

Banning Gender: Movements to Suppress Gender Studies in the U.S. and Global Contexts

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Abstract : In the United States and around the world, we see liberal democracies attacked, from within and without, on a number of grounds. One of the primary assaults on the liberal ideology of feminism has been to ban or severely curtail the teaching of and scholarship on gender as constructed rather than as a biological and binarist component of human identity. On every continent, women's and gender studies at the university level have become targets of rightwing movements aligning with authoritarian regimes to suppress queer and trans people as well as feminist scholars and academics who define gender as fluid, contingent on culture, and as reflective of a political commitment rather than timeless, sacred, natural, biological, or god-given. Rightwing movements calling for an end to gender studies have put already-marginalized academic and scholarly projects under new scrutiny, in some cases resulting in the dismantlement of long-standing women's and gender studies programs. This paper evaluates the cross-cultural effects such movements have had on our discipline worldwide and documents the strategic responses engaged in by gender studies scholars and leaders to resist the erasure of our field. Evidence is drawn from surveys of thousands of programs and dozens of interviews conducted in the past year with gender studies scholars, administrators, and practitioners. This paper's main objective is to highlight the international linkages between movements aiming to suppress or erase gender studies as a field of research and teaching and to identify collaborative responses and promising solutions that can protect our discipline from these assaults.

Keywords : anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ, authoritarianism, movements, gender studies, globalization

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