences”. It is important to note that abortion and reproductive health policies are not presented as the only factors behind this “decline”. “Bio-technology”, “industrialization”, “the fear for overpopulation”, “consumerism” and “economic problems” are the factors juxtaposed.

²⁰⁶ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 31-32

To sum up, we have seen the various comments of the Pope with concerning the women's rights in the broad sense, but also the right to abortion, sterilization or contraception. On the one hand, the Pope stands out for his “modernity”, or even his capacity for “consensus”, if we may express in this way, with regard to the benefits of feminism, the need for the recognition of women's rights and their participation in public life and the condemnation of violence against women in marriage. On the other hand, the recognition of women's rights does not seem to concern women's right to control their bodies, given his strong opposition to abortion, contraception, reproductive health policies and sterilization. Women's rights, like the representation of women and their role, seem to be defined clearly and relatively tightly. The Pope has no problem to highlight and insist on certain aspects of women's rights, which are considered as “good” and the truth to follow, while the Church's line towards certain subjects remains compartmentalized. These topics are strongly rejected, considered as unacceptable and therefore “bad”. A truth is also constructed in this sense. This truth constructed by the Pope is not without political consequences. As a spiritual but also political leader, elite in our theoretical configuration and undeniably enjoying authority over the faithful on the international scene, the Pope's word carries weight. This is confirmed in the news, while it has been burning for several weeks in Argentina on the issue of legalization of abortion. Pope Francis' fiefdom was the cradle of extremely intense demonstrations and unprecedented mobilization on the part of the “pro-choice”, who were facing the “pro-life”. According to the website “The Cross”, the Pope, while “it would not be his habit”, has allowed himself to weigh in the debate that currently divides his country of origin”, by sending a “letter addressed to the Argentinian Catholic faithful”, in which he calls “to mobilize against the bill likely to legalize abortion in the country”²⁰⁷. The next day, on 9 August 2018, the Senate voted against the legalization of abortion with 31 in favor, 38 against and 2 abstentions, whereas the deputies had approved it²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁷ Tans. By Roxane Misk: “Ce n’est pas dans ses habitudes, mais sur l’avortement, le pape François s’est autorisé à peser dans le débat qui divise actuellement son pays d’origine. Dans une lettre adressée aux fidèles catholiques argentins, le pape a appelé à se mobiliser contre le projet de loi susceptible de légaliser l’avortement dans le pays.”, in Tranié, J., “Le pape François dénonce l’avortement comme « culture du déchet””, *La Croix*, 08/08/2018, Available online : <https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Catholicisme/Pape/Le-pape-Francois-denonce-lavortement-comme-culture-dechet-2018-08-08-1200960585>, (accessed on 09/08/2018)

²⁰⁸ AFP, “Argentine: le droit à l’avortement devra attendre malgré la mobilisation », *Libération*, 9/08/2018, Available online : http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2018/08/09/argentine-le-droit-a-l-avortement-devra-attendre-malgre-la-mobilisation_1671711 (accessed on 09/08/2018), and Montoya, A., Legrand, C., « Droit à l’avortement en Argentine : « ce vote est une honte. Les sénateurs n’ont rien compris », *Le Monde*, 09/08/2018, Available online: https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/ameriques/article/2018/08/09/droit-a-l-avortement-en-argentine-ce-vote-est-une-honte-les-senateurs-n-ont-riencompris_5340807_3222.html?utm_campaign=Echobox&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1533808876, (accessed on 09/08/2018)

The Pope's interventions over the past few months concerning abortion seem to take a new turn, as suggested by the article in “The Cross”. This is verified in the extract that we have decided to mobilize to confirm this information. Indeed, during a speech delivered on 16 June 2018 to the delegation of the forum of family associations in the Holy See, Pope Francis expressed himself as follows:

*“I have heard that it is **in fashion** — or **at least customary** — in the **first months of pregnancy** to have certain **exams**, to see whether **the baby is not well**, or has some **problems....** The **first proposal** in that case is: **“Shall we do away with it?”**. **The murder of children**. **And to have a nice life, they do away with an innocent.** ²⁰⁹”*

He uses the words “in fashion”, “customary”, and “murder of children” and “do away with an innocent” to define abortion, which is seen as a selfish practice for “have a nice life”. It's a quite confrontational language, introduced by “I have heard”. If this formula may seem light when it comes to arguing or giving his opinion, the fact that it is used by an authority figure embodied by the Pope may be understood as a legitimization of his words. He goes on, by saying:

*“**Have you ever wondered why you do not see many dwarfs on the streets?** Because the **protocol of many doctors** — **many, not all** — is to ask the question: **“Will it have problems?”** It pains me to say this. In the **last century** the entire world was **scandalized over what the Nazis were doing to maintain the purity of the race**. **Today we do the same thing, but with white gloves**²¹⁰”.*

Here, he tries to prove his point by highlighting the reducing of the presence of dwarves in the streets, which would imply that the “dwarf embryos” were aborted thanks to the protocols of the “many doctors” who allow to see if the embryo has a problem. The following is quite violent. Indeed, he compares abortion to what “Nazis were doing to maintain the purity of the race”, highlighting the world's outrage at one but not the other. We could deduce that the words of Pope Francis amount to saying that abortion is Nazism, “but with white gloves”. We can notice the continuity in the Pope's discourse and the those of members of the Church who used to compare the dictatorships of the twentieth century with the “*theory of gender*”. The last part of the extract concerns again his theme of the family, as he conceived and constructed it:

²⁰⁹ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the delegation of the forum of Family associations, The Holy See, Clementine Hall, 16/06/2018, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html, (accessed on 03/08/2018)

²¹⁰ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the delegation of the forum of Family associations, The Holy See, Clementine Hall, 16/06/2018, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html, (accessed on 03/08/2018)

“Then today — it hurts to say it — we speak of ‘diversified’ families: different types of family. Yes, it is true that the word ‘family’ is an analogical term, because it refers to the ‘family’ of stars, to ‘families’ of trees, to ‘families’ of animals ... it is an analogical term. But the human family as the image of God, man and woman, is one alone. It is one alone. It may be that a man and a woman are not believers: but if they love each other and become joined in marriage, they are the image and likeness of God, even though they do not believe”²¹¹.

It seems painful for the Pope to “speak of ‘diversified’ families: different types of family”. This suggests that the idea of a family other than traditional, namely consisting of a man and a woman, is not only excluded but painful for his mind. He uses the formula “it is true that”, to emphasize the possibility of using the word “family” is an “analogical term” and therefore designate “the family of stars”, “families of trees”, “families of animals”, which also refers to nature, to the families of nature. But he reemphasizes the definition of “the human family” as being as “the image of God, man and woman, is one alone. It is one alone”. Once again, we face a pattern of repetition. The last point concerns couples who are not religious. If these couples are composed of a man and a woman, and therefore heterosexual, they are still in the image of God, even though they do not believe”. Thanks to this extract, he defines what a family is and thus defines everyone that must be excluded from it with regard to the concept of binary opposition, namely gay and lesbian couples, considered as 'diversified families', since heterosexual couples, even non-believers, are in the image of God. These may be stepfamilies involving divorce, but since we have not addressed this topic in the empirical analysis, we will not continue any further. We formulate this hypothesis in order not to confine our interpretation. This extract also allowed us to address the topic of sexual orientation. Let’s see how Pope Francis deals with the concept of sexual orientation, or as the Church defines *gender*, the possible imposition of a free sexual orientation.

²¹¹ Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the delegation of the forum of Family associations, The Holee See, Clementine Hall, 16/06/2018, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html, (accessed on 03/08/2018)

V.1.3.2. Free sexual orientation

The first extract mobilized in this section is part of his speech delivered in the flight back from his trip to the Caucasus, Georgia and Azerbaijan that we have also analyzed above. Here, he answers a question asked by the American journalist Joshua McElwee, who asks the Pope how to accompany a person who has suffered from his sexuality, with regard to his qualification of “great enemy” of the *theory of gender* which is a threat to marriage. Pope Francis answers by distinguishing “being homosexual” from the “theory of *gender*”:

“First of all, in my life as a priest, as a bishop – and also as Pope – I have accompanied many people with homosexual tendencies and also homosexual activity. I have accompanied them, I have brought them closer to the Lord; some cannot do it, but I have always accompanied them and never abandoned anyone. This is what has to be done. Individuals have to be accompanied, as Jesus accompanies them. When a person who has this condition comes before Jesus, Jesus certainly does not say: ‘Go away because you are homosexual’²¹²”.

According to Pope Francis, homosexuality is a “tendency”, an “activity”. Homosexuals must be “accompanied”, and he repeats this word five times. He includes himself in the discourse, as having followed the advice he gives. Indeed, he tells how, at each stage of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, he lent himself to this exercise of accompaniment by bringing “them closer to the lord”. This positions him as an expert, both of the Church and of how to act with homosexuals. He uses Jesus as an example of what to do, and Jesus would “certainly” “not say: “Go away because you are homosexual” to a “person who has this” “condition”. Here, then, Pope Francis constructs a definition of what a homosexual is by using a certain language that participates in the elaboration of a truth of the “condition” of a homosexual. The second part of the extract is related to “*gender theory*”, which he distinguished from “being homosexual”:

“What I was talking about has to do with the mischief going on these days with the indoctrination of gender theory. A French father told me that he was at the table speaking to his children – he is Catholic, his wife is Catholic, the children are Catholic, lukewarm Catholics, but Catholics – and he asked his ten-year old son: “And what do you want to be when you grow up?” – “A girl.” And his father realized that the schoolbooks were teaching gender theory. This is against the realities of nature. It is one thing if a person has this tendency, this option; some people even change sex. But

²¹² Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis From Azerbaijan to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Papal Flight, 2/10/2016, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018)

it is another thing to teach this in schools, in order to change people's way of thinking. I call this 'ideological colonization'²¹³.

Again, homosexuality is a “tendency”, an “option”. He talks in the same sentence about “person” who has homosexual “tendency”, and therefore homosexuals, and people who change sex, namely transsexuals. It creates a kind of category, whereas the notion of *gender*, as we have defined it in the state of the art, tries to think of categories, and not to impose them. We understand thanks to the “this is one thing”, that the Pope accepts in a way, this homosexuality which he defines as such, because he opposes what he does not accept, namely the ideological colonization that is the “*theory of gender*”. Again, the words associated with it are extremely negative “mischief”, “indoctrination”, and thus defined as “against the realities of nature”. He tells another story, namely that of a Catholic family, he insists on this word by repeating it five times. This family is also Catholic because it “respects” the traditional configuration of the family advocated by the Church and Pope Francis, but also by the previous popes. This extract reflects the Church's definition of *gender* as a mix of sexual orientation and social representations of the sexes under the aegis of this “*gender theory*” that colonizes the mind. They reconstruct each element of this definition through binary oppositions that shape a new language, and thereby, a new truth. It can be noted that here, the story of this “French father” whose son is indoctrinated by the books he has at school refers to the *ABCD of equality* scandal we talked about in the introduction.

On 26th August 2018, Pope Francis reopened the subject of homosexuality on his flight back from Ireland, which he visited on the occasion of the IX World Meeting of Families, in particular to apologize on behalf of the Church for the pedophilia scandals that have just broken out in the country.

“I would tell him first of all to pray. Pray. Don't condemn, [but] dialogue, understand, make room for his son or daughter. Make room for them to say what they have to say. Then too, at what age does this concern of the child become evident? This is important. It is one thing when it shows up in childhood when there are so many things that one can do to see how the matter stands; it is another when it shows up at twenty years of age or so. But I would never say that silence is the answer; to ignore a son or daughter with a **homosexual tendency** is not good parenthood. You are my son, you are my daughter, just as you are. I am your father or your mother, let's talk about this. And if you, as a father or mother, can't deal with this on your own, ask for help, but always in

²¹³ Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis From Azerbaijan to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Papal Flight, 2/10/2016, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 3/07/2018)

*dialogue, always in dialogue. Because that son and daughter has a right to family, and their family is this family, just as it is. Do not throw them out of family. **This is a serious challenge for parenthood***²¹⁴”.

The word “tendency” is repeated in this discourse, and homosexuality is linked to the word “challenge”, which here concerns the family of a homosexual person. What is interesting in this extract is what is not in it. Indeed, if the discourse itself seems to be nothing more than a continuation of the Pope's words on homosexuality, it is also because a polemical sentence has been deleted from the official discourse.

