Combating Illiberalism

Anti-‘Gender Ideology’ Campaigns in Hungary and their Impact on LGBTI Activism

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Master Thesis

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Introduction

Over the past decade a conservative transnational campaign has emerged in Europe which claims to oppose what the campaign itself calls 'gender ideology'. This term refers to a so-called ideology which allegedly unites progressive actors such as organisations promoting gender equality, feminism, LGBTI[1] equality and also university gender studies departments. Anti-'gender ideology' discourse was initiated by the Vatican in the late 1990s in reaction to the increasing influence of activists promoting sexual and reproductive rights at international institutions. The Vatican regarded 'gender ideology' as threatening the 'order of creation' and the stability of social reproduction (Garbagnoli 2016, 188). Since 2005, anti-'gender ideology' discourse and mobilisations have been observed in Spain, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, France, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Belgium, Poland, Russia, Ireland, Lithuania and Finland, usually targeting LGBTI rights, reproductive rights, sex and gender education, gender studies and democracy (Paternotte and Kuhar 2017, 300). Overlapping with rising conservatism, anti-'gender ideology' campaigns are currently widespread in Europe, as well as being detected in Latin America and the United States.

'Gender ideology' has been described by Weronika Grzebalska, Andrea Petö and Eszter Kováts (2017) as 'symbolic glue', for it functions as an umbrella term that unites heterogeneous conservative and religious forces against a supposedly homogenous (but equally diverse) group of progressive actors, or 'gender ideologists'. This diverse group of progressive actors are framed as following the same 'ideology', even though they have different interpretations of various issues discussed in progressive movements. According to Grzebalska (2016), anti-'gender ideology' campaigns are challenging the post-war human rights consensus and have a broader aim of changing the values underlying European liberal democracy. Instead of simply a conservative 'backlash' against women's and LGBTI rights, she views the campaigns as a symptom of a broader crisis of neoliberal[2] democracy:

[1] I use 'LGBTI' to describe Hungarian activism more broadly as certain organisations do work on intersex issues, while those referred to with the 'LGBT' acronym do not explicitly work on intersex issues.

[2] When discussing 'neoliberal(ism)' in this thesis I refer to the political economic theory which prioritises free markets, free trade and private property rights in order to liberate individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills (Harvey 2005, 2). It replaced the post-war consensus of the welfare state model and has been argued to have rapidly increased social inequality (118-119). In the case of the post-1989 democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, neoliberalisation involved the sudden imposition of free markets and privatisation on former communist states, bringing an end to the system of planned economy and with it the full employment ideology (Štulhofer and Sandfort 2004, 42). Often associated with 'new individualism', older generations in Central and

> 'Gender ideology'… has come to signify the failure of democratic representation, and opposition to this ideology has become a means of rejecting different facets of the current socioeconomic order from the prioritization of identity politics over material issues, and the weakening of people's social, cultural and political security, to the detachment of social and political elites and the influence of transnational institutions and the global economy on nation states. (Grzebalska et al. 2017, 5)

As the passage above illustrates, not only does 'gender ideology' unite disparate elements in order to construct a coherent target for conservative and populist campaigns in times of political and economic crisis, but unsurprisingly the threat is also framed as essentially foreign. It was Pope Francis who first used the notion of 'ideological colonisation' to refer to 'gender' as a threatening foreign import (Bracke and Paternotte 2016, 143). This is an increasingly prevalent aspect of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse as it develops in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries such as Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Croatia (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte explain the concept of 'ideological colonisation' in the following way: "'gender ideology'…often understood as a symptom of the depravation of EuroAmerica…can be read as a neocolonial project through which Western activists and their governments try to export their decadent values and secularize non-Western societies" (2017, 20). As this aspect of the discourse has become particularly popular in post-socialist contexts, in this thesis I analyse the effects of anti-'gender ideology' discourse in one such context: Hungary.[3]

In *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing Against Equality* (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017), scholars across Europe studying this phenomenon analyse its impacts on progressive politics, gender studies as a profession, and gender equality. The book's chapter on Hungary (Petö and Kováts 2017) examines the broader implications of anti-'gender ideology' discourse for progressive politics in Hungary, yet does not foreground its specific effects on LGBTI activism. So far, as regards Hungarian scholarship on anti-'gender ideology' campaigns, there have been no publications examining such effects. As a result, in this thesis I aim to answer the following question: How are anti-'gender ideology' campaigns affecting LGBTI activism in

Eastern Europe have come to regard neoliberalism as synonymous with "embezzlement, materialism, and cynicism" (43).

[3] I chose Hungary in particular due to my relative acquaintance with the country, having lived there for six years with my family in the early 2000s. As a result, I am familiar with Hungary before and after it joined the European Union, which provides me with some insight into the drastic changes brought about by EU accession.

Hungary? While my research question was meant to explore forms of resistance or difficulty for activists in this context, I did not expect to encounter a field so filled with conflicts and tensions. Therefore I allowed the field to guide the development of my research, and the third chapter focusses specifically on the conflicts that the anti-'gender ideology' campaigns have emphasized among different progressive activists, which are important to understand if an effective resistance to this conservative campaign is to emerge. In order to unpack the conflicts I do not take them at face value but rather locate them in Hungary's post-socialist context. As anti-'gender ideology' discourse in Hungary emphasises the notion of 'ideological colonisation' and the rejection of international institutions, I adopt a theoretical framework emerging from the combination of post-socialist and postcolonial studies. Therefore in the thesis I first draw from existing scholarship about 'gender ideology' campaigns in Europe and more specifically Hungary, before turning to dialogues between post-socialist and postcolonial studies. I then turn to scholarship on sexual politics in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe to locate current LGBTI activism in the debates emerging from anti-'gender ideology' discourse. Through analysing information from interviews with four LGBTI activists and one feminist activist, I supplement existing scholarship with situated insights on the effects of the campaign in their own activist contexts.

Balázs works for the LGBT umbrella organisation Magyar LMBT Szövetség (Hungarian LGBT Alliance).[4] Zsuzsa works for Háttér Társaság (Háttér Society),[5] which is also a founding member of the Hungarian LGBT Alliance. Both organisations are members of ILGA-Europe,[6] the international LGBTI umbrella organisation for Europe and Central Asia. Zoltán was once a trainer and volunteer with Szimpozion Egyesület (Szimpozion Association),[7] which is a member of IGLYO - The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organisation.[8] Due to his dissatisfaction with mainstream activism Zoltán helped found Buzi Újhullám (Faggot New Wave),[9] an alternative anti-capitalist LGBT group. Anna used to be an activist but became disillusioned with mainstream LGBTI activism. She now hosts a community radio show with topics addressing lesbian and bisexual women. Finally, Réka is a feminist activist working for a German social democratic foundation. She is responsible for the foundation's gender equality projects for Central and Eastern Europe,

[4] See: http://lmbtszovetseg.hu/ (accessed June 22, 2018).
[5] Website of Háttér Society http://en.hatter.hu/about-us (accessed June 22, 2018).
[6] Website of ILGA-Europe: https://www.ilga-europe.org/ (accessed June 22, 2018).
[7] Website of Szimpozion: http://www.melegvagyok.hu/ (accessed June 22, 2018).
[8] Website of IGLYO: http://www.iglyo.com/ (accessed June 22, 2018).
[9] Facebook profile of Buzi Újhullám: https://www.facebook.com/BuziUjhullam/ (accessed June 22, 2018).

encompassing Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Each of these five activists offered invaluable insights that, combined with existing analyses of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Europe, debates on the postcolonial aspects of post-socialist Europe, and scholarship on CEE sexual politics, allow us to understand the particular impact of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns on LGBTI activism in Hungary.

In the first chapter, I begin by outlining the origins of anti-'gender ideology' discourse, beginning in the Vatican in the late 1990s and spreading to Spain, Italy, Croatia and Slovenia in the 2000s in response to specific legislation regarding LGBTI rights and sexual education reforms. I then trace the larger anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations in France and Italy, during 2012-2014, before addressing their appearance in CEE countries, having adopted the rhetoric of 'ideological colonisation' from Italy. Next, I zoom in on the Hungarian context and discuss the history and nature of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse as it appeared there. Finally, I present the interviewees' insights about whether the discourse has become a mobilisation, and how this has affected (or could affect) their LGBTI activism.

In the second chapter, I contextualise the question of sexual politics and LGBTI activism in Hungary's geopolitical situation as a post-socialist country in Central and Eastern Europe, in order to allow us to fully comprehend the success of anti-'gender ideology' discourse in Hungary. Through scholars applying postcolonial theory to post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Milica Bakic-Hayden (1995) and Vedrana Velickovic (2012), I outline arguments contesting the orientalising notions of a 'civilizational scale' between the 'West' and 'East' of Europe, of the East needing to 'catch up' with the West, and of the hegemony of Western progressive ideals. I then analyse how these notions play out in sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe, using Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizieliñska's (2011) concept of temporal disjunction between the 'West' and the 'East' to problematize them. I show how this postcolonial/post-socialist framework is instrumental in understanding yet also criticising and deconstructing the attempt of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns to frame themselves as resistance against imperialism. Finally I turn to analysing the interviews in order to show how the postcolonial dimensions of anti-'gender ideology' discourse affects LGBTI activism in post-socialist Hungary.

In the third and final chapter, I focus on the debates that emerged from the interviews with the five Hungarian activists. The non-mainstream and more left-wing activists Zoltán, Anna and Réka, expressed the belief that less emphasis on human rights and identity politics and more consideration of socio-economic conditions by LGBTI organisations would help mitigate

the effects of anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse. During this discussion other tensions between progressive activists came to light, such as tensions between feminism and trans politics, and confusions about the relationship between identity politics and queer politics. I address these through an analysis of Nancy Fraser’s redistribution-recognition dilemma (1995) while drawing on elements of queer theory. I then explore this debate in the context of post-socialist countries in order to discover the possibilities for a sexual politics or LGBTI activism to incorporate socio-economic critique in the context of post-socialism.

