

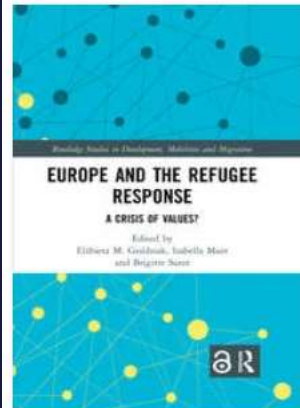


Anti-LGBTQ+ disinformation in Hungary - a case study -

Bulcsú Hunyadi, Political Capital Institute, HDMO

The framework of anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo

- Anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo was part of a **broader strategy to spread disinformation and hostile narratives**
- **Aim:** polarise society and generate collective fear and anger to manipulate public discourse
- **Method:** exaggerating existential threats to scapegoat enemies
- **Ingredients:**
 - Fear-mongering system (control of media)
 - Various propaganda instruments
 - Continuous selection of scapegoats
 - (No checks and balances)



Chapter

The Moral Panic Button

Construction and consequences

By [Márton Gerő](#), [Endre Sik](#)

Book [Europe and the Refugee Response](#)

Edition	1st Edition
First Published	2020
Imprint	Routledge
Pages	20

 OPEN ACCESS

Creative Commons,
CC BY-NC-ND

Key features of anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo

- **Centrally** organised, applied **systematically** and **coordinated**
- Spread by (pro-)government **politicians and state officials**
- **Network of actors** parroting the same messages to increase the reach and impact of disinformation narratives
- Featured in **mainstream** government-organised **media**
- **Network of media platforms** building stories and narratives
- Disinformation underpinned/supplemented by **policy actions**
 - Laws and regulations, referendum, actions of authorities
- **No institutional check** on government and media platforms
- Anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo became a **key tool in Orbán's authoritarian arsenal** after 2017, used for manipulation and mobilisation

Main anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo narratives

1. LGBTQ+ is an ideology/lobby & a tool of repression (~'Wokeism')
2. LGBTQ+ undermines/contradicts 'normality'
3. LGBTQ+ undermines/contradicts traditions (traditional family)
4. LGBTQ+ causes demographic decline ('demographic winter')
5. LGBTQ+ is a threat to children ('child protection' narrative)

1. LGBTQ+ = ideology/lobby & a tool of repression

- "It's not about limiting rights of individuals, it's about a lobbying group and indoctrination by an ideology."
- LGBTQ+ is a threat to the interests of the majority
- The minority's rule over the majority
- An authoritarian and totalitarian worldview
- The limitation of political liberties (cancel culture)
- Oppression of national 'patriotic' elites/values/way of life by globalist liberal elites

2. LGBTQ+ contradicts 'normality'

- LGBTQ+ is a threat to
 - natural order
 - 'normal', familiar, common (traditional) way of life
- Portraying homosexuality as a disease
- Narrative coming mainly from the extreme right

3. LGBTQ+ undermines traditions

- LGBTQ+ is a threat to values, traditions, and culture
- LGBTQ+ is a threat to (traditional) family
 - (=heterosexual couples with children)
- Promotion, support and protection of families were cornerstones of Fidesz's communication and policies
- Traditions and traditional family strongly connected to Christianity
- Family is the key to the survival of the nation (against demographic decline)

4. LGBTQ+ = demographic decline

- LGBTQ+ threatens the persistence of the Nation
- ... and the white, Christian race/civilization
- ... along with outgoing and incoming migration, the presence of Roma people in Hungary, and abortion

5. LGBTQ+ = a threat to children

- This became Fidesz's strongest anti-LGBTQ+ narrative
- Child protection also a central element of Fidesz's communication and policies
- Public visibility and promotion of LGBTQ+ community is a threat to mental well-being and healthy development of children
- Conflation of pedophilia and homosexuality
- Protecting children from pedophilia (and homosexuality) used as (legal) justification for limiting LGBTQ+ rights
- Referendum on child protection simultaneously with the 2022 parliamentary elections

Methods of anti-LGBTQ+ disinfo

- False or misleading claims, exaggeration, generalisation
 - *“Do you support the promotion of gender reassignment treatments for minors?”*
- Distortion and misinterpretation of legislation and developments in Western countries
 - Presenting individual, often outlying events as widespread, common cases to shock the audience
 - *The West is lost in the “madness of gender reassignment surgeries”*
- Questioning the gender identity of public figures
 - Algerian boxer Imane Khelif, French First Lady Brigitte Macron
- Misleading presentation of EU and other grants
 - Exaggeration of the EU's financial support for LGBTQ+ causes.
- Misleading reports and fake news about Pride
- Portraying homosexuality as a disease
- Defending so-called “conversion” or “reparative” therapies

Result of anti-LGBTQ+ disinformation

Opinion poll data collected after the 12 April election:

- **57%** of the population would **repeal the anti-LGBTQ+ rights measures** adopted by the Fidesz government in recent years.
- **68% support same-sex marriage and adoption**
- **71%** support the right of same-sex couples to undergo artificial insemination.
- **79% believe** that it is the **state's responsibility to take action** against discrimination against LGBT people.

Thank you for your
attention,

and looking forward to your questions!