*“I would say first to pray. Do not condemn, open dialogue, understand, make room for the son and daughter. Make room for it to be expressed. Then, what age is the child when this restlessness manifests itself? It's important. **It is one thing when it manifests itself from childhood, when there are a lot of things to be done, with psychiatry, or...to see how things are. It's another thing when it manifests itself after 20 years or something like that.** But I will say that silence is never a remedy. Ignoring a son or daughter with homosexual tendencies shows a lack of fatherhood and motherhood. You are my son, you are my daughter, as you are. I'm your father or your mother, let's talk (...)*^{215 216 217}”.

Here, the Pope emphasize the need to “not condemn”, “open dialogue”, “understand” and “make a room” for children who are homosexuals. Afterwards, he suggests that “a lot of things” can “be done”, “with psychiatry”. We will see in future discourses that the lexical field of psychiatry, or rather psychology, is constructs through language in other discourses on homosexuality. Here, the word “psychiatry” is used directly as a remedy for homosexuality.

Let's continue with an extract from the previous speech:

*“Last year I received a letter from a Spanish man who **told me his story** from the time when he was a child. He was **born a female, a girl, and he suffered greatly because he felt that he was a boy but physically was a girl.** He told his mother, when he was in his twenties, at 22, that he wanted to have an operation and so forth. His mother asked him not to do so as long as she was alive. She was elderly, and died soon after. He had the*

²¹⁴Press Conference on the return flight from Dublin to Rome, Papal flight, Apostolic visit to Ireland on the occasion of the IX World Meeting of Families, 26/08/2018, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/august/documents/papa-francesco_20180826_irlanda-voloritorno.html, (accessed on 3/09/2018), 10 pp.

²¹⁵ Beswick, E., “What exactly did the Pope say on psychiatric help for gay children?”, *EuroNews*, 28/08/2018, Available online: <https://www.euronews.com/2018/08/28/what-exactly-did-the-pope-say-on-psychiatric-help-for-gay-children->, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

²¹⁶ Stansall, B., “Vatican removes Pope's remarks on psychiatric help for gay children”, *France 24*, Europe, 27/08/2018, Available online: <https://www.france24.com/en/20180827-vatican-catholic-church-pope-francis-gay-children-parent-psychiatric-help>, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

²¹⁷ Sharman, J., “Vatican clarifies Pope Francis comments on psychiatric help for gay children”, *The Independent*, 28/08/2018, Available online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-homosexuality-gay-children-psychiatry-vatican-catholic-church-a8510721.html>, (accessed on 3/09/2018)

*operation. He is a municipal employee in a town in Spain. **He went to the bishop. The bishop helped him a great deal, he is a good bishop and he “wasted” time to accompany this man.** Then he got married. He changed his civil identity, he got married and he wrote me a letter saying that it would bring comfort to him to come see me with his bride: **he, who had been she, but is he. I received them.** They were pleased. And in the neighbourhood where he lived there was an elderly priest, over 80 years old, the former parish priest who assisted the nuns, there, in the parish... Then a new [parish priest] came. When the new priest would see him, he would yell at him from the sidewalk: **“You’ll go to hell!”** When he went to the old priest, the old priest said to him: **“How long has it been since you made your confession? Come now, I will hear your confession so you can receive Communion”.***

This extract is relatively long, and we have chosen to leave it as it is in order to highlight this tendency for the Pope to tell stories. This to be understood as a will to explain his purpose, to image him, or perhaps to insert himself into the discourse as a direct witness and thus get closer to his interlocutors. Here, he tells the story of a transsexual, a man who “was born female, a girl, and” “suffered greatly because he felt that he was a boy but physically was a girl”. This person “went to the bishop” who “helped him”. The bishop is defined as “good”, but he “wasted time” to “accompany him”. The Pope himself received him. There is an idea of a waste of time juxtaposed with the help offered by the bishop, which we don’t know how to understand it because the Pope had already said earlier that the role of the members of the Church, in the image of Jesus, is precisely to accompany. He will continue to affirm this in the following extract:

*“Do you see what I am saying? **Life is life, and things have to be taken as they come. Sin is sin. Tendencies or hormonal imbalances create many problems and we have to take care not to say: “It doesn’t make any difference, let’s live it up.” No, not at all. But for every case welcome it, accompany it, look into it, discern and integrate it. This is what Jesus would do today. Please, do not say: “The Pope blesses transsexuals!” Please! Because I can already see the newspaper headlines... No, no. Are there any doubts about what I said? I want to be clear. It is a moral problem. It is a problem. It is a human problem. And it must be resolved as best we can, always with the mercy of God, with the truth, as we said in the case of marriage, reading the entire Amoris Laetitia, but always this way, with our hearts open***²¹⁸”.

First, we have the idea that we must accept things as they are, which suggests that this “man's transsexuality” must be accepted. But the sentence after “sin is sin” suggests that this is not the case for transsexuality. In fact, the words “tendencies”, “hormonal imbalances”, “create”,

²¹⁸ Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis From Azerbaijan to Rome, Apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan, Papal Flight, 2/10/2016, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

“many problems” can, together, refer to something negative. He says on the contrary, that one cannot consider that it “makes no difference” and that one can “live it up”, but that “we have to take care” of it, “welcome it”, “accompany it”, “integrate it”. He picks himself up, because he does not want his remarks to be interpreted as he meant that he “blesses transsexuals”, and clarifies his words, removes any doubt by redefining the transsexuality as a “problem”, “moral problem”, “human problem” that “must be resolved” “with mercy of god”, “with the truth”. This language of “taking care”, “accompanying”, “problem”, “must be resolved”, reminds us the speeches of previous popes, especially the one of Benedict XVI in which he talked about “pathological forms of sexuality whose homosexuality²¹⁹”. This construction of this "medical" paradigm, even if it is less obvious in Francis, constitutes a continuity in the discourses of the popes, but also a definition of questions of sexual identities and orientations other than “traditional” as kinds of anomalies that must be remedied, because it is not normality.

In his last sentences, Pope Francis advises to read the *Amoris Laetitia*, let's follow his council:

“250. The Church makes her own the attitude of the Lord Jesus, who offers his boundless love to each person without exception. During the Synod, we discussed the situation of families whose members include persons who experience same-sex attraction, a situation not easy either for parents or for children. We would like before all else to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while ‘every sign of unjust discrimination’ is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence. Such families should be given respectful pastoral guidance, so that those who manifest a homosexual orientation can receive the assistance they need to understand and fully carry out God’s will in their live²²⁰”.

The Pope begins by affirming the universality of God's love, granted “to each person without exception”, before giving his opinion on how a family should handle a situation in which one of its members “experience same-sex attraction”. It is therefore about the management of homosexuality, of a homosexual in a family, which he describes as “a situation not easy either for parents or for children”. This already constitutes an element of his truth, since it excludes the possibility that the homosexuality of a family member is well lived by his/her family,

²¹⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the dignity and vocation of women on the occasion of the Marian Year, (1988), Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html, (accessed on 5 July 2018)

²²⁰ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 190

through his statement without nuances. He reaffirms the “ought” to respect the dignity of “every person”, to be “treated with consideration”, while rejecting every kind of unjust discrimination”. We may wonder what he means by “unjust discrimination”. Does this imply that it exists “just discrimination”? Again, he rejects aggression and violence, while affirming in the following sentence the need, through the “should be given”, to give a “pastoral guidance” to these families and “assistance” to a homosexual because he “need to understand and fully carry out God’s will in their lives”. For Pope Francis, homosexuals have the same right to dignity as any other human, but the dignity of the family seems to take precedence over the dignity of the homosexual individual:

*“In discussing the **dignity and mission of the family**, the Synod Fathers observed that, **“as for proposals to place unions between homosexual persons on the same level as marriage, there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family**”²²¹”*

Here it is clearly stated that the “union between homosexuals” cannot be considered under “absolutely no grounds” “on the same level” as “marriage”. First, the word “marriage” is understood and defined as between a man and a woman. Marriage between two homosexuals does not exist in the reality shaped by the Pope because it does not exist in its definition. Secondly, the rejection of “the same level” implies two different levels, which amounts to the rejection of equality. If there is no equality between two ‘objects’, ‘concepts’ or ‘persons’, therefore it implies a hierarchy, in which an ‘element’, if it can be expressed in this way, has a higher position, and the other a lower position. This implies authority over one another, a relationship of domination. This is expressed in and through the concept of binary opposition that we have been mobilizing since the beginning of our analysis, and the Pope gives us a concrete example.

In the following extract, the inequality we have just detected is developed and explained in more depth:

*“52. **No one can think that the weakening of the family as that natural society founded on marriage will prove beneficial to society as a whole. The contrary is true: it poses a threat to the mature growth of individuals, the cultivation of community values and the***

²²¹ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 190-190

moral progress of cities and countries. There is a failure to realize that only the exclusive and indissoluble union between a man and a woman has a plenary role to play in society as a stable commitment that bears fruit in new life. We need to acknowledge the great variety of family situations that can offer a certain stability, but de facto or same-sex unions for example, may not simply be equated with marriage. No union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society. But nowadays who is making an effort to strengthen marriages, to help married couples overcome their problems, to assist them in the work of raising children and, in general, to encourage the stability of the marriage bond? ²²²”

Authority is affirmed by the “No one can think”. If we cannot think in this direction, it implies that we must think in the other direction, which proves to be the truth to follow and assimilate. Also, the “weakening of the family as that natural society founded on marriage” cannot lead to a benefit for “society as a whole”. The formula “society as a whole” refers to this idea that it does not only concern believers. This is actually what we thought we understood in the state of the art and in a previous discourse of the Pope. There is an increased consideration on the part of the Church for the phenomenon of “de-secularization” of society, which would imply a decrease of Church's power on the international scene. Involving society as a whole would be part of this desire to reach a wider public, in order to maintain the place of the Church in the public debate, notably through a leader who spreads his ideas through discourse. Finally, Pope Francis reaffirms the inequality by saying: “de facto or same-sex unions for example, may not simply be equated with marriage. No union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society”. Thus, to justify this inequality in access to marriage on the basis of sexual orientation, he bases it on the ability or not to give “life”. This brings us to our last extract from *Amoris Laetitia*, which, by the way, is intended to be read by the whole ecclesiastical community, believers and lay couples, but which is accessible to all:

“On the other hand, “the technological revolution in the field of human procreation has introduced the ability to manipulate the reproductive act, making it independent of the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. In this way, human life and parenthood have become modular and separable realities, subject mainly to the wishes of individuals or couples”. It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be

²²² Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 41- 42

*received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created*²²³”.

If he bases his argument of the rejection of the same-sex marriage on the inability for same-sex couples to give life, which actually cannot “ensure the future of society”, it is logical that he positions himself against “ability to manipulate the reproductive act”. This could refer to in vitro fertilization techniques in a case of a lesbian couple who wants to have a child, or a surrogate mother for a gay couple, but this is not about technological revolution, which is the subject of this extract. In all cases, he has already mentioned his opinion on the subject in the previous extracts by positioning himself against manipulation of the woman's body, which involves surrogate mothers. Thus, he describes “human life” and “parenthood” as “subjected to the wishes of individuals or couples”. By saying “It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality”, it suggests several things. First, human weaknesses can be understood, but this understanding cannot lead to attempts that “sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality”. This reminds us of the “Misericordia” always advocated by the Pope, and also the similar approach mobilized for homosexuals: they must be listened to, respected and accompanied, but this does not mean that they have access to certain rights, such as marriage or access to adoption. It should be noted that in many countries adoption is legal only for married couples. Not recognizing same-sex marriage allows the Church to anticipate the issue of adoption by a same-sex couple. This is the reason why, in many countries, laws authorizing adoptions for homosexuals were adopted almost systematically after the legalization of same-sex marriage. Second, the techniques that allow same-sex couples to have children are defined as “ideologies” “that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality”. Third, that the “sexual relationship between man and a woman” is an “inseparable aspects of reality”, and thus, defines what “the reality” is. It is implicit here that the sexual relationship between man and woman in question is to be placed in the context of marriage, with regard to what we have seen in the empirical analysis, but also with regard to the fact that this text comes from the *Amoris Laetitia*, whose subject is family and marriage. This can also be an example of intertextuality. Finally, he concludes by reminding us that humans are subject to the Creator, and that they can only “fall into the sin” with the manipulation of reproduction.

²²³ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018), p. 45-46 (264 pp.)

These humans are not omnipotent and must accept this “gift” of creation, and respect “it as it was created”. Therefore, he defines what a human being is, and imposes his truth through the language he builds and the authority he embodies in and through his discourse.