1

Anti-'Gender Ideology' Campaigns: from the Vatican to Hungary

In this chapter I trace the origins of the discourse claiming to combat 'gender ideology'. I start with its inception in the Vatican and its first appearance in a number of European countries in the mid-2000s, in response to specific legislation. I then focus on France, where the anti-'gender ideology' discourse first managed to mobilise citizens to a significant and durable degree. Next, I follow its development in Italy, where mobilisations were considerably more successful, and highlight two main reasons for this: the conservative movement's alliance with sexual difference feminists, which caused rifts in the opposition, and Italy's specific geopolitical location in Europe. As a result of this location the notion of 'ideological colonisation' (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017, Garbagnoli 2016) became a key tenet of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse, becoming prominent in the context of Central and Eastern European countries. After contextualising the spread of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Central and Eastern Europe, in the third section I zoom in on the emergence of the discourse in Hungary. Finally, through activist insights I begin to identify in what ways the anti-'gender ideology' campaign is posing challenges for LGBTI activism in Hungary. A thorough discussion of the latter is developed in the ensuing two chapters.

1.1 ORIGINS IN THE VATICAN

Although the discourse and mobilisations around the threat of so-called 'gender ideology' surfaced in various European countries between 2010-2014, their origins lie in the Vatican's response to the successes of feminist and LGBTI activism during the 1980s and 1990s. This activism promoted sexual and reproductive rights on an international level, which prompted the Vatican to develop its anti-'gender ideology' discourse after the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and after the 1995 UN World Conference on Women (Garbagnoli 2016, 189). The Vatican regarded the activists' increasing influence over international institutions as promoting "an ideology that threatens the 'order of creation' and the stability of social reproduction" (188). Despite the many varying uses of the term 'gender', the Vatican focussed on its use by feminist activists in questioning masculinity and

femininity as inherent natural characteristics of men and women. Feminists view masculinity and femininity as social constructions, and for the Vatican this represents a deconstruction of the sexual order that would destroy the social order and lead to the "self-destruction of humankind" (189). This is why, at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Vatican fought against the inclusion of the word 'gender' in the Beijing Platform for Action, winning the concession of its use in inverted commas. Having originally promoted a view of women's submissive relation to men, the Vatican then developed a new discourse based on the complementarity of the sexes, in which they defined women as equal in dignity but different in nature (Garbagnoli 2016). In this way, they were able to present a more socially acceptable view of gender relations whilst insisting on essential biological differences between men and women. From the principle of the complementarity between the sexes stemmed a wider rhetoric claiming that 'gender ideology' undermines marriage, family and the specific vocations and educational roles of men and women (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017, 16).

1.2 A TRANSNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Thus, according to Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte, 'gender ideology' discourse was "ready in 2003" (2017, 26), but was first used in a public-political debate in 2005 in Spain, in reaction to legal reforms introducing marriage equality. This was followed by mobilisations in Croatia as a result of a debate over sexual education in 2006, in Italy in 2007 when a Family Day gathering opposed an Italian bill on civil unions – the Diritti e Doveri delle Persone Stabilmente Conviventi (DICO) – and in Slovenia in 2009 with opposition to a proposal to open up marriage to same-sex couples (300). These mobilisations were triggered by specific national debates around topics pertaining to same-sex marriage and sexual education. It was not until the early 2010s, however, that transnational collaboration could be traced between countries. Since the appearance of 'gender ideology' in French public-political debate, iconographic material, names of groups and lines of argumentation can be traced in Italy, Germany, Slovakia, Croatia and Finland (315). France is also the place where the phrase 'gender ideology' itself first gained widespread popular traction among conservative mobilisations.

Anti-'gender ideology' discourse first appeared in the French public-political sphere in 2011, in response to 'sexual gender theory' being taught in high school biology textbooks. Shortly

afterwards, in September 2012, the first anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations commenced in the form of *La Manif Pour Tous* (LMPT) – the movement that opposed the marriage equality bill under discussion in the French Parliament from 2012-2013, and later adopted on 17 May 2013. LMPT is one of many anti-'gender ideology' groups which regard 'gender ideology' as an "ideological matrix of a set of abhorred ethical and social reforms, namely sexual and reproductive rights, same-sex marriage and adoption, new reproductive technologies, sex education, gender mainstreaming, protection against gender violence and others" (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017, 16). Protestors spread the belief that the same-sex marriage bill would pave the way for 'unnatural' laws around artificial insemination of lesbian couples and same-sex adoption. Using the argument of some feminists that surrogacy is anti-feminist, the anti-'gender ideology' protestors tried to garner support of women in claiming the bill would pave the way for surrogacy (Kováts and Põim 2015, 132).

Along with groups such as Hommen, the Antigones, and the *Veilleurs* (Vigils), LMPT formed part of a broader anti-'gender ideology' campaign in France that opposed 'gender ideology' and the threat of 'gender theory' being taught in schools even once the marriage equality debate had passed. From their inception, these groups claimed to be politically and religiously autonomous, and therefore appealed to 'common sense' in the form of ordinary people's experiences, traditional values and the 'natural order'. However, according to Sara Garbagnoli, "all groups were related in one way or the other to the Vatican's structures or Catholic associations and movements" (2016, 196-197). LMPT, for example, is connected to the French Conference of Bishops and "with American fundamentalist NGOs such as the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network" (Kováts and Põim 2015, 134). The Vatican's rhetoric can be clearly seen in the anti-'gender ideology' discourse used by the demonstrators, specifically calling on the natural family as heterosexual and claiming that same-sex marriage and adoption threaten children.

This movement was successful in limiting the scope of the marriage equality law, and causing the postponement of a project concerning a new LGBTI parenting law, the removal of 'gender' in ministerial documents and the stalling of an experimental school program against gender stereotypes (Garbagnoli 2016, 198). Their mobilisations were considerably more numerous than the mobilisations in support of same-sex marriage. In 2013 the largest pro-marriage equality mobilisation gathered 120,000 people, in contrast with the 800,000 strong conservative mobilisation (Kováts and Põim 2015, 35-36).

In Italy, mobilisations first appeared in 2013-2014, spearheaded by movements with clear connections to the French anti-'gender ideology' campaign, as they copied "the logos, the

names, and the style of the main anti-gender French protests…new Italian groups were created as the equivalent of French ones: *La Manif pour tous* – Italia (LMPT-I), the *Sentinelle in Piedi* (Standing Sentinels) and Hommen-Italy" (Garbagnoli 2016, 198). Despite its successes and mass mobilisations, the French campaign did not manage to stop the adoption of the marriage equality bill. In Italy, instead, anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations achieved a number of significant political goals, such as blocking a strategy against homophobia and transphobia, stopping a bill on hate crimes related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and watering-down a same-sex civil union bill (200).

Two major reasons for the success of the Italian anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations were the nature of the discourse in relation to Italy's geopolitical situation in Europe, and the lack of a united front among progressive actors to combat this discourse. 'Gender ideology' has been described by Weronika Grzebalska, Andrea Petö and Eszter Kováts (2017) as 'symbolic glue', for it functions as an umbrella term that unites heterogeneous conservative and religious forces against a supposedly homogenous (but equally diverse) group of progressive actors, or 'gender ideologists'. In the case of Italy, according to Garbagnoli, "gender succeeded in operating as a rallying cry federating a wide range of different Catholic groups – from the *Forum delle Associazioni Familiari* to neo-fascist groups such as *Forza Nuova* – in order to fuel a moral panic and to block legal and social reforms concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights and LGBTQ rights" (2016, 199). However, this 'symbolic glue' effect actually led to divisions among progressive actors, thereby reducing effective opposition to anti-'gender ideology' campaigns. For example, the Vatican's belief in the essential difference and complementarity between the sexes resonated with prominent Italian sexual difference feminists, who sided with the Pope in opposing sexual education reforms because they were perceived as promoting the negation of sexual difference (Colpani 2017, 223).

Italy's geopolitical position in the European south during the economic crisis that started in 2008 allowed the notion of 'ideological colonisation' to gain significant traction. This notion established 'gender ideology' as a threat to Italian national identity and the Vatican used it to spread the idea that Europe had deviated from its Catholic values and had been ideologically colonized by the secular and capitalist West (Garbagnoli 2016, 199). During a period of austerity and economic uncertainty this created a moral panic in which resistance to 'gender ideology' became symbolic of resistance to the 'deviant West' and presented a solution to people's anxieties (199).

Spreading across to Slovenia, anti-'gender ideology' campaigns began to appear in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, and Hungary during

the period of 2013-2015. The notion of ‘gender ideology’ as ‘ideological colonisation’ by the secular and capitalist West found fertile ground in formerly communist CEE countries such as Hungary, and helps to explain the success of anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse in this specific geopolitical area. In these countries, religious and lay conservative NGOs have attacked legislation around gender equality and LGBTI rights, as in France and Italy, with varying effects. In Croatia and Slovakia, mobilisations succeeded in securing the banning of same-sex marriage (Grzebalska 2016, 1). In Poland and Hungary, the governments delayed ratifying the Istanbul Convention (the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence)[10] on the grounds that the use of ‘gender’ in the text is a Trojan horse for imposing ‘gender ideology’. In Poland the campaigns have been particularly effective; the word ‘gender’ is almost synonymous with ‘perversion’ in current Polish media discourse (Graff 2016, 269), the government has vetoed a transgender rights bill, cancelled the publicly funded IVF scheme, and plans to eradicate sex and equality education at schools (Grzebalska 2016, 1).

As the aforementioned mobilisations and discourse have appeared across such a range of countries, they are regarded as constituting a transnational campaign which has its origins in the Vatican but which has managed to adapt to various national contexts. Making use of common social media strategies and with a large network of so-called experts, proponents of this campaign have been able to tap into rising right-wing politics in recent years, which appears to be here to stay. I will now focus on the Hungarian context, outlining the form anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse has taken, and the mobilisations it has produced so far.

1.3 HUNGARY: FROM DISCOURSE TO MOBILISATION

In the following two sections we will see examples of what Andrea Petö and Weronika Grzebalska call the ‘illiberal polypore state’ (Petö 2017). Using this term they describe how the Hungarian government is transforming the post-1989 democratic transformation into an ‘illiberal democracy’,[11] achieved by channelling EU funds into illiberal governmental civil society whilst depleting liberal civil society. They describe this transformation as follows:

[10] See: https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?desktop=true (accessed May 18, 2018).
[11] A term first used in 2014 by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán himself, to describe his new style of governance (Malomvölgyi 2017, 58).

> The key aspect of this transformation is the replacement of previous civil society actors working within the human rights paradigm with pro-government NGOs supporting the illiberal agenda. While the latter seemingly have the same profile and target group as the previous ones, they operate within a blatantly different framework which is predominantly religious and anti-modernist. This replacement is largely achieved through the ideological distribution of EU and state funding, which leaves progressive NGOs reliant on foreign donors and generally excluded from policy making. (Petö 2017: 19)

Through the analyses that follow we shall see examples of three key elements of the Hungarian illiberal polypore state: parallel civil society, securitization narratives, and familialism.[12] The quote above describes how parallel civil society is achieved. Governmental NGOs are known locally as 'GONGOs'. Securitization narratives involve locating foreign 'enemies' and threats, which can be seen below in the claims that liberal civil society is an enemy of the nation due to its foreign funding and alignment with EU liberal ideals. Examples of other 'enemies' or threats selected by the Hungarian government (apart from the European Union, NGOs and human rights organisations) are multiculturalism, the Central European University, George Soros, refugees, migrants and Muslims (Malomvölgyi 2017, 59). Familialism emphasises the traditional heteronormative nuclear family, and can be seen below when I discuss the increased presence of family days, as well as the anti-'gender ideology' discourse claiming that 'gender ideology' is a threat to the family and family values.

Andrea Petö and Eszter Kováts (2017) analyse why anti-'gender ideology' discourse had not (yet) become a movement in Hungary by the summer of 2016. They list a number of "discouraging factors" that had so far prevented a movement from appearing. These included the fact that the Hungarian government expresses no interest in gender equality policies, there is no gender mainstreaming policy, and since the law on registered partnership in 2009 further LGBTI-related legislation is not anticipated (Petö and Kováts 2017, 153). The elimination of civil society opposition due to the government's network of GONGOs has rendered mobilisations unnecessary, as there have been no progressive developments to protest against and no organisations that could plausibly introduce such developments (like marriage equality

[12] See also https://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-conversation-global/how-hungary-and-poland-ha_b_12486148.html?guccounter=1 (accessed July 14, 2018).

in France or anti-homophobia legislation in Italy). However, this does not mean that ‘gender ideology’ has been absent from Hungarian public and political debates.

The term ‘gender ideology’ first appeared in Hungary in 2008 and 2010 during debates around the uses of ‘gender’ in high school textbooks and pre-school curricula respectively. The latter example was the first instance of the term ‘gender ideology’ entering the political sphere, as the then Undersecretary of Education Rosza Hoffman, of Fidesz-KDNP (the government ruling coalition), removed an amendment to the curriculum that aimed at combatting the use of gendered stereotypes. According to her, the amendment promoted ‘gender ideology’ (Petö and Kováts 2017, 146-148). In 2010 the government’s Gender Equality Department was disbanded and merged into the Division of Equal Opportunity under the Ministry of Human Resources. In 2012 the Family Protection Act came into force, reiterating foetus protection from the moment of conception and affirming that “the family is composed of a marriage of a heterosexual couple and their children, or relatives in direct line” (Kováts and Põim 2015, 73). This was reiterated in school curricula and media broadcasting programs. The main right-wing opposition party Jobbik submitted an amendment to this Family Protection Act “to ban ‘homosexual propaganda’ in order to protect ‘public morals and the mental health of the young generations’. The proposal would introduce a new crime of ‘propagation of disorders of sexual behavior’ into the Criminal Code punishable for three years, or even eight in certain cases” (74). Additionally, in 2013 the new Constitution excluded same-sex couples from the definition of marriage and family, as well as excluding sexual orientation from protected grounds of discrimination (72).

Discourse relating specifically to ‘gender ideology’ reappeared in 2014. The Hungarian government and Jobbik increased their anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse in response to two reports tabled by the European Parliament: the unsuccessful Estrela Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and the Lunacek Report against homophobia and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) discrimination, adopted in February 2014. One Jobbik MP wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to reject the Lunacek report because it “attacks the bases of our traditional values, and it is the manifestation of the global sexual revolution” (Gaudi-Nagy, quoted in Kováts and Põim 2015, 70). In a speech in which Orbán stated “We won’t be a colony”, the Lunacek Report was presented as an example of a worldwide conspiracy to impose ‘gender ideology’, and Orbán encouraged the Hungarian people to resist pressure from the ‘outside’ (Kováts and Põim 2015, 68). This was the moment when the Hungarian government began to use the anti-Western, anti-EU and anti-neoliberal branch of anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse in order to create an external enemy, a threat to the

Hungarian nation that only Orbán was willing and able to fight. Kováts and Petö had predicted in 2016 that if the discourse were to create mobilisations in Hungary, it would be led by the Hungarian government itself. Since no other publications have been written since 2016 concerning the development of anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations in Hungary, I conclude this chapter in the next section with the voice of the five activists I interviewed. While presenting their insights on the present situation, I also begin to shift the focus from the government-led conservative campaign to the forms of resistance available in Hungarian society, with a particular focus on LGBTI activism.

1.4 HUNGARIAN ACTIVIST INSIGHTS

In order to understand how the context of increasing anti-'gender ideology' discourse and mobilisations affects LGBTI activism in Hungary, I spoke to four LGBTI activists and one feminist activist in Budapest in May 2018. All interviewees believe that the anti-'gender ideology' discourse has now become some form of mobilisation. According to Zsuzsa (employee at the mainstream LGBTI organisation Háttér Society), the mainstream LGBTI organisations in Hungary receive funding from the Open Society Foundations, the European Commission, state and foreign sources for civil society. They therefore constitute part of the civil society that the Hungarian government has turned into the image of an 'enemy' to the nation. Zsuzsa, Balázs (from the mainstream organisation Hungarian LGBT Alliance) and Réka (a left-wing feminist activist) all agreed that currently the image of the enemy is being enlarged to incorporate LGBTI organisations due to their foreign funding, but there is no indication that 'gender ideology' is being weaponised by the government as an enemy to the degree that refugees are. However, Réka claimed that Kováts and Petö (2017) were correct in their prediction, and that the Hungarian government has started to apply the anti-'gender ideology' discourse to issues of legislation that have direct effects on LGBTI people's lives.

Although there are no anti-'gender ideology' NGOs, Zsuzsa believes that the discourse is being used by various religious and conservative groups and Balázs and Réka have noticed how the government funds their gatherings in Hungary. In spring 2017, the World Congress of Families was held in Budapest.[13] It addressed demography issues as well as family values, and included invitees from Western Europe and the United States who belong to anti-'gender

[13] See: https://www.budapestfamilysummit.com/hu/a-vilagtalalkozorol/ (accessed May 18, 2018).

ideology' NGOs, pro-life organisations and religious and family values NGOs.[14] According to Balázs, the Hungarian Government financed this event with roughly 300 million forints (924,700 euros). Online mobilisation is prevalent but physical mobilisation is only possible with the help of such state funding. For example, there are online platforms such as CitizenGo,[15] which gather signatures for EU Citizen's Initiatives like the *Mum, Dad and Kids Initiative to Protect Marriage and Family*[16] which garnered 60,000 Hungarian signatories, or the *One of Us* initiative[17] aiming to restrict reproductive rights. Although the latter reached the required one million signatures, the European Union refused to debate the issue due to being in breach of the 'European values'. However, Réka informed me that *One of Us* remained as a transnational NGO which held a congress in May 2017 in Budapest as well.[18] According to Balázs, the Hungarian government also uses EU funds to finance such events: "from the European Union money, the kind of social funds money, there was one particular call which was six billion forints… It was a call for spreading the values of the family and providing support for family counselling and events promoting family values". There are also suspicions that a lot of the funding for such events comes from Russia and the United States. Since family and religious values groups importing the anti-'gender ideology' discourse into Hungary are from the United States and Western Europe, Balázs regards claims that so-called 'gender ideology' is a Western-imposed deviancy as entirely hypocritical. Yet, despite this financial backing and foreign support, Balázs believes that "these movements have not at least in core European countries changed the way people think about LGBT people and you see a constant growth in acceptance rate and I think that's very hard to deny or even counter with these 'gender ideology' narratives".

For Réka, the government's involvement started in February 2017 with the attacks on gender studies departments at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and Central European University (CEU). In April 2017, the government adopted a law that would make the CEU inoperable in Hungary. The CEU was founded by American-Hungarian philanthropist George Soros, who funds liberal projects through the Open Society Foundations, and has a long-standing dispute

[14] See: https://444.hu/2017/05/09/a-magyar-kormany-lelkesen-asszisztal-a-legsulyosabb-orosz-es-amerikai-homofobok-budapesti-talalkozojahoz (accessed May 18, 2018).
[15] See: http://www.citizengo.org/ (accessed May 18, 2018).
[16] See: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/o Zsuzsaolete/details/2015/000006 (accessed May 18, 2018).
[17] See: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/successful/details/2012/000005 (accessed May 18, 2018).
[18] See: https://oneofus.eu/activities/one-of-us-forum/2017-one-of-us-budapest-forum/ (accessed May 18, 2018).

with Orbán.[19] At the same time, the government announced a law restricting foreign-funded NGOs that was implemented in 2017. Additionally, Zsuzsa brought to my attention a recent law which came into effect in June 2018 known as the "Stop Soros" bill,[20] which imposes a "25 percent tax on foreign donations to nonprofits that work with migrants and allow the interior minister to forbid any activity he identified as a 'national security risk'" (McAuley 2018). In this scenario, EU funding is treated as foreign funding despite Hungary being a member state of the European Union, and any organisations supporting migrants and refugees could have their activities stopped, which would affect many LGBTI and feminist organisations as well.