V.1.4. Overview of the results

We have developed a “table of results” of our analysis. In a way, it is a summary of the information we have found in the empirical material, which is not classified by axis because they are not completely watertight, as we saw it in our analysis. We have therefore chosen to classify them by theme or subject addressed, to be able to understand the Pope's general definition of these concepts, through different extracts from the speeches we have just analyzed.

V.1.4.1. “Gender Theory”/ “Gender ideology”

	Language
<p>“Gender Theory / Gender Ideology”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warlike language, • Lexical field of danger • Definition • Crisis and Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Ideological colonization”, “ideology of gender”, “only one form of thought”, “indoctrination”; - “dictatorship”, “great genocidal dictatorship”, “dictatorial path”, “dictating”, “world war”, “Hitler Youth”, “radically”, “suffering”, “empires”, “loss of freedom”, “under attack”, “great enemy”, “destroy”, “world war”, “weapons”, “ideas”; - “money”, “influential countries”, “from the West”, “globalization”, “modernity”; - “crisis”, “mistake”, “confusion”, “challenge”, “source of concern”, “horrors”, “mischief”; - “choose his or her sex”, “denies differences and reciprocity in nature” “without sexual differences” “eliminating the anthropological basis of the family”, “absolute and unquestionable”, “biological sex”, “against reality of nature”; - “educational programs”, “children”, “family”, “lab specimens”, “manipulation of education”, “reeducation camp”, “schoolbooks”;

Table 1: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Gender theory” and “Gender ideology”

The language used is a 'warlike language', giving form to a lexicon of 'danger' and 'violence'. The main victims of this violence are children, attacked through education, and more specifically through school programs and books. In addition to these adjectives, which construct this lexical field of danger, a definition of "*gender theory/ideology*" is given. The elite, in the person of the Pope, asserts that *gender theory* means the denial of sexual differences, and the fact of choosing one's sex. He thus constructs a representation of what *gender theory* is, and in this, creates a representation of reality that is considered the true one. If there is a reality considered to be true, this is in contrast to a reality that is not true, or false. But to suggest that the reality of his opponents is false is a complicated undertaking. This "false" reality takes the form of "bad". And in the light of the extremely negative language used, we can consider that this language is part of the binary opposition of "evil" vs. "good". This information highlights the notion of separation between two camps, emphasized in the extracts when the Pope speaks of "they". There are on the one hand, "Those" who try to impose this *theory of gender* in society and in schools in a colonial approach, and on the other hand those who oppose it, because they refuse to be victims of their enemies. This reflects the binary opposition of "us" vs. "them". We find here the three elements of the 'Regime of Truths' theorized by Foucault: the Pope, through his warlike language establishing a lexical field of danger present in his discourses, defines the *gender theory*, whose meaning is considered as the true one; excluding all those who do not share this representation of reality. Thus, we have an official and dominant discourse, spread by Pope Francis, who builds his Truth of the *gender theory*.

V.1.4.2. *Marriage and Family*

<i>Marriage and family</i>	- “man and a woman”, “father”, “mother”, “correct relationship”, “child’s development”, “complementarity”, “very nature of the conjugal union”, “adoption”, “act of love”, “expend their marital love”, “gift”;
• Nature	- “most beautiful thing”, “God”, “God has created”, “image of God”, “devil”, “religious education”, “complementarity”, “must be complementary”, “complementary view”;
• God	- “‘Diversified families’”, “different types of family”, “‘family’ is an analogical term”, “‘family’ of stars”, “‘family’ of trees”, “‘family’ of animals”, “human family as the image of God”;
• Hierarchy	- “union between homosexuals”, “on the same level as marriage”, “absolutely no grounds”, “any similar”, “may not simply be equated”;

Table 2: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Marriage” and “Family”

We see here that the word marriage is associated with several different themes or ideas. First, the male-female configuration, which is defined as the “very nature of the conjugal union”, while the word “family” was defined through the “correct relationship represented by masculinity and femininity”. Second, the religious, beautiful, virtuous and complementary character of this configuration. Third, the “diversified families”, so families that do not meet the definition of family cited above. The Pope does not define these families, but defines the word family as “analogical”, and can thus include the families of stars, trees or nature, but not the human family, which is in the image of God, therefore the family including the configuration man-woman. Fourth, unions between homosexuals, which he defines as not being on the same level as marriage and which “may simply not be equated” to marriage. Thus, it creates a definition and meaning of marriage and good family configuration that excludes all those who do not meet that definition. Here, we can think of same-sex couples and single mothers or fathers. Thus, the binary opposition is that of “normal vs abnormal”, or “natural vs unnatural, through the ‘language of nature’, ‘religious language’, and a ‘language of hierarchy and inequality’. The three elements of the ‘Regime of Truth’ are again present: the authority, imposes a representation of reality through a definition considered as the true one, establishing an opposition, and in this case with a hierarchical dimension, which excludes those who do not meet this definition, part of the official and dominant discourse.

V.1.4.3. Woman/Women

<p>Woman/Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • In the Family • In the Church • In their Role • Rights • Body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “clever woman”, “glorious woman”, “more beautiful”, “great beauty”, “dedication”, “integrity”, “humble”, “heroic courage”, “courageously”, “great heroine”, “wisdom”, “difficult decision”, “risky decisions”, “ignorant”; - “children”, “family”, “mother”, “grandmother”, “widow”, “center of the family education”, “not exclusively mother”, “field of education”, “formator”, “educators”, “experience of being mother”, “capacity for educating”; - “God’s wisdom”, “language of faith”, “strength of a prophet”, “full faith and courage”, “restore faith of God”, “suffered greatly”, “hope”, “icon of the Church”, “icon of Mary”, “Mary”, “icon of our Lady”, “Church is feminine”, “Church is a woman”; - “femininity”, “feminine topic”, “feminine presence”, “female figure”, “figure of women”, “offers herself”, “mystery of life”, “preservation of life”, “accompany”; - “think differently than men”, “can ask questions that men don’t get”, “specific and specialized skills”, “rebuke men”, “see beyond”, “guides them”, “women view things from a different richness”, “a larger one”, “experience and view reality”, “look at their own eyes”; - “in their role”, “their gifts”, “their accomplishment”, “their condition”, “their convictions”, “their contribution, “her way of being”; - “women in the Church”, “secretary of a dicastery”, “excluded from decision-making process”, “courage to say no”, “service”, “not a servitude”, “distinctive role to play”, “altar savers”, “in charge of Caritas”, “there is more!”; - “small representation, “make a room”, “making more room”, “theirs rights reaffirmed and protects”, “full right to be included”, “feminism», “temptation”, “certain forms of feminism”, “feminine emancipation”, “would reduce a woman’s importance”, “right”, “dignity and rights”, forms of enslavement”, “verbal, physical, “sexual violence”; - “female body”, “genital mutilations”, “surrogate mothers”, “exploitation and commercialization of the female body”;
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Table 3: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Woman/Women”

The words woman and women are also associated with several themes and ideas, which are intended to construct a definition of what would be a woman/women. First, they are defined through their nature, or what she/they are (1), their role (2), their rights (3) and their body (4). Each of its elements are defined in turn: what is the nature, role, rights and body of the woman/women according to Pope Francis?

- (1) First, the woman is defined by adjectives or values associated with her. Thus, the woman is “clever” (which had a negative connotation, linked to *gender theory* in schools), “glorious”, “beautiful”, “courageous”, “humble” and “heroic”. And the associated values are “dedication”, “integrity”, “wisdom”, “courage”. Second, the woman is defined either in the family or in the Church. There is no other configuration described or defined by the Pope. This therefore excludes women who are not part of these configurations. On the other hand, in these two configurations, we find a religious and virtuous language, and the status of wife, mother and educator. It should be noted, as we pointed out in the empirical analysis, that we did not understand exactly what the Pope meant by “mother” when speaking of women in the Church. It can be either a link to Mary or an image or concept in the Catholic religion that we have not analyzed further.
- (2) The Pope talks a lot about women “in their role”, probably involving their role as mother, wife, educator or in the Church as we have just highlighted. But this formula suggests both that it contains a broader dimension, notably because it uses it to express that women's nature goes further than being mothers or that they must be given more space in society, at the same time that he has reduced them to this role, since it almost systematically recalls this notion of role: “women, in their role”. These roles are justified on the grounds of their capacities that are different than those of men, which therefore implies a different role, in the family, in the Church and in society. Because as we have said, the Pope insists that women should have more space, especially on the public stage.
- (3) The Pope defines women through their rights to access the public stage, to have their place on local, national and international levels, to dignity, because they reject all forms of verbal, physical and sexual violence. He also rejects the cultures of patriarchy that enslaves women. These are the rights he refers to when he talks about women.

(4) Finally, the Pope speaks of the woman's body which must be respected, especially when he speaks of how female bodies are used in the media. He continues in his denunciation of a misuse of the woman's body by positioning himself against surrogate mothers or reproductive health, which we will discuss later.

Thus, through this virtuous language and the rights and bodies of women that must be defended, the Pope builds a definition of what a woman is. This meaning is once again considered the good, the truth and all women who do not meet the definition of this nature, this role, this place, this body, but also this sexuality - since women described by Pope Francis have either taken vows of chastity, or are in a situation of heterosexual marriage - are excluded from this definition. Here, the binary oppositions are “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. abnormal”, thus completing the triptych necessary for the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault.

V.1.4.4. Man/Men

<p>Man/Men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Abilities • Role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “better man”, “father”, “masculinity”, “masculine power”, “conscious”, “suitable father figure”; - “machista”, “are not able to look at life this way”, “craven acts of cowardice”, “excesses of patriarchal cultures”, “considered women inferior”, “male chauvinism”; - “equally decisive role in family life”, “protection”, “support of their wives and children”, “importance of their role”;
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Table 4: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Man/men”

Men are not a lot treated and defined by the Pope, at least in the extracts we have selected. Moreover, men are mainly mentioned when it comes to mirroring them with women, especially with regard to abilities and roles. As we have seen, the complementarity of the sexes is constantly put forward, and is also used to define the sexes through their relationship. By defining women as seeing further than men, having a different point of view of reality and therefore the need to listen to them more, it implies that men see less far than women. It implies that they do not have access to the same vision of reality as they do, insinuating that this vision would be less good, and this because of their inherent abilities to their sexes, because of their nature. Also, the Pope also speaks of men in a relatively negative vision, for example when he used the word “machista”, to say that men behave too much in this way, that they have “craven acts of cowardice” when they express their domination to women. Finally, men are defined as fathers with the role of protecting and supporting their families, but also through the formulas “better man”, “conscious”, “masculinity” and “father”. This participates in the construction of what a man is, or what he should be. Again, binary oppositions are those of “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. “abnormal”. Pope Francis thus imposes a representation of man considered as the true one excluding men who would not meet these criteria, such as homosexual men.

V.1.4.5. *Abortion and Woman body*

<p>Abortion/ Woman body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Cheating”, “lying”, “other matters on which the Church has a clear teaching”; - “unnecessary to return to it”, “not necessary to speak”, “Church strongly rejects”, “unacceptable measures” - “danger”, “decline in population”, “development of bio-technology”, “forced State intervention”, “politicians”, “hope for the future”, “problems”; - “mentality against having children”, “dignity of conscience”; - “sterilization”, “contraception”, “in fashion”, “customary”, “first month pregnancy”, “body is not well”, “protocol of doctors”, “first proposal”; - “innocent”, “Nazis”, “white gloves”, “murder of children”
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Table 5: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Abortion” and “Woman body”

Earlier, we highlighted the way in which the Pope speaks of the rights of women that they considered necessary to ensure. Nevertheless, when it comes to women's right to control their bodies, which the right to abortion translates, the language used by the Pope is extremely negative. This language also establishes a lexical field of ‘danger’, a danger to humanity implied by the decline of the population. It is also a violent language, even a ‘warlike’ one, when he makes the comparison between abortion and Nazism. Abortion would be thus, Nazism with white gloves which translates into the murder of innocent children. The Pope's position on contraception, sterilization and abortion is clear, thus constructing a negative definition of what abortion and more generally reproductive health topics are. So, he builds a representation of reality, which he imposes as the good, the true one. Binary oppositions are those “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. “abnormal”, but also “good” vs. “evil”, when we see that abortion is defined through the formulas “dignity of conscience”, “Nazis”, “murder of children”, “innocent”, “forced State intervention”, “politicians”, which form a paradigm of “the enemy” It could also turn out to be an opposition of “us” vs. “them”, Us, believers, families and ecclesiastics who refuse the murder of innocent children vs. Them, politicians, doctors or anyone who would be for the right to abortion or any woman having recourse to abortion or sterilization or contraception. These people are thus excluded from the dominant discourse of Pope Francis, spreading the truth about the abortion’s meaning.