Réka and Zsuzsa stated that the majority of the government mobilisation has so far been around refusing to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The Hungarian government and other conservative actors claim that the use of 'gender' is a Trojan horse for promoting 'gender ideology'. In March 2018, 333 NGOs from nine different Council of Europe member states asked the Council of Europe to amend the text to insert "equality between men and women" whenever it uses the word "gender" or related concepts.[21] Therefore, for Réka, it appears that some conservative actors genuinely care about ratifying a law that prohibits violence against women, whilst only taking issue with the word 'gender'. This approach appears to be strikingly similar to the Vatican, which regards women as equal to men in dignity but different in nature.

The deciding factor as regards LGBTI activism appears to be whether or not the Hungarian government will start to portray 'gender ideology' as a new enemy of the nation. For Zsuzsa, "the image of the enemy as it has been traditionally is always something related to globalism, something related to those ideologies that stress more the liberty, the individual, rights to freedom and self-definition". Taking into account the government's monopoly over media outlets in the country and huge financial resources, she believes that LGBTI activists could not combat a scenario in which 'gender ideology' became a new enemy of the nation. For Réka the government is already testing this with the attacks on foreign funded organisations and George Soros. Zoltán (former LGBT activist and member of anti-capitalist LGBT group Buzi

[19] For more information, see the following article by *The Budapest Beacon*, incidentally a major international nongovernmental news source that was forced to close in April 2018, further consolidating the government's monopoly over Hungarian media: https://budapestbeacon.com/fidesz-kdnp-passes-lex-ceu/?_sf_s=ceu&sf_paged=11 (accessed June 19, 2018).
[20] Since conducting my research, the Open Society Foundations have been forced to leave Hungary due to being rendered inoperable as a result of the "Stop Soros" bill. See: https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/press-releases/open-society-foundations-close-international-operations-budapest (accessed June 10, 2018).
[21] See: http://www.irf.in.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=455:1&catid=35:worldwide&Itemid=62 (accessed May 18, 2018).

Újhullám) believes it is unlikely because the LGBTI movement is seen as a middle-class one, and the government is relatively reluctant to make an enemy of it. However, whether or not ‘gender ideology’ will be posited by the government as the new enemy of the Hungarian nation, for Zoltán, Réka and Anna (all critical of mainstream LGBTI activism) it is still extremely important to take heed of the swell of people online who are attracted to this discourse. For Zoltán, the challenge for LGBTI organisations in Hungary is the way in which they should interpret and react to the campaign. It has initiated more of an ideological battle in which the LGBTI activists need to find a more nuanced interpretation of the campaign rather than reinforcing the false dichotomy of the ‘conservatives’ versus the ‘progressives’.

The following two chapters form part of this complex analysis necessary to understand how LGBTI activism in Hungary could respond to anti-‘gender ideology’ campaigns. In the second chapter I locate the anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse and its support in the post-socialist context of Hungary, using post-socialist theory in conjunction with postcolonial theory to illuminate this context further.

2

Anti-'Gender Ideology' Discourse in the Post-socialist Context of Hungary

In the first chapter, after having outlined the emergence of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Europe, I showed how they have presented challenges for progressive activists attempting to resist them in Hungary. Two main elements of the discourse require further investigation by analysing them in Hungary's post-socialist[22] context. The notion of 'ideological colonisation' and the rejection of Western-dominated international institutions. I therefore follow scholarship that calls for an encounter between postcolonial and post-socialist studies, in particular scholarship that foregrounds the quasi-postcolonial relation between Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union/Western Europe.

In the first section, I study this scholarship when applied to analyses of post-socialist countries in the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe. I draw from scholars who use postcolonial concepts of the 'core' and 'periphery' to deconstruct the notion of a 'civilizational scale' between the 'East' and 'West' of Europe. I then explore applications of such an approach to sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe, before locating anti-'gender ideology' discourse in this context in the third section. Here I discuss how the presentation of 'gender ideology' as 'ideological colonisation' uncovers pertinent concerns of Hungarian people about the current socio-economic order. Finally, returning to my interviews with Hungarian LGBTI and feminist activists, I explore the conflicts that have arisen in the LGBTI movement in response to the anti-'gender ideology' discourse, which can be illuminated by a postcolonial analysis of post-socialist Hungary.

2.1 CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE BETWEEN THE POST-SOCIALIST AND THE POSTCOLONIAL

According to Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery (2009), the concept of 'post-socialism' was initially used as a temporal designation for those countries in which socialism had ceased and democratizing processes had begun. 'Post-socialism' as a field of study eventually also entailed critiques of socialist pasts and potential socialist futures, as well as criticism of the

[22] By post-socialist I refer to the situation of countries formerly governed by state socialism or communism, which have since undergone a democratic transition to neoliberal capitalism.

neoliberal present entailing the imposition of markets, transition and democracy on former socialist states (2009, 11). In this way, post-socialist studies began to converge with postcolonial studies, which critiqued not only the colonial past but also the neo-colonial present. Chari and Verdery are among many postcolonial and post-socialist scholars who in recent years have called for an incorporation of the area of post-socialist states[23] into the realm of postcolonial studies.

Scholars who have studied the relationship between postcolonial theory and post-socialist realities usually privilege the relation either with the former Soviet Union, or with Western Europe.[24] For example, David Chioni-Moore (2001) argues that almost all areas of the Earth are postcolonial, and that post-World War II Soviet expansion effectively colonised the Baltics, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria (2001, 116). For Chioni-Moore, a feature distinguishing the postcolonial state of post-socialist realities from that of countries colonised by Western imperialism is that the Baltics and Central European states are a case of 'reverse-cultural colonization' (116). Drawing from the foundational postcolonial scholar Edward Said's notion of Orientalism (1979), he suggests that due to the Soviet Union's fear of cultural inferiority to the West, orientalism went the reverse way to colonization. That is, colonization travelled East-West, whereas orientalism remained as West-East, which meant that the Soviet Union, rather than regarding these states as barbaric civilisations in need of taming, counted them more as prized possessions (Chioni-Moore 2001, 116).

The analysis which foregrounds the postcolonial relation between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe is the most appropriate for understanding the formation of anti-'gender ideology' discourse in Central and Eastern Europe at large. It is particularly helpful for understanding the notion of 'ideological colonisation' (Garbagnoli 2016), introduced in the first chapter, which is based on the conceptualisation of the center-periphery[25] relations within Europe.

A number of scholars studying post-socialist states have noted how the European Union originally consisted of the major former colonial powers of Western Europe (Böröcz and Sarkar 2005, Bojan Bilić 2016), and that these powers drafted almost all the current borderlines in

[23] By post-socialist states I refer to former Asian socialisms, as well as the post-Soviet bloc. As this thesis focuses on Hungary, I will discuss the post-Soviet bloc states whilst using the broader term 'post-socialist', in order to retain the critical standpoints of this field of study.

[24] An additional reason for the encounter between postcolonial theory and post-socialist studies is for understanding anti-colonial socialism. Many formerly colonised states such as "Cuba, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, Laos, and so on […] entered the Soviet orbit as part of establishing their independence from one or another western imperial power" (Chari and Verdery 2009, 11).

[25] See Immanuel Wallerstein (2004).

Central and Eastern Europe in the wake of the dissolution of their empires (Bilić 2016, 9). This, for Bilić, helps to explain the postcolonial relation between Western Europe and Eastern Europe :

> Power differentials embedded in centuries of colonial rule 'equalise' Western Europe/Anglo-Saxon West with the whole continent and produce axes of distinction and division that, while glossing over a plethora of political systems and social experiences, render Eastern Europe as constantly and consistently trailing behind the more progressive Western part. (2016, 9)

Kuus Merje (2004) uses postcolonial theory to examine underlying orientalism in the enlargement discourse of the European Union and NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization). This discourse sets up a sliding scale between 'Europeanness' and Eastness, and between maturity and immaturity (2004, 472-476), where CEE states are regarded as culturally and economically lagging behind Western European states. In the book edited by Bilić (2016), many scholars from post-socialist countries study the 'Europeanisation' of LGBTI activism and cultural values in Central and Eastern Europe, based on the values of Western, 'center' EU member states, in which the Balkans are regarded as 'periphery' states and countries in-between are 'semi periphery' states (4-15). The objective of the book is to "destabilise the self-colonising recognition of 'foreign cultural supremacy' through which the '(semi-)periphery' 'voluntarily absorbs the basic values and categories of colonial Europe'" (12).

Milica Bakic-Hayden (1995) addresses the problematic of self-colonisation through the notion of 'nesting orientalisms', using the example of former Yugoslavia.[26] She applies the postcolonial concepts of the 'center' and 'periphery' to illustrate the self-colonising discourse of citizens in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans whose desire to constitute part of the 'West' rather than the 'East' often manifests itself in a nationalism which discriminates against a national subject deemed 'other' or foreign. In particular this 'othering' is conducted by each country orientalising its Eastern neighbour in order to position itself in the West, to prove its belonging to Europe.

Similarly, In 'Belated Alliances? Tracing the Intersections Between Postcolonialism and Postcommunism', Vedrana Velickovic notes how CEE and Balkan countries use identity markers such as their Latin origins and Catholicism to "align themselves culturally with the

[26] See also: Maria Todorova (2005) & (2009) and Tanja Petrović (2010).

West in their self-imagining (and consequently distance themselves from their less 'worthy' neighbours)" (2012, 166). She takes her analysis a step further by claiming that "a long overdue critical engagement with this discourse of 'the return to Europe' as well as with the various 'self-colonizing' practices in eastern Europe is much needed" (168). Drawing from Boris Groys' *The Post-Communist Condition* (2004), Velickovic notes how, through a process of infantilization of the 'East' by the 'West', the 'children of communism' are made to forget their communist past and not critically reflect on it (2012, 168-169). Through an analysis of works by Dubravka Ugrešić she calls for re-engagement with the socialist past in order to discover alternative ways of thinking about the post-socialist condition (169).

We shall see in the next section how the sliding East-West scale and the 'return to Europe' affect sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe.

2.2 SEXUAL POLITICS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

In *Decentring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (2011), Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizieliñska use their concept of a temporal disjunction between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe to show how the discourse of CEE belatedness results from Western/EU-centrism. This theory denotes the difference between a Western 'time of sequence' and an Eastern 'time of coincidence' illustrated by a graphic of "two separate geopolitical-temporal modalities (communism and capitalism) running parallel, where in 1989 one of them finishes (communism), and the other one becomes universal for both regions (capitalism)" (2011, 14-15). Their diagram shows that, in the field of sexual politics, the 'West' followed a sequential trajectory: the homophile movement in the 1950s and 1960s, gay liberation/lesbian feminism in the 1970s, AIDS in the 1980s, and queer theory in the 1990s. Central and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, adopted these all at once in the 1990s and in a confused manner, which Kulpa and Mizieliñska describe as the 'time of coincidence'. They explain that after the fall of the Iron Curtain, CEE countries "unanimously adopted a Western style of political and social engagement, without much questioning of its historical particularism and suitability for their context" (14). CEE countries during communism had built completely different social structures and modalities in comparison to the United States (14), yet local activists – such as LGBTI activists – adopted Western models of activism and their accompanying cultural values, with the potentially unintended consequence of reinforcing the notion that Central and Eastern Europe needs to catch up with the 'West'.

Kulpa and Mizieliñska’s analysis was praised in many reviews for its innovative approach to analysing sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe, but it also received criticism for some generalising notions. One such criticism was raised against their diagram illustrating the temporal disjunction between the Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, which Rasa Navickaitė regards as actually reiterating an East-West dualism (2014). Navickaitė finds it surprising that the diagram shows two separate arrows depicting Eastern and Western time, as if the East and West never affected each other, and that only the Eastern arrow is affected by the fall of the Iron Curtain. Additionally, Navickaitė views the depiction of Western temporal continuity in contrast with the Eastern looping of time as a victimisation of the East as well as inaccurate in the first place (Western sexual politics was not simply a continuous progressive development). Drawing on Butler (2009), Navickaitė states that the evolutionary understanding of sexual progress as a ‘historical unfolding of freedom’ is problematic because “it is too much based on the optimistic progress narrative, but also on the way we draw borders of the relevant geographical spaces, that is, what counts as ‘the West’” (2014, 173). Despite such critiques, Kulpa and Mizieliñska’s analysis remains useful for highlighting the embeddedness of sexual politics in the postcolonial/post-socialist context, and in an on-going negotiation of the relations between Western and Eastern Europe.

Navickaitė herself notes that one of the effects of the East-West civilizational scale is the emergence of homophobic nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, as frustration with Western hegemony manifests itself in a nationalism that rejects perceived Western cultural values, among which openness to sexual diversity (2014, 168). Such nationalism can be seen in Mizieliñska’s analysis of Poland. Mizieliñska argues that ‘sexual politics’ has become the main tool to distract the attention of public opinion from other social and economic problems, and points out that Polish politicians use homophobia to posit themselves as the only ‘moral voice’ in the ‘immoral’ European Union (2011, 87). Mizieliñska’s suggestion, in the wake of homophobic far-right mobilisations in Poland, is to recognise that “the history of the LGBT (queer) or feminist movements looks different in every country; and, given the context, many approaches, once used and defined in the US, can have different meanings and produce (or not) different outcomes when transplanted elsewhere” (89). In this way, she calls for the de-centralisation or de-Westernalisation/Americanisation of queer theory and the recognition of the heterogeneity of Central and Eastern Europe, in order to have “the courage to do queer locally, which means to build a theory which is more suitable to our practice” (101).

Decentring Western sexual politics, for Nicole Butterfield (2012), would involve a reflection on who benefits from certain Western strategies such as human rights. In her analysis of

Croatian LGBTI activism, she studies the emergence of terms such as 'European values' in documents used by some transnational LGBTI organizations and EU institutions. The notion of 'European values' is used to lobby for the rights of sexual minorities in countries outside the European Union, and Butterfield analyses how it contributes to the civilizational scale which posits the European Union as a signifier of European culture as a whole (2012, 17), thereby reinforcing Western hegemony. She argues that the use of human rights strategies in sexual politics "may not address the economic and social inequalities that exist within and among different LGBT communities" (15), and that communities of lower classes do not have access to the often costly process (in terms of time and money) of claiming compensation for LGBT-related discrimination. Additionally, LGBT people of the lower classes have "less time and resources for participating and shaping the types of strategies and rights that emerge in LGBT struggles" (27). Thus, Butterfield combines a critique of Western cultural hegemony with a materialist critique of how the human rights approach benefits those from higher socio-economic classes.[27]

A postcolonial analysis of post-socialist contexts which foregrounds the relation between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe allows us to understand the traction of anti-'gender ideology' discourse in post-socialist countries. In particular, the role played by sexual politics in this relation is illuminating as regards the effect of this discourse on LGBTI activism in Central and Eastern Europe. In the following section I will further investigate the role of sexual politics in this context whilst focussing specifically on Hungary.

2.3 ANTI-'GENDER IDEOLOGY' IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL POLITICS IN HUNGARY

Sarah Bracke and David Paternotte (2016) outline how the anti-'gender ideology' discourse of 'ideological colonisation' has in fact been used by the Vatican throughout its history to call for a 'retrieval' of the real world. This 'real world' is a "reality untainted by human ideas or frames, to which the Church has privileged access" (2016, 149). European colonialism, according to María Lugones (2007), established Eurocentric capitalism by profoundly changing the gender and sexual order in the colonies. Using examples from pre-colonial Native

[27] See Butterfield (2012) for possible alternatives to the human rights approach, such as rights to sexual health and economic security.

American and Yoruba societies, she shows how a binary system of gender and compulsory heterosexuality was imposed on the colonised people by colonial powers. Given the alliance between Christianity and colonial imperialism, it is therefore ironic that the Vatican now regards this colonial gender and sexual model as being ideologically colonised by 'gender ideology'. Bracke and Paternotte highlight this contradiction: "the Vatican's emphasis on ideological colonization, in sum, is grounded in very partial perspective on colonization at best, while reproducing profoundly colonial conceptions of gender relations, sexuality, and family formation" (2016, 151). Such a contradiction can also be found in the Hungarian context. As mentioned in the previous chapter, for example, while the conservative front frames 'gender ideology' as a tool of Western influence, Balázs correctly regards many of the anti-'gender ideology' organisations themselves, such as those promoting family and religious values, as a Western import. The World Congress of Families (WCF) held in Budapest in spring 2017 was coordinated by the U.S based organisation 'International Organization for the Family',[28] and WCF partners are organizations from a number of countries, primarily the United States and Italy.[29] Additionally, the entire anti-'gender ideology' discourse originated outside of Hungary, in the Vatican and then in 'Western' European countries such as France, Spain, Italy and Germany (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017).

However, despite the inaccuracies of this discourse, feminist scholars in Hungary have noted how 'gender' has "come to signify the failure of democratic representation, and opposition to this ideology has become a means of rejecting different facets of the current socioeconomic order" (Grzebalska et al. 2017, 5). Anti-'gender ideology' demonstrators have managed to "present themselves as 'common people', who fight for their economic livelihood against a privileged elite whose only concerns would be sexual issues" (Garbagnoli 2016, 192, 198). Grzebalska et al. state that, although right-wing actors promoting anti-'gender ideology' discourse often offer the wrong solutions (such as exclusionary and marginalizing practices), the issues they uncover are pertinent and resonate with the public. These issues include undelivered promises of representation and equality and should therefore be taken seriously by progressive actors wishing to mitigate these mobilisations (2017, 7).

The main issue being uncovered in many CEE countries is the failure of the transition to neoliberal capitalism to improve the living and working conditions of a large number of people.

[28] See: https://profam.org/ (accessed June 10, 2018).

[29] Also including two organisations from Kenya and Australia respectively and one organization from each of the following countries: United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, Russia, the Republic of Georgia, Serbia, Spain, and Nigeria. See: https://profam.org/world-congress-of-families-partners-2017/ (accessed June 10, 2018).

According to Andrea Czerván (2016), before Hungary's transition from state socialism to neoliberalism after 1989, there were higher employment opportunities than after the neoliberal restructuring of the economy. Labour began to shift from rural areas to urban areas and "many rural areas became almost totally insignificant in terms of production (except for big agricultural companies) as well as consumption" (Czerván 2016, 86). At the same time, women with children became disproportionately marginalised from the work force. Grzebalska et al. (2017) and Tina Beattie (2016) urge activists to understand the importance of family for people in times of economic uncertainty, and therefore recognise why people are fearful of 'gender ideology' portrayed as a threat to the traditional family. Recourse to 'family values' attracts those who are dependent on the family as a safe community which resists the toxic effects of neoliberalism and represents "stable domestic environments [that] are places of refuge, care, and love for the vulnerable" (Beattie 2016, 248-249). These concerns, instrumentalised by the ruling party Fidesz and combined with the latter's monopoly over media in rural areas, help to explain why Prime Minister Viktor Orbán garnered huge support in rural areas in the recent 2018 general election.

The notion of 'ideological colonisation' has been a major element contributing to the success of anti-'gender ideology' discourse in the context of sexual politics in Central and Eastern Europe and Hungary. Taking into consideration Hungary's geopolitical location at the 'semi periphery' of Europe and the current context of politico-economic crisis in the European Union more broadly, it is unsurprising that anti-'gender ideology' discourse that invokes Western imperialism has been so successful. Therefore an encounter of postcolonial theory and post-socialist realities which foregrounds the role of sexual politics allows us to better understand the specificities of the anti-'gender ideology' campaign in Hungary, as well as some of the conflicts generated among progressive actors in opposing the campaign. In the following section I outline such conflicts within the Hungarian LGBTI movement, drawing from my interviews with LGBTI and feminist activists.