V.1.4.6. *Homosexuality/Homosexuals*

<p>Homosexuality/ Homosexuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “tendency”, “tendencies”, “activity”, “this condition”, “this option”, “psychiatry”; - “accompanied”, “as Jesus accompanies them”, “brought them to the Lord”, “some cannot do it”, “never abandoned anyone”, “some people even change sex”, “pastoral guidance”, “need to understand”; - “Boundless love to each person without exception”, “out to be respected”, “every sign of unjust discrimination” - “Same-sex attraction”, “situation not easy”; - “technological revolution”, “field of human procreation”, “ability to manipulate the reproductive act”, “human life”, parenthood”, “separable realities”, “understanding of human weaknesses”, “ideologies”, “replace the Creator”, “accepting”
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Table 6: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Homosexual” and “Homosexuality”

While Pope Francis insists on the biological nature of the sexes, and the element or word “nature” can almost be considered as a basis on which he rests to apprehend the themes we have just analyzed, “nature” is not associated with homosexuality. Indeed, the words associated with it are “tendency”, “activity”, “condition” and “option”, which would rather be part of a paradigm of “practice” and “choice”. Moreover, the ideas associated with homosexuals are either that of accompaniment or that of respect to which they are entitled. Indeed, Pope Francis affirms the need to reject “every sign of unjust discrimination”, as well as the “boundless love” that God brings to “every person without exception”. It is a language of ‘love and acceptance’, even if we already had noted in the previous section the notion of “unjust discrimination”, which we do not understand well. The second lexical field could be a ‘psychological’ based on the associated formulas: “accompanied”, “need to understand”, “brought them to the Lord”, “never abandoned anyone”. This suggests that something needs to be fixed, this situation, “activity”, or “tendency” need to be addressed. On the other hand, parenthood among homosexual couples is the subject of a much more negative language “ideology”, “ability to manipulate the reproductive act”, but also religious: “replace the Creator”. The languages mentioned would be binary oppositions of “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. “abnormal” for homosexuals and homosexuality, and “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. “abnormal” and “good” vs “evil” for parenthood among homosexuals. Again, a meaning is constructed, and represents a reality

imposed as the true one, participating in the construction of a truth emanating from an elite as theorized by Foucault.

V.1.4.7. Transsexuality/Transsexuals

<p>Transsexuality/</p> <p>Transsexuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “born a female”, “he suffered greatly”, “he felt that he was a boy”; - “helped”, “accompany it”, ““wasted’ time to accompany”, “welcome it”, “integrate it”, - “sin”, “hormonal imbalances”, “many problems”, “moral problems”, “human problem”, “must be resolved”, “mercy of God”, “with the truth”,
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Table 7: Encoding the results of the language associated with “Transsexuality” and “Transsexual”

Here we find the language of “accompaniment” and the ‘psychological’ lexical field as already described above. Added to this is a much negative, even violent language, creating a lexical field of “medical, psychoanalytical” and ‘problematic paradigm’ while Pope Francis had begun his description of a transsexual as “born a female, he felt he was a boy and suffered greatly”. Finally, he continues by using the formulas “sin”, “hormonal imbalances”, “human, moral problem”, and ends with a religious language, “with the truth”. We could understand that the religious language, through “mercy of God”, would therefore be the truth. This time he is saying it directly. Nevertheless, we can see that he constructs his truth of transsexuality according to the “Regime of Truth” of Foucault, through the binary oppositions “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. “abnormal” and “good” vs. “evil” and the language that shapes his discourses who impose meanings and excludes any definition or reality other than his own.

V.1.5. Verification of the hypothesis and conclusion

Our hypothesis was as such: **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors (1), which deconstruct the concept of *gender* (2) through the construction of his Truth of *gender* (3)”**.

(3) In the previous section, we have seen how Pope Francis constructs his truth of the themes we have selected, namely *Gender Theory/Ideology, Marriage and Family, Woman/Women, Man/Men, Abortion/Woman Body, Homosexuality/Homosexuals, Transsexuality/Transsexuals*. For a recall, we had identified in the state of art the strategy of the Holy See to deconstruct the concept of *gender* through its reduction into a *gender theory* that includes:

- The imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is supposed to be only biological.
- The reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage.
- The dangers of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples.

In the light of the information we have obtained from our analysis, it can be confirmed that the *gender theory* is constructed as an imposition, an ideological colonization that calls into question the uniquely biological character of sex and denies the sexual differences and the reciprocity of the sexes, which is against the reality of nature. The male and female sexes are defined by and through their complementarity, but also through their differences in abilities and roles that are inherent to their biological sex. Moreover, marriage is understood and accepted only in a male/female configuration, namely heterosexual. Marriage between homosexuals is not envisioned; moreover, Pope Francis speaks of homosexual unions, which cannot be put on the same level as heterosexual marriage. Parenthood in same-sex couples is, like *gender theory*, an ideology that manipulates the reproductive act and replaces the Creator. Adoption for same-sex couples is not addressed textually in our corpus of text, but its rejection is understood in terms of the gift and act of love that adoption is for married heterosexual couples, thus excluding adoption for same-sex couples who do not meet this definition considered as a truth. Finally, abortion is indeed considered as a danger to society, particularly with regard to population decline, that, combined with reproductive health policies, creates a situation in which intergenerational relations is no longer ensured.

(1) One can notice a certain continuity between the representation of *gender theory* as it is understood by the Church and its components in the literature, and the understanding of *gender theory* by Pope Francis in his discourses. Moreover, the continuity between the definitions and meanings of the role of the sexes and their relationships can also be underlined, even if Pope Francis is more nuanced in his remarks than the two previous popes. Pope Francis thus perpetuates the complementary vision of the sexes and the attribution of their role according to a nature that would be inherent to them, already developed by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Moreover, Pope Francis reproduces almost verbatim this notion of respect for the environment and for nature, linked to the respect for the nature of the sexes, just as much created by God, and which we must accept and respect. Another element that constitutes a continuity is the perpetuation of this imposition of *gender* concept or *gender theory* as domination and ideological colonization from the West. Finally, even if Pope Francis insists on “Misericordia” and stands out for his at some times “modern” remarks about homosexuals or women’s rights and their place on the public stage who/that must be respected, it does not formally contradict the position of the Church on the subjects we treated. This is verified with the analysis of extracts from *Amoris Laetitia* which reflects the Pope's conclusion on family, but also the considering for the opinion of Ecclesiastics on this subject. If we have not addressed the ins and outs of the discussions that took place during the two synods of 2014 and 2015, we can, at the very least, say that Pope Francis has reached a consensus, and thus perpetuates this continuity. Therefore, we can confirm that Pope Francis's discourses do indeed participate in a meta-discourse of the Church and her predecessors.

(2) Finally, we have demonstrated the construction of a ‘Regime of Truth’ by Pope Francis, who participates through his speeches into a meta-discourse of the Church and its components and perpetuates it. In our hypothesis, this construction of his truth deconstructs the gender concept.

As a reminder, we have defined the *gender* concept in the state of art as well, based on the elements considered as common denominators on which academics agree: “**gender as a scope of studies, a general axis of method²²⁴, allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction**”.

²²⁴ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., *op. cit.* p. 8

Thus, he contradicts and deconstructs the concept of *gender* by reducing it to a single theory or ideology that would not allow reflection and plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction, but that colonizes minds and imposes the single thought. We can point out the paradox of pointing the finger at the closed and dominating character of a concept that he reconstructs through a Regime of Truths, which by definition implies the production of a truth through an official discourse produced by an elite that it embodies, which imposes representations and meanings of reality considered as the true ones. This paradox can be explained by the need for the Church to establish its control over the faithful in order to maintain its power on the international scene within an increasingly secularized world, where power is understood through representations, meanings, speeches and thus, words. This seems logical in view of what post-structuralist theory explains about dominant discourses: they allow elites to establish and increase their power.

VI. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to reflect on the problematic of the construction of *gender* by Pope Francis on the international scene. This problematic is the fruit of a desire to question the current power of the Holy See, which is proving to be a topical issue. Indeed, Pope Francis' pontificate marks a turning point in the culture of governance of the Holy See, which must face new political challenges: the demand for the right to access to abortion, especially in Argentina, the rights of LGBT persons and the rise of the concept of *gender* as a field of study that has gained legitimacy following its development in universities for several decades. Our first task was to understand the context that has cradled the new spiritual and political leader of the Vatican since the beginning of his pontificate. This allowed us to address the issue of the progressivism he would show through his internal reforms and political communication. Seen as a simple man, close to people and good orator, he quickly conquered hearts and minds after a pontificate of Benedict XVI who had the image of a traditional pope, maybe even radical. Nevertheless, the scandals of pedophilia and money laundering also punctuate the pontificate of the new pope, who multiplies the measures and appearances on the international scene. This contextualization allowed us to identify interventions of the Pope on the notion of *gender*, as a theory or an ideology. Our approach has therefore been to immerse ourselves in the scientific literature dealing with the relationship between *gender* and the Church, and more particularly how the Church apprehends and understands the notion of *gender*. The reception of *gender* studied by the Church is mainly treated through the social-constructivist approach, which understands power as a construction of reality through representations and discourses. Thus, *gender* is not a material question but a question of representation, addressed through the discourses of a plurality of actors on the international scene. This has allowed us to highlight the strategy of the Holy See to deconstruct the notion of *gender* since 1995, the pivotal date of the meeting of *gender* and the Church on the occasion of the UN international conferences. This strategy began with the Holy See's opposition to the introduction of the word *gender* in official UN documents. We have seen the emergence of different actors who position themselves against the concept of *gender* at the international level, but also ecclesiastics, experts, Catholic academics and anti-*gender* associations, who have multiplied the writings and mobilizations against the *gender theory*. This strategy is thus well translated by the reduction of the concept of *gender* into a single theory or ideology and would, moreover, bring about a certain number of ideas and impositions: the imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is

supposed to be only biological; the reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage; the danger of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples. This enabled us to refine our **research problem in research question**, namely *“How does Pope Francis represent and relay the gender concept in his international discourses?”*. To answer this question, we had to choose a theoretical approach on which we were relying to test our hypothesis. We have chosen the post-structuralist approach, which emphasizes the notion of discourse, language and binary oppositions allowing the elites who construct them to implement an official discourse, a dominant discourse. This dominant discourse excludes any person or discourse that does not correspond to the truth imposed by the elite, strengthened by its authority. Moreover, it allows the elite to increase their power. The articulation of the elite elements, binary language and opposition and discourse, was theorized by Michel Foucault and is called the “Regime of Truth”. This allowed us to redefine our **central research question**, namely *“How does Pope Francis build his Truth of gender, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”*. We also formulated our **hypothesis**, which is as follows: *“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the gender concept through the construction of his Truth of gender”*. To test our hypothesis, we selected discourses in order to proceed to a quantitative analysis divided into three non-watertight axes. These axes were themselves based on the definition of the “gender theory” identified in the state of art, which also allowed us to verify the possible continuity between the discourse produced by the Church and its components and the discourses of Pope Francis. We have therefore verified, through the empirical analysis of extracts from the Pope’s discourses, how he constructs a ‘Regime of Truth’ for each of the themes and elements present in the three axes, namely “Gender Theory/Ideology”, “Marriage and Family”, “Woman/Women”, “Man/Men”, “Abortion/Woman Body”, “Homosexuality/Homosexuals”, “Transsexuality/Transsexuals”. This allowed us to verify one of the three dimensions of our hypothesis, through the construction of Pope Francis’ “Regime of Truth” about gender. Thus, we confirmed that the gender concept is understood by the Pope only through the “gender theory”, which is constructed as an imposition, an ideological colonization that calls into question the uniquely biological character of sex and denies the sexual differences and the reciprocity of the sexes, which is against the reality of nature. In addition, gender theory includes the themes outlined above, which are also defined by the Pope. Indeed, the male and female sexes are defined by and through their complementarity, but also through their differences in abilities and roles that

are inherent to their biological sex. Moreover, marriage is understood and accepted only in a male/female configuration, namely heterosexual. Marriage between homosexuals is not envisaged; moreover, Pope Francis speaks of homosexual unions, which cannot be put on the same level as heterosexual marriage. Parenthood in same-sex couples is, like *gender theory*, an ideology that manipulates the reproductive act and replaces the Creator. Adoption for same-sex couples is not addressed textually in our corpus of text, but its rejection is understood in terms of the gift and act of love that adoption is for married heterosexual couples, thus excluding adoption for same-sex couples who do not meet this definition considered as a truth. Finally, abortion is indeed considered as a danger to society, particularly with regard to population decline, that, combined with reproductive health policies, creates a situation in which intergenerational relations is no longer ensured. The analysis of Pope Francis's 'Regime of Truth' about *gender* allowed us to identify the continuities between his discourse and those of the Church and its predecessors, confirming the second dimension of our hypothesis. This dimension is the Pope's participation into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors. Finally, we have demonstrated how this 'Regime of truth' deconstructs the concept of *gender*, that we had defined through and in the state of the art as "*a scope of studies, a general axis of method*²²⁵, *allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction*". Indeed, we verify this dimension of the hypothesis by highlighting the Pope's reduction of the *gender* concept into a *gender theory* in his speeches. The *gender theory* could be understood as a summary of the opposition of the Church and the Pope to the difference between social sexes, free sexual orientation and the rights of abortion, same-sex marriage and same-sex abortion. This deconstructs the broad character of the *gender* concept, which is more akin to a framework, "a general axis of method²²⁶". The ideological colonization and indoctrination that this theory would imply, contradict the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction that the *gender* concept allows. Finally, this strategy of the Holy See to designate the other as the enemy and the *gender theory* as the colonizer of minds imposing a single thought through a 'Regime of truth' - which, by definition produces a truth imposed by the authority of an elite in a dominant discourse, excluding others and preventing any form of questioning - is, at the very least, paradoxical.