2.4 ACTIVIST COUNTER-STRATEGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-SOCIALIST HUNGARY

In chapter one we saw how the 'gluing' effect of 'gender ideology' (Grzebalska et al, 2017) exacerbated divisions among progressive actors combating anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Italy, and Balázs (a mainstream Hungarian LGBTI activist) has noticed conflicting

approaches among some feminist and LGBTI activists in the Hungarian context. In this section I will address the conflicts among mainstream and leftist LGBTI activists in Hungary concerning the most effective strategies for combating anti-'gender ideology' discourse and mobilisations. These strategies are illuminated by a postcolonial approach to post-socialist realities.

Both Zsuzsa and Balázs work for mainstream LGBTI organisations in Hungary. Their activism focuses on education, visibility, workplace equality, research, and community service provisions such as a psychological helpline, HIV prevention and legal aid. During our interview, Balázs suggested two additional ways of combatting anti-'gender ideology' discourse. One is to show that this discourse is itself a transnationally orchestrated strategy that comes from abroad and can be traced in the right-wing corridors of international institutions. The other is to show that LGBTI people and activism are not, in fact, a Western import. In this latter regard, Balázs refers to two nineteenth-century 'LGBTI activists' in Hungary: Karoly (Karl Maria) Kertbeny (1824–1882) and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895). Ulrichs is now famously known as the first advocate of gay rights and coming out and Kertbeny is known for coining the words 'homosexual' and 'homosexuality' (Timár 2012, 134-135). Additionally, as Balázs puts it, "Hungary in 1995-6 was the third country in the world to have recognition for same-sex couples in the form of cohabitation, even before many Western European countries".[30]

Anna, Zoltán and Réka all raised leftist critiques of the mainstream LGBTI activist response to the anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations, which parallel the points raised by Butterfield (2012), Mizieliñska (2011), and Grzebalska et al. (2017), discussed earlier in this chapter. Indeed, they pointed out an uncritical adoption of Western LGBTI activism with a self-colonising Euro/Western-centric tendency, as well as a lack of structural reflection on and criticism of neoliberal capitalism. Réka cited companies promoting 'rainbow' products but who still exploit their workers, human rights discourses which do not address the material realities of people's lives, and the promotion of marriage equality (which is regarded as a Western, neoliberal priority). Moreover, all three activists mentioned the funding that mainstream LGBTI organisations receive from international organisations and institutions that are entangled with neoliberal interests, such as the European Commission and the Open Society Foundations. Anna believes that anti-'gender ideology' campaigns are rejecting the alliance

[30] See also Scott Long (1999, 251).

between capitalism and progressive forces. Zoltán believes that opposing the campaigns directly is necessary, but also that "we should see the whole context behind that and we should target that much more and that is a missing point in opposition parties and the LGBT activism".

However, according to Zsuzsa, mainstream LGBTI organisations focus on areas that affect all strata of society, such as hate crimes and school bullying issues, and do not focus on marriage equality, as it is apparently unrealistic in Hungary. In the context of the East-West divide it therefore appears that even the critics can be accused of being westernised – as this particular critique of marriage equality mirrors leftist critiques of liberal LGBTI activism in the United States and Western Europe. Additionally, mainstream organisations recognise economic disparities and carry out awareness-raising campaigns and community events in the less affluent and more isolated areas of Hungary. Although Zsuzsa recognises that there is an economic problem, she does not believe that LGBTI activism in Hungary contributes to it or aligns itself with the 'causes' of it. Rather, in her view, the Hungarian government is manipulating this problem, for when people are economically vulnerable they are more likely to uncritically accept a political scapegoat such as foreign-funded institutions, refugees, and potentially 'gender ideology'.

Anna and Zoltán referred to three elements of a postcolonial analysis of LGBTI activism in a post-socialist context: self-colonisation, Hungary's semi-peripheral location in Europe and its post-socialist condition. According to them, the self-colonising discourse among mainstream LGBTI activists hinders other forms of LGBTI activism in Hungary that could respond appropriately to the claims of 'ideological colonisation' by anti-'gender ideology' forces. Zoltán believes this self-colonising approach is due to Hungary's socialist past. He has noticed a "tendency towards the centre and the core is of course neoliberal capitalism". However, he understands why many LGBTI activists want to follow the Western European model of a liberal society, in which Western Europe is regarded as the "land of progress". Anna explicitly used the term "self-colonising" to refer to liberal, progressive actors in Hungary, and mentioned Hungary's semi-peripheral position to explain why there is no room in the country for anti-capitalist LGBTI groups. Zoltán had established one such group called Buzi Újhullám in 2013, but it never garnered much support due to the lack of reception for leftist critiques. There exist no real left-wing political groups in Hungary, not only due to the stigma of state socialism, but also because the austerity programme conducted by what Réka termed the "so-called socialist government" coalition of 2002-2010 discredited the left. Therefore, what seems to be happening with the emergence of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse in Hungary is that

all critique and opposition to Western cultural and economic hegemony is being driven by the far-right, with damaging consequences for the LGBTI movement and other progressive actors.

As a solution, Anna encourages mainstream LGBTI organisations to try to understand what concept of gender the anti-'gender ideology' adherents' regard as a threat and how it is connected, in their view, to the failure of liberal democracy. She believes gender has become a symbol of the failure of liberal and progressive values to address the material needs of Hungarians. Therefore, in her view, LGBTI activism would benefit from an anti-capitalist analysis grounded in a bottom-up, grassroots approach addressing the real needs of Hungarians rather than uncritically adopting strategies from abroad. In this way, she joins Kulpa and Mizieliñska in calling for the de-centralisation of EU/Western LGBTI activism. As Anna argued:

> I don't think it's possible to simply import different activism and movements, you really need to think about the specific context – what these things mean here. And as I have seen it there's this kind of universalist idea – that it's the same everywhere, you have to achieve the same rights, follow the same strategies – when in fact it might have to be very different the way you approach these things.

Similarly, Zoltán suggested that a grassroots, anti-capitalist LGBTI activism should be implemented, not through NGOs, but through strengthening Hungarian trade unions and social collectives, independent of foreign funding.

From the information gathered through the interviews, it is clear that the anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations are unearthing legitimate concerns regarding the position and affiliations of LGBTI organisations in relation to Hungary's geopolitical location in Europe under neoliberal capitalism. The interviews have revealed that frictions between LGBTI activists regarding anti-'gender ideology' counter-strategies must be understood in the context of a postcolonial analysis of Hungary's post-socialist condition. The next chapter is devoted to a more detailed analysis of these frictions which are essential to understand as the weaknesses in the progressive front are precisely the strengths of the conservative anti-'gender ideology' attack.

3

Activist Contentions: Human Rights and Identity Politics in Post-socialist Hungary

By applying postcolonial theory to the post-socialist context of Hungary I have been able to explain the success of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse in Hungary. This analysis also helps to explain divisions among progressive activists when we situate it in the context of sexual politics. These divisions require a more in-depth analysis if one is to understand the effects of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns on progressive activists in the post-socialist context of Hungary. It is important to note that critiques concerning the lack of critical reflection by mainstream LGBTI activism on the socio-economic conditions of Hungary were articulated by the leftist activists Zoltán, Réka and Anna. Conversely, Balázs and Zsuzsa (the activists from mainstream LGBTI organisations) do not seem to regard such reflection as essential to combatting anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Hungary.

In this chapter I explain two points of contention which Zoltán, Réka and Anna regard as barriers to addressing socio-economic issues in LGBTI activism: the human rights framework and identity politics. Their critiques are complemented by those of feminist scholars studying the anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Hungary. Andrea Petö and Eszter Kováts (2017) argue that to combat anti-'gender ideology' campaigns it is essential to reflect on the content of progressive politics, which would involve a questioning of identity politics rooted in neoliberalism, as well as on "the language of equality (statistical equality, human rights, EU as a neoliberal project while being sold as norm owner of gender equality and human rights)" (2017, 158). In the section on human rights, the leftist critiques are complicated by the interviews with Balázs and Zsuzsa. These complications imply that the debates generated by anti-'gender ideology' campaigns among progressive actors have in fact revealed more long-lasting conflicts between some feminist and some LGBTI activists. In the section on identity politics these conflicts are illuminated further by the interviews, and I analyse them through Nancy Fraser's (1995) recognition-redistribution debate. I then explore this debate in the context of post-socialist countries in order to discover the possibilities for a sexual politics or LGBTI activism to incorporate socio-economic critique in post-socialist Hungary.

3.1 THE HUMAN RIGHTS TENSION

Eszter Kováts (2018), analyses the effects of what she calls the 'neoliberal consensus' and the 'human rights consensus' on the emergence of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Hungary. Although it is unclear "whether human rights share the responsibility for neoliberalism or have simply been a 'powerless companion' to market fundamentalism" (2018, 7), for Kováts they are not sufficient for addressing systemic questions, such as global power inequalities, and are unable to prevent from precarisation (Kováts 2016, 7-12). As Butterfield (2012) argues, only those with sufficient economic resources are able to access human rights protection from discrimination. Human rights arrived in Hungary, like much of Central and Eastern Europe, at the same time as neoliberal policies during the democratic transformations after the fall of the Soviet Union. As a result, many of the actors are still Western-funded and/or their strategies are heavily influenced by the West (7). According to Réka, government financing for human rights activism reduced in recent years, and the Hungarian market was not favourable to funding human rights organisations, which left only a few foreign donors available as funding options. This increased the power of foreign actors in the area of human rights activism, providing the anti-'gender ideology' discourse on Western and European neo-colonialism with more 'evidence' for its claims.

Kováts describes the human rights framework for activism as a 'consensus' not only because there has not been much exploration into alternatives by local activist groups since the 1990s, but also because, in her view, the human rights framework and discourse is non-negotiable. Kováts argues that the human rights consensus labels certain political positions as illegitimate based on a moral judgement and that "the same is true for the inflation of the terms 'racist', 'sexist', 'misogynist', and 'homophobic'" (2018, 7). Additionally, she believes that recourse to moral judgements by progressive actors has been a major contributing factor to the demand for populism and anti-politically correct language (8), as a large portion of the Hungarian population feel their concerns rejected. These demands are some of the factors fuelling the rise in right-wing populism occurring in Hungary and much of the continent. This political shift to the right has overlapped with anti-'gender ideology' discourse, and is why Kováts believes the human rights consensus needs to be reconsidered in order to tackle the mobilisations. However, recognising that the human rights paradigm is a substantive political claim, and that certain rights should indeed be non-negotiable, she calls for "a more accurate analysis to decide which rights and how they can become a part of this paradigm, and what should be put up for an agonistic debate instead" (8).