²²⁵ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., *op. cit.* p. 8

²²⁶ *Ibidem*

This paradox could be explained by the increasing of a “de-secularization” of the society on the International scene and such, a decrease of the power of the Holy See on the international scene.

Limits and perspectives

Regarding the limits of our work, we can notice that this research is based on a discourses analysis that could have been broader and included more speeches. This is one of the limits of our work. We could also have gone deeper into the theory, especially the one of Judith Butler. Moreover, we discovered from our empirical analysis that it was difficult to establish a spatio-temporal link in the discourses of the Pope. Indeed, Pope Francis also stands out for his nuances, his remarks sometimes based on the necessity of respect and its translation into rights, sometimes by remarks based on a negative and quite harsh language towards certain parts of the population. The rejection of ideology and the difficulty of establishing directly a clear guideline in the Pope's words could be explained by his belonging to the Jesuit community, which is characterized by the exercise of casuistry. The importance of treating each situation case by case, linked to the notion of “Misericordia” take shape in the personal stories he tells, or through the stories of people he met and accompanied. This technique is similar to the political communication technique of storytelling. Hence, this research could be part of a broader research, which would study the communication instruments used by the Pope as a political and spiritual leader. Speeches could be studied according to the audience to which the Pope is addressed, or the environment in which he finds himself. Indeed, we have identified three different types of audiences in this thesis: Clerics and the Church, the people of the world, and finally the journalists in the press conferences given in the planes. The first press conference in a plane on the way back from Rio is a typical example of a moment during which the Pope gives himself a certain freedom in his speech, and utters sentences that have marked the minds, as if “*If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?*”²²⁷. This observation leads us to wonder if press conferences can constitute a political communication tool for the Pope? And if so, in what way and for what purpose? If we are not able to answer these questions so far, we have nevertheless tried to understand more deeply the reception of the *gender* concept by the Church and Pope Francis. This research is part of a desire to complete the work on *gender* and the Church, or at the very least, to participate at our level in the development of this field of research.

²²⁷ Press conference of Pope Francis during the Return flight, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html (accessed on 10/06/2018)

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APPENDIX 1: List of discourses

N.	Date	Place	Nature	Pp.	Link
1	08/07/2013	Italy, Lampedusa	Homely	3	https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html
2	28/07/2013	Rio De Janeiro	Press conference (plane)	21	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html
3	11/04/2014	BICE, Holy See	Discourse	3	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html
4	17/11/2014	Holy See	Discourse	3	https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141117_congregazione-dottrina-fede.html
5	18/01/2015	The Philippines, Manila	Discourse	8	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150118_srilanka-filippine-incontro-giovani.html
6	19/01/2015	Sri Lanka and The Philippines	Press conference (plane)	10	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html
7	21/03/2015	Italy, Naples	Discourse	5	https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150321_napoli-pompei-giovani.html ,
8	14/06/2015	Holy See	Discourse	6	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html
9	19/03/2016	Holy See	Amoris Laetitia: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation	264	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html
10	12/05/2016	USIG, Holy See	Interview	12	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_uisg.html
11	27/07/2016	Poland, Kraków	Interview	10	https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco_20160727_polonia-vescovi.html
12	01/10/2016	Georgia	Discourse	5	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161001_georgia-sacerdoti-religiosi.html

N.	Date	Place	Nature	Pp.	<u>Link</u>
13	02/10/2016	Azerbaijan	Press Conference (plane)	12	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html
14	25/01/2017	Holy See	General Audience	3	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170125_udienza-generale.html
15	09/06/2017	Holy See	Discourse	3	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170609_pontconsiglio-dialogo-interreligioso.html
16	05/01/2018	Holy See	Discourse	3	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180105_maestri-cattolici.html
17	16/06/2018	Holy See	Discourse	7	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html
18	28/08/2018	Ireland	Press Conference (plane)	10	http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/august/documents/papa-francesco_20180826_irlanda-voloritorno.html
19	26/11/2013	<i>New Life</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.lifenews.com/2013/11/26/pope-francis-catholic-churchs-pro-life-teaching-on-abortion-cant-change/
20	22/12/2014	<i>Vatican Insider</i>	Press Article	/	http://www.lastampa.it/2014/12/22/vaticaninsider/pope-francis-the-fifteen-diseases-of-the-curia-ru2arcS66IjkmIqG8GF7OI/pagina.html
21	16/01/2015	<i>The Guardian</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/16/pope-francis-catholic-church-contraception
22	02/02/2015	<i>New Life</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.lifenews.com/2015/02/02/pope-francis-respect-human-life-from-conception-to-natural-death/
23	27/08/2018	<i>France 24, Europe</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.france24.com/en/20180827-vatican-catholic-church-pope-francis-gay-children-parent-psychiatric-help
24	28/08/2018	<i>Euro News</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.france24.com/en/20180827-vatican-catholic-church-pope-francis-gay-children-parent-psychiatric-help
25	28/08/2018	<i>The Independent</i>	Press Article	/	https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-homosexuality-gay-children-psychiatry-vatican-catholic-church-a8510721.html

APPENDIX 2: “Ambiguous and debatable terms regarding family life and ethical questions”, Preface: Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo

1	<i>A demographic implosion in Europe?</i>	G.F. Dumont
2	<i>A new model of a Welfare State</i>	T. Raga
3	<i>A new paradigm of health</i>	R. Paccini
4	<i>An ideology of gender: dangers and scope</i>	O. Alzamora
5	<i>Assisted procreation and FIVET</i>	J.L. Bruguès
6	<i>Bioethics committees</i>	E. Sgreccia
7	<i>Biotechnology: the state and forms of fundamentalism</i>	E. Sgreccia
8	<i>Birth control and demographic implosion</i>	M. Schooyans
9	<i>Catholic women for a free choice</i>	B. Clowes
10	<i>Children and labor</i>	R. Valenzona
11	<i>Children's rights and sexual violence</i>	D. Kornas-Biela
12	<i>Children's Rights</i>	Marie Th. Hermange
13	<i>Conjugal love?</i>	F. Gil Hellin
14	<i>Contraceptive mentality (The)</i>	G. Kaszak
15	<i>Contraception</i>	M.L. Di Pietro
16	<i>Counselling for pregnant women in Germany,</i>	H. Reis
17	<i>De facto unions</i>	H. Franceschi
18	<i>Demography, demographic transition and policies,</i>	G.F. Dumont
19	<i>Dignity of the child (The)</i>	L. Scheffczyk
20	<i>Dignity of the human embryo</i>	A. Serra
21	<i>Discrimination against women and CEDAW</i>	F.J. Errázuriz
22	<i>Domestic economy</i>	J.D. Lecaillon
23	<i>Embryonic selection and reduction</i>	A. Serra
24	<i>Equal rights for men and women</i>	G. Cottier
25	<i>Euthanasia</i>	I. Carrasco
26	<i>Extended Family (The)</i>	G. Campanini
27	<i>Family and personalism (The)</i>	F. Moreno
28	<i>Family and philosophy (The)</i>	H. Ramsay
29	<i>Family and sustainable development (The)</i>	A. d'Entremont
30	<i>Family and the principle of subsidiarity (The)</i>	J.L. Gutiérrez

31	<i>Family and the rights of minors (The)</i>	F. D'Agostino
32	<i>Family counseling services</i>	L. Pati
33	<i>Family, nature and the person (The)</i>	J.M. Meyer
34	<i>Fertility and continence</i>	R.M. Joseph
35	<i>Free choice</i>	William E. May
36	<i>Gender</i>	J. Burggraf
37	<i>Genome and the family (The)</i>	R. Colombo
38	<i>Hardness of heart a future possibility?</i>	J.A. Reig
39	<i>Homosexual "marriage"</i>	A. Polaino Lorente
40	<i>Homosexuality and homophobia</i>	T. Anatrella
41	<i>Imperfect and iniquitous laws</i>	A. Rodriguez Luño
42	<i>Indissoluble marriage?</i>	F. Di Felice
43	<i>Informed consent</i>	A. Galindo
44	<i>Legal status of the human embryo (The)</i>	C. Barra
45	<i>Manipulation of language</i>	W. Neville
46	<i>Marriage with differences in religion,</i>	C.M. Ruppi
47	<i>Marriage, separation, divorce and the conscience</i>	F. López-Illana
48	<i>Medical interruption of pregnancy (The)</i>	J.M. Lé Méne
49	<i>Mixed marriage and discrimination,</i>	C.M. Ruppi
50	<i>Motherhood and feminism</i>	J. H. Matlary
51	<i>Neutral genetic consultancy</i>	G. Herranz
52	<i>New definitions of gender</i>	B. Vollmer
53	<i>New family models</i>	J. Hagan
54	<i>New human rights</i>	A. Lobato
55	<i>Parenthood</i>	A. Lobato
56	<i>Partial birth abortion</i>	J. Suaudeau
57	<i>Patriarchy and matriarchy</i>	V. Mathieu
58	<i>Person and integral procreation (The)</i>	A. Lobato
59	<i>Personalization</i>	A. Lobato
60	<i>Phenomenon of privatization (The)</i>	A. López Trujillo
61	<i>Pre-implantation and emergency contraception</i>	J. Wilks
62	<i>Principle and argument of the lesser evil (The)</i>	F.C. FernAndez
63	<i>Pro-choice</i>	J. and M. Meaney

64	<i>Quality of life</i>	R. Paccini
65	<i>Recomposed family (The)</i>	Anna Kwak
66	<i>Reproductive health</i>	L. Ciccone
67	<i>Responsible parenthood</i>	C. Caffarra
68	<i>Right to abortion (The)</i>	A. Grzeskowiak
69	<i>Safe motherhood</i>	J.R. Flecha
70	<i>Safe sex</i>	J. Suaudeau
71	<i>Sex education,</i>	A. Polaino Lorente
72	<i>Sexual and reproductive rights</i>	J.A. Peris
73	<i>Sexual identity and difference</i>	A. Scola
74	<i>Single-parent family (The)</i>	C. Meves
75	<i>Traditional family (The)</i>	S. Belardinelli
76	<i>Verbal engineering</i>	I. Barreiro
77	<i>Voluntary interruption of pregnancy (The)</i>	C. Casini
78	<i>What bioethics?</i>	M. Lalonde

SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. Contextualization: Is Pope Francis, a progressive pope?

Pope Francis was elected bishop of Rome on the 13 March 2013 and became the 266th pope of the Catholic Church. One only need take a look at the numerous reforms initiated since the beginning of his pontificate to see that Pope Francis stands out from his predecessors. He created the Council of Cardinal Advisers (C9), which aim is to help the Pope to govern²²⁸, and draw a new “Constitution” for the Vatican administration. He created the new position of Secretary of Economy, in order to break the stranglehold of the State Secretary on the Vatican²²⁹, which illustrates his will of collegiality in the exercise of power. Moreover, the Pope began to tackle the issue of the Institute for the Works of Religion²³⁰ (IOR), which is at the heart of many financial scandals for the last thirty years. This set of measures are unacceptable for some of the members of the Roman Curia. Therefore, an opposition gets organized in the Vatican, led by the traditionalists who do not accept that the sovereign goes down from his throne. Indeed, they have to accept a change of culture of governance within the Roman Curia. His reforms, but also his stands on migrants and the oppressed, helped to build the image of Pope Francis as a progressive pope. Thus, what about his position concerning the *gender* concept?