The interviews both contradict and complicate this narrative. On the one hand, while Zoltán is concerned by the "very strong human rights discourse" and describes such discourse as being nearly impossible to criticise or question without being publicly reprimanded in a way that is permanently damaging to one's reputation within LGBTI activism, according to Zsuzsa, mainstream Hungarian LGBTI organisations do not rely so heavily on a human rights framework. She explains that her organisation works with a general equality framework and on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities in the workplace, but governmental actors are not very receptive to it. Their main use of a human rights framework is in dealing with international institutions such as the United Nations, and for writing shadow reports[31] to treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).[32] On the other hand, while criticising the human rights framework, both Réka and Zoltán in fact begin to refer to more complicated debates concerning disagreements between leftist feminist activism and LGBTI activism.

In discussions about Kováts' 'human rights consensus' and the anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations, Zoltán linked the inability to question the human rights framework with the inability to critique the "very strong discourse of queer questioning of gender and gender identity". He, like Kováts, takes issue with moral judgements and argues that the questioning of gender identity is "very much in line with neoliberal tendencies of individual self-definition". Balázs, who works for the mainstream LGBT organisation 'Hungarian LGBT Alliance', has interpreted these criticisms as a result of the anti-'gender ideology' discourse, which aligns 'gender ideologists' with an international conspiracy of neoliberal and secular Western Europeans attempting to colonise Hungary. For instance, Balázs notices that some left-wing feminists "interpret the anti-'gender ideology' movement as being caused by the kind of neoliberal alliance between multinational corporate values and LGBT and liberal organisations".

For Zoltán, the human rights framework and "queer questioning of gender and gender identity" bring to the surface three main contentions between some feminist and some LGBTI standpoints: that of trans activism, surrogacy and sex work. Réka stated that many gay men at Pride have anti-feminist standpoints such as being pro-porn, pro-surrogacy and pro-prostitution. She went further to claim that both choosing one's gender and sex work have been classed as human rights by human rights organisations. Additionally she referenced how trans

[31] Shadow reports are submitted by NGOs to treaty monitoring bodies at the UN as an alternative to their government's reports on the human rights situation in their country.
[32] The UPR is the UN's process of reviewing the human rights records of its member states. See http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx

activism is harmful for feminists because it reinforces gendered roles and attempts to redefine what is to be a man or a woman. Balázs, when asked about the principal threats of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns to LGBTI activism in Hungary, said that it deliberately undermines the alliances between LGBTI and feminist movements. As we saw in chapter one, many conservative actors reject the use of 'gender' in the Istanbul Convention. Réka had noticed how many of these conservative actors were satisfied with the feminist meaning of the word 'gender', but were concerned with the LGBTI meaning (the notion of 'gender identity' in trans activism). These different interpretations of the word 'gender' are illustrative of tensions between feminist and LGBTI movements, and are compounded by the 'symbolic glue' effect of anti-'gender ideology' discourse which accuses feminists of pushing the 'LGBT agenda'. As a result, some feminists are tempted to break their traditional alliance with LGBTI organisations in order to accomplish feminist reforms such as the Istanbul Convention. Therefore, although one could expect a united front against anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations, this 'symbolic glue' appears to have worked more as a way of highlighting the differences already present within the various progressive actors, particularly between certain feminist and LGBTI activists.[33]

The concerns articulated by Réka and Zoltán were preceded by references to the damaging effects of identity politics, as in their view the latter distract from and even worsen material issues (such as the case of surrogacy benefitting gay men at the expense of women). In the case of sex work, Réka explained: "there are certainly certain hundreds or thousands of women who self-consciously do sex work and don't want to be called prostitutes, but the problem is not about the stigma, the problem is about the structures and the poverty and the failing state and the economic interests". For Anna, the mainstream discourse on human rights also presents a challenge to fighting for socio-economic justice. In her view, Hungarian mainstream LGBTI activism focusses mainly on recognition issues, and for there to be a possible counter-strategy to the anti-'gender ideology' mobilisations, there needs to be a balance between recognition and redistribution. As human rights activism is often based on individual rights, Anna and Réka believe it is too closely linked with identity politics and fails to treat discrimination as a structural problem. In the context of this discussion, Anna explicitly referenced Nancy Fraser's articulation of the tensions and contradictions between identity politics and socio-economic

[33] There are, of course, disagreements among feminists, and disagreements among LGBTI people, concerning trans rights and surrogacy.

justice in 'From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age' (Fraser 1995).

3.2 THE IDENTITY POLITICS TENSION

In 1995, Nancy Fraser expressed as follows the dilemma arising in progressive politics in the new millennium, with the increasing use of identity politics after the fall of the Soviet Union:

> What should we make of the rise of a new political imaginary centred on notions of 'identity', 'difference', 'cultural domination', and 'recognition'? Does this shift represent a lapse into 'false consciousness'? Or does it, rather, redress the culture-blindness of a materialist paradigm rightfully discredited by the collapse of Soviet Communism? Neither of those two stances is adequate, in my view. . . Instead of simply endorsing or rejecting all of identity politics *simpliciter*, we should see ourselves as presented with a new intellectual and practical task: that of developing a *critical* theory of recognition, one which identifies and defends only those versions of the cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality. In formulating this project, I assume that justice today requires *both* redistribution *and* recognition. (1995, 69)

In this way, Fraser explores the potential of a critical-theoretical framework that could address socio-economic as well as cultural injustices. She points out that as the millennium drew near and the Soviet Union had recently fallen, identity-based (cultural) demands were moving to the forefront of social activism while economic demands were increasingly tarnished with the 'communism' brush. She theorises that cultural injustices require what she calls "recognition", and economic injustices require what she calls "redistribution". However, she points out that the two have contradictory aims. Redistribution requires the elimination of class as a social group, whereas recognition requires the reinforcement of the social group, "to valorize the group's 'groupness' by recognizing its specificity" (1995, 78). She calls this the redistribution-recognition dilemma and, recognizing that "economic injustice and cultural injustice are usually imbricated so as to reinforce one another dialectically" (72), sets out to resolve it.

Fraser addresses the dilemma by distinguishing between “affirmative” and “transformative” remedies. Affirmative remedies aim to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements, whereas transformative remedies aim to correct the underlying framework that caused the inequitable outcomes in the first place. Fraser therefore concludes that transformative remedies should be pursued. In the case of recognition this would be deconstruction, entailing a “deep restructuring of relations of recognition, [which] blurs group identities of existing differentiation” and in the case of redistribution this would be socialism, entailing a “deep restructuring of relations of production [which] blurs group differentiation [and] can help remedy some forms of misrecognition” (Fraser 1995, 87). She uses the example of sexuality to illustrate her point: “Affirmative remedies for homophobia and heterosexism are currently associated with gay-identity politics, which aims to revalue gay and lesbian identity. Transformative remedies, in contrast, include the approach of ‘queer theory’, which would deconstruct the homo–hetero dichotomy” (83). The conclusion of combining socialism in the economy and deconstruction in the culture would appear to pave the road for investigating the possibilities of a queer socialism, or, in theory, a queer Marxism. However, Fraser also notes that “for this scenario to be psychologically and politically feasible requires that people be weaned from their attachment to current cultural constructions of their interests and identities” (91).

Anna is clear that the principal change mainstream LGBTI activism in Hungary needs to undergo is the development of an approach that encompasses a balance between recognition and redistribution. Zoltán believes in the need for an anti-capitalist LGBTI organisation, one which is preferably not an NGO but either a social collective or connected to the trade unions. Anna encourages LGBTI activists to think about “this focus on visibility, like reinforcing identities…and how for instance this is connected to a marketisation of gayness or queerness”. Zoltán is even more critical of focusing on interpretations of identities, such as queering and non-binary, and is worried that this focus is misplaced: it should be on socio-economic issues. Réka claimed that “queers could have the potentiality to question structures, but in the activism it looks like again very narrow and rigid identities”. She said that gay men, particularly at Pride parades, are opening themselves up to a market influence in order to be closer to the ‘progressive values of the West’. In this comment Réka intertwined a critique of identity politics with the self-colonising attitude discussed by theorists of the post-socialist condition (Bakic-Hayden 1995, Velickovic 2012) and, more specifically, theorists of sexual politics in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (Kulpa and Mizieliñska 2011, Butterfield 2012). Clearly, for Zoltán and Réka, identity politics presents a huge challenge to finding avenues for

LGBTI activism that incorporate socio-economic critique. Anna is also concerned, but her affiliation with Fraser's theory seems to imply that her dispute with identity politics can be resolved by articulating identity politics alongside a socialist politics, which would require a transformation of both.

Yet, even if Anna recognises in Fraser's theory a useful framework to address the frictions among Hungarian activisms, and even if Fraser presents the recognition-redistribution dilemma as characteristic of the "post-socialist condition" (a term she uses to characterise the global political field after 1989),[34] Fraser does not address the concrete context of post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Someone who does so, instead, is Hungarian scholar Zsuzsa Gille (2010). Gille argues that the combination of redistribution and recognition already existed under state socialism before 1989, and has taken on different forms after 1989. That is, she argues *both* that identity politics did exist under socialism *and* that post-socialist CEE countries have not side-lined redistribution since the democratic transition. In fact, she points out that in the context of Hungary it is the far-right that has managed to combine a politics of redistribution and recognition most effectively. The manifesto of Jobbik (the main right-wing opposition party) is the most economically socialist of all the parties, and this was reiterated by Zoltán during our interview. The difference is that the far-right offers an identity politics that is whitewashed and based on nationalism. This essentialist nationalist identity politics is extremely powerful in the context of post-socialism, where Western neoliberal hegemony is regarded as threatening the economic conditions of the average Hungarian citizen. Jobbik is therefore filling the redistributive policy area previously left void by an absence of a truly left-wing political party in Hungary (as we saw in chapter two, this absence constitutes a major factor of the post-socialist condition). Since Jobbik offers an identity politics based on 'Hungary belongs to Hungarians' (Gille 2010, 26), left-wing organisations wishing to combat this narrative can find strength in retaining identity politics as a strategy. Lisa Duggan (2003) argues a similar point in the context of far-right identity politics in the United States.