The first example that can be noted are the speeches made during his trip to Rio de Janeiro in July 2013, where he addressed the issue of the ordination of women, which he believes is not relevant. Moreover, he declared: “*If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him? The problem is not having this tendency,*²³¹”. Therefore, this statement suggests that Pope Francis was ready to modernize the Church’s position on certain *gender* issues. However, this has been put into perspective on several occasions, notably during the controversy over the French program called *The ABCD of equality*. Following this, Pope

²²⁸ This most symbolic decision will enter the annals of the Roman Church, used to expect ruling decisions only from the pope. “François, le pape qui voulait changer le monde, France 2, 25/09/2016, Partie 2, Available online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJAy2K8nrDA> (accessed on 3/03/2018)

²²⁹ “Toward a rapid reform of the Roman Curia?”, *FSSPX NEWS*, (17/05/2013), Available online: <http://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/toward-rapid-reform-roman-curia-22714>, (accessed on 14/06/2018)

²³⁰ IOR website: <http://www.ior.va/content/ior/en.html>

²³¹ Press conference of Pope Francis during the Return flight, Apostolic Journey to Rio De Janeiro on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, Papal Flight, 28/07/2013, Available online : http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html (accessed on 10/06/2018)

Francis reacted strongly by declaring that this initiative was an “*ideological colonization*”²³² and an “*insidious indoctrination*”²³³. Regarding the issue of abortion, even though Pope Francis’s words are less extreme than those held by his predecessors, his position seems to be in the same line as these. He also defended Church’s opposition to artificial contraception in a speech in Philippines.

To conclude, he is political leader who has been able to modernize the Church through his reforms, and reintegrate it at the center of great international debates thanks to his numerous interventions on the international scene. However, it is difficult to consider as a “progressive” pope regarding his reactions to the so-called “*gender theory*”, the right to abortion and the same-sex marriage right or the role of women in the Church.

I.2. Structure of the thesis

The context allows us to glimpse the premises of his perpetuation of the Church's tradition on *gender* issues, which turns out to be a pressing issue among current events on the international scene. More importantly, the notion of *gender* seems to be understood differently by the Church than by other actors. How can this be explained? How did *gender* become such a controversial subject and how the Church became one of the main actors in this controversial debate?

These are the questions we will try to answer, through the exploration of the following problematic: “**How does Pope Francis build the *gender* concept on the international scene?**”

To do so, we will review the literature in the second chapter, which will allow us to situate ourselves in it. Thus, we will begin this state of the art by exploring Realism in International Relations, confronting two well-known authors and their understanding of power: Raymond Aron and Hans Morgenthau. This will allow us to understand that the *gender* notion is not a material issue but a question of representation. This is why we will continue the exploration of literature with in social- constructivist theory, the cradle of the Catholic Church's reception of *gender*. This will allow us to refine our problematic into a research question:

- “**How does Pope Francis represent and relay the *gender* concept in his international discourses?**”.

²³² News Wires, *France 4*, 10/03/2016, Available online: <http://www.france24.com/en/20161003-pope-gender-theory-studies-catholic-church>, (accessed on 20/06/2018)

²³³ *Ibidem*

This brings us to our third chapter. We will use the Post-structuralist approach to understand the notions of discourse and language, but also considers the notion of dominant discourse, imposed by the authority of an elite who constructs meaning and knowledge. In particular, we will mobilize the 'Regime of Truth', theorized by Michel Foucault, which consists of the articulation of three elements: elites, language and binary oppositions and discourses, which allows the study of the production of a truth. This will then allow us to turn our research question into a central question:

- **“How does Pope Francis build his “Truth” of the *gender* concept, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”.**

We also deduce our hypothesis, which will be as follows:

- **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate in a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the *gender* concept through the construction of his “Truth” of *gender*.”**

To test our hypothesis, we will proceed to a qualitative analysis discourses of Pope Francis, a corpus of texts composed of 388 pages. Our analysis would be separated in three parts, entitles “*Gender Theory*” and “*Gender Ideology*”, “*Men and Women’s representation*”, and “*Free sexual orientation and human rights*”. Our approach will be to understand the construction of a Truth by the Pope for each of the themes addressed in the axes, in order to verify our hypothesis. We will therefore try to rely on the “Regime of Truth” of Foucault and analyze the extracts of the speeches selected through it. Finally, we will analyze our results in a summary table, which will allow us to gather the information and, eventually, to verify our hypothesis.

II. STATE OF ART: THE GENDER NOTION AND THE CHURCH IN LITERATURE

II.1. The social-constructivist approach: cradle of the *gender's* understanding by the Church. Relevance of the approach and research question.

The state of art enabled us to review the reception of *gender studies* by the Catholic Church, and more broadly, to understand its relationship with the Holy See and its various components since the two previous pontificates. This allows us both to highlight the Holy See's strategy of deconstruction of the *gender* notion through the reconstruction of its definition made possible by the discourses, but also to understand the evolution of the position of the previous popes regarding women's issues and sexual issues. The essentialist and naturalist argument are the guideline that makes the Church able to counter and to avoid any evolution in the analysis of the sexes and their social role.

As a first step, this strategy is being used on several levels: within international organizations at Conferences about equality between men and women since 1975; within the Holy See, which harmonizes its discourse and internationalizes it thanks to the popes' interventions on the international scene; within anti-*gender* associations such as *VigiGender*, which intervenes directly in schools; in the literature through the production of writings and commentaries by Catholics “*gender experts*” such as Monsignor Tony Anatrella.

If agents are extremely diversified, their definition of *gender* and their alarmist message related to the danger it represents are identical. Therefore, they reduce the concept of *gender* to the *gender theory or ideology* that includes:

- (1) The imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is supposed to be only biological.
- (2) The reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage.
- (3) The danger of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples.

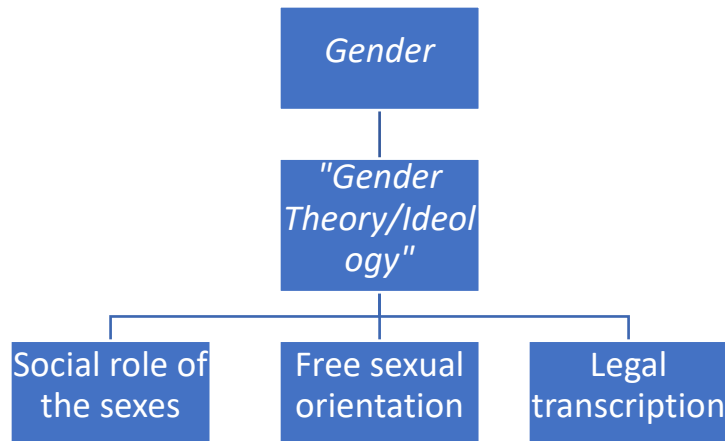


Figure 1: Mapping of the construction of a *gender*'s definition by the Church

To implement these definitions, several techniques are also mobilized. Indeed, through language and discursive strategy, Church attacks:

- (1) The “unscientific”, “vague”, and “floating” nature of *gender*
- (2) The “ambiguous” character of the word *theory* in the social sciences
- (3) The “Western domination” character of *sexual orientation*, *gender identity* and the *social construction of sexes* where homosexuality that is presented as an “anomaly”.

This contributes to the construction of a lexical field of controversy and imposition from those who attack the foundations of the Church, which justifies the need to defend oneself, to avoid the harmful consequences for the whole society.

The interests hidden behind this strategy seem political. In this way, the Church seeks to reintegrate the international debate in an increasingly secularized society. If the secularization of society implies a diminution of the power of the Church on the international scene, would the struggle of representations not be a political stake and of power? In any case, the Holy See is positioned as an actor that must be considered on the international scene, reinforced by its allies and a leader who, since two pontificates, perpetuates a negative image of the notion of *gender*.

It is important to note that social-constructivism has allowed us to develop what we expect by *gender*. Indeed, in order to highlight the possible “deconstruction” of *gender* by the Church, we need to define this concept “in a certain extend”, even is the purpose of this thesis is in not

to oppose a “true” definition of *gender*, elaborated by academics, to a “false” definition of *gender*, elaborated by the Church. First, it would not be a scientific procedure. Second, trying to develop a “real” definition of *gender* is an impossible undertaking, given that it is an extremely debated concept within the literature itself, which takes different forms and interpretations depending on the authors. This is what makes *gender studies* extremely rich and diversified, particularly in terms of the number of subjects they cover.

The purpose of this thesis is to treat *gender* as it is understood by the Church, which was made possible with the literature review that allowed us to deduce a kind of definition on which all the authors seem to agree on. This is confirmed by the interventions of academics, who explain that a unified “*gender theory*” does not exist, at least not if the question is to reduce the *gender* concept to a single theory: “*Gender is a concept. It is not a theory or an ideology, but a tool that helps people to think*²³⁴”.

In light of this information, we will consider ***gender as a scope of studies, a general axis of method***²³⁵, **allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction.**

To conclude this section, the social-constructivist approach is relevant for addressing *gender* issues and the Church. Nevertheless, this theoretical approach is singled out by its consideration of various actors, and this is confirmed in the works analyzed above that deal with the Church and its components in the broad sense. Since our main actor is clearly identified, we would like to go further in this notion of actor, in order to understand the power he exercises through speeches. This is not highlighted in the social-constructivist approach, or at least in view of the information we have founded. For this reason, we do not completely reject this theoretical approach, but wish to go further, using the post-structuralist approach to focus on the unique study of the discourses of the new pope in office, Pope Francis.

Finally, this section allows us to elaborate our research question: “**How does Pope Francis represent and relay the *Gender* concept in his international discourses?**”

²³⁴ Trans. by Roxane Misk: Eric Fassin : « *le genre est un concept. Ce n'est pas une théorie ni une idéologie, mais un outil qui aide à penser* », in Soullier, L., Roucaute, D., *Le Monde*, “Masculin-Féminin : cinq idées reçues sur les études de genre”, Available online : https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2013/05/25/masculin-feminin-cinq-idees-recues-sur-les-etudes-de-genre_3174157_3224.html, (accessed on 25/05/2018)

²³⁵ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., (2008), *op. cit.* p. 8

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FROM FOUCAULT TO POPE FRANCIS

III.1. Relevance of social-constructivist approach: research question

Post-Structuralism is often connected to the theoretical positions developed *in* and *from* the work of Althusser, Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault. Even though this theoretical approach consists of different practices and political applications, several fundamental assumptions are shared about language, meanings and subjectivity²³⁶. These elements are mobilized in **discourses**, in which “*certain accepted ‘facts’ and beliefs’ actually work to reinforce the dominance and power of particular actors within International Relations*²³⁷”. Indeed, this theoretical approach allows for an analysis of the world and International Relations that questions what is accepted as “truth” or “knowledge”. Moreover, truths and knowledge, that could be transformed in universal laws, are seen by poststructuralists as a set of interpretations that actually shape the world. This introduces the criticism and skepticism that researchers must exercise, both toward theories that claim to be able to identify objective facts and toward universal messages that claim to offer objective view of the world or a universal truth. These truths are in fact the result of the influence of pre-existing hypotheses of what truth or knowledge are, which turn out to be subjective entities that are not discovered, but produced. Critics are therefore focused on the lack of consideration for the diversity of international relations by certain theories, but also on the notion of power, which is understood as the power imposed by certain actors, known as '**elites**', on others to make them accept this “knowledge” they build²³⁸.

These elites are multiple and have different roles in society. They can either be government ministers, business leaders, media, from the moment they influence society by the choices they make. It can also be Church²³⁹, since elites could be seen as “*experts within society, giving them the authority to further reinforce their viewpoints that serve their best interests to a wide audience*²⁴⁰”. Moreover, post-structuralists stress the **authority** of the elites, who puts it into practice by manipulating discourses to increase their power. Thus, discourses able to increase power are called **official, or dominant**. Their strength is their ability to oust other discourses,

²³⁶ Weedon, C., *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*, Cambridge and Oxford, Basil Blackwell, (1987), p. 20

²³⁷ Mc Morrow, A., “Poststructuralism”, in McGlinchey, S., Walters, R., Gold, D., (dir.), *International Relations Theory*, E-International Relations, England, (2017), p. 56

²³⁸ *Ibidem*

²³⁹ Weedon, C., (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 35

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56-57

options or opinions, which are thus seen as irrational²⁴¹, or as we have seen previously, unscientific.

Language is a central notion of poststructuralist approach, because it creates and perpetuates the **dominant discourse**. Moreover, it is composed of *binary oppositions* which are hierarchical pairs. In these binary oppositions, one element of the pair is emphasized and favored over the other. This provides the creation or perpetuation of meanings²⁴².

III.2. Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Norms, Sexuality and Gender

Foucault worked on the discursive production of homosexuality as a subject position that he analyzed in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1.*, whose aim is ““to define the regime of power-knowledge-please²⁴³, sustaining the discourse on human sexuality in the West²⁴⁴”. Indeed, the body and sexuality are central elements in the work of the philosopher, who does focus solely on the perception and the meaning of the body. Thus, “sex has become a focal point of the exercise of power through the discursive constitution of the body [but also] a focal point in subjective identity²⁴⁵”. Moreover, Foucault's works are related to those of Judith Butler, who is also a theoretician of *gender*, body and sexuality and considered by the opponent of *gender* as the “female pope of the ideology they denounce²⁴⁶”. Butler's angle of analysis is the rejection of the notion of *gender* identity, but also of a stable sexual orientation²⁴⁷. As such, compulsory heterosexuality is seen as a norm, participating to the construction of *identity categories*, which is actually produced by *institution, practices* and *discourses*. This is relevant regarding the compulsory heterosexuality imposed by the institution of the Church as a ‘natural’ norm, relayed in the discourses of its components.

III.3. Pope Francis and the ‘Regime of Truth’

The “Regime of Truth” developed by Michel Foucault is **the articulation of elites, dominant discourse and the power of the language shaped by the binary oppositions constitute together the “Regime of Truth”**. They allow the creation of a truth that “that serves the

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*

²⁴² *Ibidem*

²⁴³ Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, (1979), p. 11, in Weedon, C., (1987), *op cit.*, p. 118

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 109-110

²⁴⁵ *Ibidem*

²⁴⁶ Paternotte, D., “Habemus Gender! Autopsie d’une obsession vaticane, *Sextant*, Vol. 31, (2015), p. 19

²⁴⁷ Thiel, M., « Queer Theory », in, McGlinchey, S., Walters, R., Gold, D., (dir.), *International Relations Theory*, E-International Relations, England, (2017), p. 98

interest of the favored actors²⁴⁸”. Moreover, “this model applies to the ruling discourse that operates unquestioned within society, masquerading as the truth or fact²⁴⁹”.

Later, Foucault refines his concept by “putting it at the heart of his historical study of Christianity²⁵⁰”.

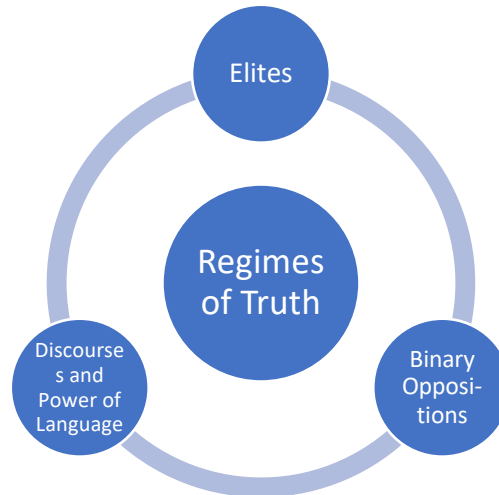


Figure 2: ‘Regime of Truth’ – Foucault

Here, Pope Francis will be the elite who tries to impose the power of the Church institution through binary oppositions that shape the language of his discourses. This ‘Regime of Truth’ applied to our research question is relevant regarding the fact that this theory emphasizes the strategic field in which truth is produced. This is directly connected to the strategy of the Church to deconstruct the *gender* by constructing a new definition of it and thus, try to implement what it considers as true.

This leads us to the refinement of our research question, which turns into our central question: **“How does Pope Francis build his Truth of *gender*, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”**.

Hence, the hypothesis we will try to verify in the analysis of the discourses of Pope Francis is: **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the *gender* concept through the construction of his Truth of *gender*”**.

²⁴⁸ Mc Morrow, A., (2017), p. 58

²⁴⁹ *Ibidem*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

IV. METHODOLOGY

IV.1. Methodological approach of discourses: “discourse productivity”

In our research, we have chosen to understand discourse through the notion of “productivity”, as Milliken explains it: “*Discourse productivity: the second theoretical commitment is to discourses as being productive (or reproductive) of things defined by the discourse. The point here is that beyond giving a language for speaking about (analyzing, classifying) phenomena, discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular regime of truth while excluding other possible modes of identity and action*²⁵¹”.

Our approach will therefore be:

- (1) to determine how the authority is reflected in the discourse.
- (2) to determine what language is used, and who/what is included or excluded from that discourse, thus who/what is considered as opposing the official and dominant discourse.
- (3) to identify binary oppositions, namely what is considered as “natural” vs. “unnatural”, “normal” vs. abnormal, “good” vs. “evil” or “us” vs. “them”.

The structure of the analysis is divided into three axes, based on the Church's definition of *gender* identified in the state of art:

- (1) “*Gender theory/ideology*”; in order to verify whether we could indeed detect a special language emerging around this “*gender theory*” axis, or if there was room for the word *gender* without being juxtaposed with the word “theory” and “ideology” in Pope Francis’s discourses
- (2) “*Men and women's representation*”;
- (3) “*Freedom of sexual orientation and human rights*”;

²⁵¹ Milliken, J., “The Study of Discourse in International Relations”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2), (1999), p. 229

IV.2. Case selection and temporality

In our analysis, we will mobilize discourses that were delivered between 2013 and 2018. This temporality covers the pontificate of Pope Francis, elected on 13 March 2013. Moreover, our corpus of texts amounts 388 pages, which includes:

- Discourses that can be considered as “classical”, which are entitled “*Addresses*”;
- Press Conferences given in planes;
- Interviews;
- General Audience, which is the Pope's meeting with those who wish to listen to him, and which takes place every Wednesday in St Peter's Square in Rome;
- Homely, which is a commentary following a reading a scripture during Mass.
- Press articles containing the Pope's words.
- And finally, the *Amoris Laetitia*, the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, which is our most important document, consisting of 264 pages, and dates from the 19th of March 2016. following two synods on the family held in 2014 and 2015. It is composed of nine chapters, and is about love in the family. Finally, it is addressed “to bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful”²⁵², even if it is accessible to all on the official website of the Holy See,. It seemed relevant to select this text which we consider as a discourse. Firstly, because it is considered as a message to the whole community of the faithful, inviting them to follow this common vision that has emerged from the two synods. Secondly, because it reflects the Pope's conclusion on the theme of family, marriage, men and women and sexuality, namely on love. Thirdly, because Pope Francis appealed to the opinions of the faithful throughout the world through questionnaires distributed in bishoprics and churches.

Concerning the space, the discourses we analyze were delivered in the Vatican, Ireland, Brazil, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Italy, Poland, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Moreover, some speeches have been delivered in airplanes, which could give a broader, perhaps even transnational, character to our corpus of texts²⁵³.

²⁵² Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis, to bishops, priests and deacons consecrated persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful, on love in the family, Vatican Press, 19/03/2016, Available online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html, (accessed on 03/07/2018)

²⁵³ Cf. the overview of texts in Appendix

V. DISCOURSES ANALYSIS: HOW DOES POPE FRANCIS BUILD HIS TRUTH ABOUT *GENDER* CONCEPT, BASED ON FOUCAULT’S ‘REGIME OF TRUTH’?

V.1.1. Overview of the results

We have developed a “table of results” of our analysis. In a way, it is a summary of the information we have found in the empirical material, which is classified by a chosen to classify them by theme or subject addressed, to be able to understand the Pope's general definition of these concepts.

V.1.1.1. *“Gender Theory” / “Gender Ideology”*

	Language
<p><i>“Gender Theory / Gender Ideology”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warlike language, • Lexical field of danger • Definition • Crisis and Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Ideological colonization”, “ideology of gender”, “only one form of thought”, “indoctrination”; - “dictatorship”, “great genocidal dictatorship”, “dictatorial path”, “dictating”, “world war”, “Hitler Youth”, “radically”, “suffering”, “empires”, “loss of freedom”, “under attack”, “great enemy”, “destroy”, “world war”, “weapons”, “ideas”; - “money”, “influential countries”, “from the West”, “globalization”, “modernity”; - “crisis”, “mistake”, “confusion”, “challenge”, “source of concern”, “horrors”, “mischief”; - “choose his or her sex”, “denies differences and reciprocity in nature” “without sexual differences” “eliminating the anthropological basis of the family”, “absolute and unquestionable”, “biological sex”, “against reality of nature”; - “educational programs”, “children”, “family”, “lab specimens”, “manipulation of education”, “reeducation camp”, “schoolbooks”;

Table 1: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Gender theory” and “Gender ideology”

V.1.1.2. *Marriage and Family*

<p><i>Marriage and family</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature • God • Hierarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “man and a woman”, “father”, “mother”, “correct relationship”, “child’s development”, “complementarity”, “very nature of the conjugal union”, “adoption”, “act of love”, “expend their marital love”, “gift”; - “most beautiful thing”, “God”, “God has created”, “image of God”, “devil”, “religious education”, “complementarity”, “must be complementary”, “complementary view”; - “‘Diversified families’”, “different types of family”, “‘family’ is an analogical term”, “‘family’ of stars”, “‘family’ of trees”, “‘family’ of animals”, “human family as the image of God”; - “union between homosexuals”, “on the same level as marriage”, “absolutely no grounds”, “any similar”, “may not simply be equated”;
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Table 2: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Marriage” and “Family”

V.1.1.3. *Woman/Women*

<p>Woman/Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • In the Family • In the Church • In their Role • Rights • Body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “clever woman”, “glorious woman”, “more beautiful”, “great beauty”, “dedication”, “integrity”, “humble”, “heroic courage”, “courageously”, “great heroine”, “wisdom”, “difficult decision”, “risky decisions”, “ignorant”; - “children”, “family”, “mother”, “grandmother”, “widow”, “center of the family education”, “not exclusively mother”, “field of education”, “formator”, “educators”, “experience of being mother”, “capacity for educating”; - “God’s wisdom”, “language of faith”, “strength of a prophet”, “full faith and courage”, “restore faith of God”, “suffered greatly”, “hope”, “icon of the Church”, “icon of Mary”, “Mary”, “icon of our Lady”, “Church is feminine”, “Church is a woman”; - “femininity”, “feminine topic”, “feminine presence”, “female figure”, “figure of women”, “offers herself”, “mystery of life”, “preservation of life”, “accompany”; - “think differently than men”, “can ask questions that men don’t get”, “specific and specialized skills”, “rebuke men”, “see beyond”, “guides them”, “women view things from a different richness”, “a larger one”, “experience and view reality”, “look at their own eyes”; - “in their role”, “their gifts”, “their accomplishment”, “their condition”, “their convictions”, “their contribution, “her way of being”; - “women in the Church”, “secretary of a dicastery”, “excluded from decision-making process”, “courage to say no”, “service”, “not a servitude”, “distinctive role to play”, “altar savers”, “in charge of Caritas”, “there is more!”; - “small representation, “make a room”, “making more room”, “theirs rights reaffirmed and protects”, “full right to be included”, “feminism», “temptation”, “certain forms of feminism”, “feminine emancipation”, “would reduce a woman’s importance”, “right”, “dignity and rights”, forms of enslavement”, “verbal, physical, “sexual violence”; - “female body”, “genital mutilations”, “surrogate mothers”, “exploitation and commercialization of the female body”;
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Table 3: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Woman/Women”

V.1.1.4. *Man/Men*

<p>Man/Men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Abilities • Role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “better man”, “father”, “masculinity”, “masculine power”, “conscious”, “suitable father figure”; - “machista”, “are not able to look at life this way”, “craven acts of cowardice”, “excesses of patriarchal cultures”, “considered women inferior”, “male chauvinism”; - “equally decisive role in family life”, “protection”, “support of their wives and children”, “importance of their role”;
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Table 4: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Man/men”

V.1.1.5. *Abortion and Woman body*

<p>Abortion/ Woman body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Cheating”, “lying”, “other matters on which the Church has a clear teaching”; - “unnecessary to return to it”, “not necessary to speak”, “Church strongly rejects”, “unacceptable measures” - “danger”, “decline in population”, “development of bio-technology”, “forced State intervention”, “politicians”, “hope for the future”, “problems”; - “mentality against having children”, “dignity of conscience”; - “sterilization”, “contraception”, “in fashion”, “customary”, “first month pregnancy”, “body is not well”, “protocol of doctors”, “first proposal”; - “innocent”, “Nazis”, “white gloves”, “murder of children”
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Table 5: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Abortion” and “Woman body”

V.1.1.6. Homosexuality/Homosexuals

<p>Homosexuality/</p> <p>Homosexuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “tendency”, “tendencies”, “activity”, “this condition”, “this option”, “psychiatry”; - “accompanied”, “as Jesus accompanies them”, “brought them to the Lord”, “some cannot do it”, “never abandoned anyone”, “some people even change sex”, “pastoral guidance”, “need to understand”; - “Boundless love to each person without exception”, “out to be respected”, “every sign of unjust discrimination” - “Same-sex attraction”, “situation not easy”; - “technological revolution”, “field of human procreation”, “ability to manipulate the reproductive act”, “human life”, parenthood”, “separable realities”, “understanding of human weaknesses”, “ideologies”, “replace the Creator”, “accepting”
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Table 6: Encoding the results of the language associated with the words “Homosexual” and “Homosexuality”

V.1.1.7. Transsexuality/Transsexuals

<p>Transsexuality/</p> <p>Transsexuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “born a female”, “he suffered greatly”, “he felt that he was a boy”; - “helped”, “accompany it”, “wasted time to accompany”, “welcome it”, “integrate it”, “sin”, “hormonal imbalances”, “many problems”, “moral problems”, “human problem”, “must be resolved”, “mercy of God”, “with the truth”,
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Table 7: Encoding the results of the language associated with “Transsexuality” and “Transsexual”

V.1.2. Verification of the hypothesis and conclusion

Our hypothesis was as such: **“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors (1), which deconstruct the concept of gender (2) through the construction of his Truth of gender (3)”**.

(3) In the previous section, we have seen how Pope Francis constructs his truth of the themes we have selected. For a recall, we had identified in the state of art the strategy of the Holy See to deconstruct the concept of *gender* through its reduction into a *gender theory* that includes:

- The imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is supposed to be only biological.
- The reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage.
- The dangers of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples.

In the light of the information we have obtained from our analysis, it can be confirmed that the *gender theory* is constructed as an imposition, an ideological colonization that calls into question the uniquely biological character of sex and denies the sexual differences and the reciprocity of the sexes, which is against the reality of nature. The male and female sexes are defined by and through their complementarity, but also through their differences in abilities and roles that are inherent to their biological sex. Moreover, marriage is understood and accepted

only in a male/female configuration, namely heterosexual. Marriage between homosexuals is not envisioned; moreover, Pope Francis speaks of homosexual unions, which cannot be put on the same level as heterosexual marriage. Parenthood in same-sex couples is, like *gender theory*, an ideology that manipulates the reproductive act and replaces the Creator. Adoption for same-sex couples is not addressed textually in our corpus of text, but its rejection is understood in terms of the gift and act of love that adoption is for married heterosexual couples, thus excluding adoption for same-sex couples who do not meet this definition considered as a truth. Finally, abortion is indeed considered as a danger to society, particularly with regard to population decline, that, combined with reproductive health policies, creates a situation in which intergenerational relations is no longer ensured.

(1) One can notice a certain continuity between the representation of *gender theory* as it is understood by the Church and its components in the literature, and the understanding of *gender theory* by Pope Francis in his discourses. Moreover, the continuity between the definitions and meanings of the role of the sexes and their relationships can also be underlined, even if Pope Francis is more nuanced in his remarks than the two previous popes. Pope Francis thus perpetuates the complementary vision of the sexes and the attribution of their role according to a nature that would be inherent to them, already developed by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Moreover, Pope Francis reproduces almost verbatim this notion of respect for the environment and for nature, linked to the respect for the nature of the sexes, just as much created by God, and which we must accept and respect. Another element that constitutes a continuity is the perpetuation of this imposition of *gender* concept or *gender theory* as domination and ideological colonization from the West. Finally, even if Pope Francis insists on “Misericordia” and stands out for his at some times “modern” remarks about homosexuals or women’s rights and their place on the public stage who/that must be respected, it does not formally contradict the position of the Church on the subjects we treated. This is verified with the analysis of extracts from *Amoris Laetitia* which reflects the Pope's conclusion on family, but also the considering for the opinion of Ecclesiastics on this subject. If we have not addressed the ins and outs of the discussions that took place during the two synods of 2014 and 2015, we can, at the very least, say that Pope Francis has reached a consensus, and thus perpetuates this continuity. Therefore, we can confirm that Pope Francis's discourses do indeed participate in a meta-discourse of the Church and her predecessors.

(4) Finally, we have demonstrated the construction of a ‘Regime of Truth’ by Pope Francis, who participates through his speeches into a meta-discourse of the Church and its components and perpetuates it. In our hypothesis, this construction of his truth deconstructs the *gender* concept.

As a reminder, we have defined the *gender* concept in the state of art as well, based on the elements considered as common denominators on which academics agree: “***gender as a scope of studies, a general axis of method***²⁵⁴, **allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction**”.

Thus, he contradicts and deconstructs the concept of *gender* by reducing it to a single theory or ideology that would not allow reflection and plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction, but that colonizes minds and imposes the single thought. We can point out the paradox of pointing the finger at the closed and dominating character of a concept that he reconstructs through a Regime of Truths, which by definition implies the production of a truth through an official discourse produced by an elite that it embodies, which imposes representations and meanings of reality considered as the true ones. This paradox can be explained by the need for the Church to establish its control over the faithful in order to maintain its power on the international scene within an increasingly secularized world, where power is understood through representations, meanings, speeches and thus, words. This seems logical in view of what post-structuralist theory explains about dominant discourses: they allow elites to establish and increase their power.

²⁵⁴ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., *op. cit.* p. 8

VI. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to reflect on the problematic of the construction of *gender* by Pope Francis on the international scene. This problematic is the fruit of a desire to question the current power of the Holy See, which is proving to be a topical issue. Indeed, Pope Francis' pontificate marks a turning point in the culture of governance of the Holy See, which must face new political challenges: the demand for the right to access to abortion, especially in Argentina, the rights of LGBT persons and the rise of the concept of *gender* as a field of study that has gained legitimacy following its development in universities for several decades. Our first task was to understand the context that has cradled the new spiritual and political leader of the Vatican since the beginning of his pontificate. This allowed us to address the issue of the progressivism he would show through his internal reforms and political communication. Seen as a simple man, close to people and good orator, he quickly conquered hearts and minds after a pontificate of Benedict XVI who had the image of a traditional pope, maybe even radical. Nevertheless, the scandals of pedophilia and money laundering also punctuate the pontificate of the new pope, who multiplies the measures and appearances on the international scene. This contextualization allowed us to identify interventions of the Pope on the notion of *gender*, as a theory or an ideology. Our approach has therefore been to immerse ourselves in the scientific literature dealing with the relationship between *gender* and the Church, and more particularly how the Church apprehends and understands the notion of *gender*. The reception of *gender* studied by the Church is mainly treated through the social-constructivist approach, which understands power as a construction of reality through representations and discourses. Thus, *gender* is not a material question but a question of representation, addressed through the discourses of a plurality of actors on the international scene. This has allowed us to highlight the strategy of the Holy See to deconstruct the notion of *gender* since 1995, the pivotal date of the meeting of *gender* and the Church on the occasion of the UN international conferences. This strategy began with the Holy See's opposition to the introduction of the word *gender* in official UN documents. We have seen the emergence of different actors who position themselves against the concept of *gender* at the international level, but also ecclesiastics, experts, Catholic academics and anti-*gender* associations, who have multiplied the writings and mobilizations against the *gender theory*. This strategy is thus well translated by the reduction of the concept of *gender* into a single theory or ideology and would, moreover, bring about a certain number of ideas and impositions: the imposition of the concept of the social role of the sexes, whereas sex is supposed to be only biological; the reassessment of heteronormativity, and the plural dimension

of sexual orientation that attacks the traditional family based on heterosexual marriage; the danger of the legal transcription of these concepts for society, namely the right of abortion, the right of same-sex marriage and the right to adopt for same-sex couples. This enabled us to refine our **research problem in research question**, namely *“How does Pope Francis represent and relay the gender concept in his international discourses?”*. To answer this question, we had to choose a theoretical approach on which we were relying to test our hypothesis. We have chosen the post-structuralist approach, which emphasizes the notion of discourse, language and binary oppositions allowing the elites who construct them to implement an official discourse, a dominant discourse. This dominant discourse excludes any person or discourse that does not correspond to the truth imposed by the elite, strengthened by its authority. Moreover, it allows the elite to increase their power. The articulation of the elite elements, binary language and opposition and discourse, was theorized by Michel Foucault and is called the “Regime of Truth”. This allowed us to redefine our **central research question**, namely *“How does Pope Francis build his Truth of gender, based on the ‘Regime of Truth’ of Foucault?”*. We also formulated our **hypothesis**, which is as follows: *“Pope Francis’s discourses participate into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors, which deconstruct the gender concept through the construction of his Truth of gender”*. To test our hypothesis, we selected discourses in order to proceed to a quantitative analysis divided into three non-watertight axes. These axes were themselves based on the definition of the “gender theory” identified in the state of art, which also allowed us to verify the possible continuity between the discourse produced by the Church and its components and the discourses of Pope Francis. We have therefore verified, through the empirical analysis of extracts from the Pope’s discourses, how he constructs a ‘Regime of Truth’ for each of the themes and elements present in the three axes. This allowed us to verify one of the three dimensions of our hypothesis, through the construction of Pope Francis’ “Regime of Truth” about gender. Thus, we confirmed that the gender concept is understood by the Pope only through the “gender theory”, which is constructed as an imposition, an ideological colonization that calls into question the uniquely biological character of sex and denies the sexual differences and the reciprocity of the sexes, which is against the reality of nature. In addition, gender theory includes the themes outlined above, which are also defined by the Pope. Indeed, the male and female sexes are defined by and through their complementarity, but also through their differences in abilities and roles that are inherent to their biological sex. Moreover, marriage is understood and accepted only in a male/female configuration, namely heterosexual. Marriage between homosexuals is not envisaged; moreover, Pope Francis speaks of homosexual unions, which cannot be put on the same level

as heterosexual marriage. Parenthood in same-sex couples is, like *gender theory*, an ideology that manipulates the reproductive act and replaces the Creator. Adoption for same-sex couples is not addressed textually in our corpus of text, but its rejection is understood in terms of the gift and act of love that adoption is for married heterosexual couples, thus excluding adoption for same-sex couples who do not meet this definition considered as a truth. Finally, abortion is indeed considered as a danger to society, particularly with regard to population decline, that, combined with reproductive health policies, creates a situation in which intergenerational relations is no longer ensured. The analysis of Pope Francis's 'Regime of Truth' about *gender* allowed us to identify the continuities between his discourse and those of the Church and its predecessors, confirming the second dimension of our hypothesis. This dimension is the Pope's participation into a meta-discourse of the Church and his predecessors. Finally, we have demonstrated how this 'Regime of truth' deconstructs the concept of *gender*, that we had defined through and in the state of the art as "*a scope of studies, a general axis of method*²⁵⁵, *allowing the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction*". Indeed, we verify this dimension of the hypothesis by highlighting the Pope's reduction of the *gender* concept into a *gender theory* in his speeches. The *gender theory* could be understood as a summary of the opposition of the Church and the Pope to the difference between social sexes, free sexual orientation and the rights of abortion, same-sex marriage and same-sex abortion. This deconstructs the broad character of the *gender* concept, which is more akin to a framework, "a general axis of method²⁵⁶". The ideological colonization and indoctrination that this theory would imply, contradict the reflection and the plural discussion on the social role of the sexes and their construction that the *gender* concept allows.

Finally, this strategy of the Holy See to designate the other as the enemy and the *gender theory* as the colonizer of minds imposing a single thought through a 'Regime of truth' - which, by definition produces a truth imposed by the authority of an elite in a dominant discourse, excluding others and preventing any form of questioning - is, at the very least, paradoxical.

This paradox could be explained by the increasing of a "de-secularization" of the society on the International scene and such, a decrease of the power of the Holy See on the international scene.

²⁵⁵ Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., *Introduction aux gender studies*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, (2008), 247 pp., in Favier, A., *op. cit.* p. 8

²⁵⁶ *Ibidem*