Duggan recognises that "the identity politics camps are increasingly divorced from any critique of global capitalism", but maintains that progressive-left forces "dismiss cultural and identity politics at their peril", because this dismissal leaves them weak in the face of the cultural and identity politics of the opposition (2003: xx). Additionally, she distinguishes between a multi-issue identity politics and a single-issue identity politics in the context of sexuality. In order to describe the latter, she coins the term 'homonormativity', which is "a

[34] See: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/334209.pdf (accessed July 23, 2018).

politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (50). The difference between the two can be explained by the history of why LGBTI people in the United States began to shift from an identity politics based on lesbian and gay identities toward a queer politics anchored in queer theory in the 1990s.

In the context of the United States, queer politics originated in the 1990s from a rejection of essentialist identity politics. As Michael Warner explains, "'queer'…rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favor of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal" (1993, xxvi). However, he continues on the same page to explain that "minority-based versions of lesbian and gay theory", or identity politics, cannot be entirely replaced, because the regimes of normativity discriminate on the basis of those identities. Gianmaria Colpani (2017), like Duggan, argues that identity politics is in fact key to combatting homonormativity, provided it is intersectional and not essentialist (like homonormative gay identity politics). He uses the example of queer of colour critique to show the importance of intersectional identity politics, as "queer of color critique over the past twenty years has been mediating not only the debate on homonormativity within queer theory, but the very 'Marxist renaissance' within the field" (2017, 131).

Zoltán, Anna, and Réka believe that the identity politics of mainstream LGBTI organisations and their adherents (such as the participants of the Budapest Pride parade), not only detracts from redistribution issues, but is in some instances in collusion with neoliberal market forces, as the anti-'gender ideology' discourse accuses them of. Problematically, however, Zoltán regards queering not as an alternative to narrow forms of identity politics, but itself an obstacle to focussing on socio-economic critique. Réka even appears to see little difference between the identity politics of gay men and queers with respect to their capacity of questioning socio-economic structures. Kováts similarly conflates identity politics with queer politics when questioning queer uses of the word 'gender' from a feminist perspective:

> it is argued that queer politics encourages individuals to reject the categories themselves (man or woman) instead of fighting the narrowly defined gender roles of men and women and the system which sustains them, and that if one does not comply with the expected gender roles, then one does not belong to that gender…This seems in line with Nancy Fraser's critique, addressed as early as in 2000…that the tendency to formulate recognition questions in identity-politics terms undermines systemic critique, lacks a

critical reflection on the socio-economic embeddedness, displaces redistribution questions, and reiterates identities. (2018, 6-7)

In this passage, Kováts argues that by rejecting gender categories, queer politics does not fight the system that sustains them. As queer politics aims to disrupt the system that sustains gender and sexual categories by refusing to identify with them, this appears to be a conflict of method, rather than a conflict of desired outcome: both aim to eventually deconstruct gender categories. As Nancy Fraser (1995) herself argues, the queer questioning of gender categories is the most transformative iteration of necessary recognition politics, which in her view must accompany a socialist politics of redistribution. However, Kováts notes that the anti-'gender ideology' discourse interprets 'gender' as "freely chosen, not constrained by norms, nature, and biological sex" (2018, 6), and as a result aligns queer theories and politics with the individualising tendencies of neoliberalism (an alignment usually associated with single-issue gay identity politics).

In Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe, the tension and confusion between identity politics and queer politics can partly be explained, once again, by the context of post-socialism. As Kulpa and Mizieliñska argue, in some CEE countries "the term 'queer' is often used to express identity politics, and becomes a bone of contention/battle between local queer theorists (who know the academic narrative of 'queer vs LGBT' and are willing to preserve it) on the one hand, and on the other local communities and activists, who use the term as another, 'new' name for 'lesbian and gay' or often use it in the commercial context" (2011, 13). For Kulpa and Mizieliñska, this arose from the adoption of Western models and categories by CEE gay and lesbian groups in the 1990s, without benefitting from the time to understand and articulate the terminology suitable to their sociocultural context (14). Simona Fojtová and Věra Sokolová (2012) notice that in the Czech Republic, there is increasing preference for the term 'queer' over gay/lesbian: "the growing use of the term 'queer' has the ability to bring together people from across the Czech society who are uncomfortable with 'hetero-homo-trans' labels" and seeks to surpass clear-cut definitions of collective and individual identity (2012, 108). This increasing use of 'queer' is, according to Fojtová and Sokolová, primarily based on the increased confidence in the politics of visibility and diversity, rather than an inclusion of socio-economic critique.[35] Irene Dioli argues that depending on the particular context where queer

[35] Mizieliñska (2006) and Fojtová and Sokolová (2012) also point out the loss of significance of the word 'queer' when it is transposed from Anglophone contexts into other languages, as it originated in the reclaiming

theory is transposed and applied, “translation of queer theory…is a move that can be interpreted as alternatively imperialistic or empowering” (2009, 31). As Kulpa and Mizieliñska (2011) note, ‘queer’ can either be used in radical ways, or as another synonym for gay identity politics.

In light of this scholarship, the confusion articulated by Zoltán, Réka and Anna concerning the difference between identity politics and queer politics appears to show that in Hungary queer is being used interchangeably with gay identity politics. Therefore, if one were to reclaim the original transformative meaning of the word queer, it could prove possible to change the narrative surrounding it in order to pursue a queer socialism. Such an endeavour could provide LGBTI activists with a means by which to challenge the attraction of anti-‘gender ideology’ discourse as regards addressing the economic concerns of Hungarian people.[36]

Petö and Kováts (2017) and the leftist interview participants, claim that in order for progressive actors to combat anti-‘gender ideology’ campaigns in Hungary they must adopt a socio-economic critique. This could range from a critique of neoliberal capitalism to an adoption of socialist politics and would include a reconsideration of the human rights framework. The interview excerpts analysed in this chapter show how the ‘symbolic glue’ effect of ‘gender ideology’ has exacerbated existing disputes among progressive activists. One such conflict concerns the claim that identity politics presents a barrier to adopting a socio-economic critique. In assuming that adopting a socio-economic critique is essential for combatting anti-‘gender ideology’ campaigns in Hungary, I have shown how LGBTI activists could pursue this aim, by distinguishing between single-issue gay identity politics and intersectional queer politics. Such a distinction has been lacking from the interviews I conducted, and, according to scholars analysing sexual politics in post-socialist contexts through a postcolonial approach, is symptomatic of Hungary’s geopolitical location in Central and Eastern Europe.

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of an English insult. This adds to the complications concerning the application of ‘queer’ in the context of Central and Eastern Europe.

[36] See the example of the Serbian Queer Beograd Festivals (Irene Dioli 2009).

Conclusion

Below I present conclusions drawn from research I conducted in the time allowed for this master's thesis. This is by no means extensive, and I therefore cannot claim to provide adequate solutions. I have analysed research by various European scholars into anti-'gender ideology' campaigns across Europe. I have drawn from CEE scholarship to outline Hungary's post-socialist context through a postcolonial lens, and I have analysed Hungarian research and activist insights to understand how LGTBI activism is being affected by anti-'gender ideology' campaigns in Hungary specifically.

Anti-'gender ideology' campaigns achieved more legislative successes in Italy than in France, in part due to divisions in the progressive counter-force. As we have seen, one major cause of these divisions is that some sexual difference feminists reinforced anti-'gender ideology' discourse claiming that men and women are equal in dignity but essentially different in nature. Through the interviews I realised that in Hungary divisions between progressive forces are also being exacerbated, due to territorial disputes over the meaning of the word 'gender', as well as conflicts between certain feminist and trans activist strategies. The major public-political stance by anti-'gender ideology' forces in Hungary has been in opposition to the Istanbul Convention. This in turn created the largest disputes so far between progressive activists. Andrea Petö and Eszter Kováts (2017) have argued that one of the 'discouraging' factors of the lack of mobilisations in Hungary is lack of legislation to mobilise against. As we have seen, the 'polypore state' tactic of creating an 'illiberal democracy' involves the dissolution of progressive NGOs and the reinforcement of 'parallel civil society' funded by the government (Petö 2017). The slow dismantling of progressive NGOs does not, however, mean the end of progressive legislation, or that the government will not create 'gender ideology' as an enemy of the nation to be mobilised against.

Whatever form the anti-'gender ideology' campaign in Hungary takes in the future, it is important for progressive actors to dialogue and attempt to retain original alliances in order to mitigate its effects. This dialogue should allow mainstream LGBTI activists to take seriously Weronika Grzebalska's diagnosis of anti-'gender ideology' campaigns across Europe being a result of a crisis of neoliberal democracy (2016). Although LGBTI activism may not have directly contributed to this crisis, it is one which cannot be ignored if progressive forces are to develop effective counter-strategies to anti-'gender ideology' campaigns.

Additionally it is important to understand both anti-'gender ideology' and LGBTI activism in Hungary's post-socialist context. I have identified how this context and its relation to anti-'gender ideology' campaigns can be understood if we approach it through a postcolonial lens, due to anti-'gender ideology' discourse claiming that 'gender ideology' amounts to 'ideological colonisation' by Western/EU neoliberal elites. The same is true of the relation between this context and sexual politics, when we analyse the notion of 'self-colonization' and the Western origins of certain activist strategies. This allows anti-'gender ideology' discourse to posit LGBTI activism in Hungary as in collusion with international neoliberal elites which threaten the economic and moral livelihood of Hungarian citizens.

In order to maintain a strong progressive front yet also adequately combat underlying politico-economic reasons for the popularity of such a discourse, there appear to be two necessary courses of action. The first is for mainstream LGBTI (and feminist) organisations to adopt a socio-economic critique, or support organisations or collectives who do so. The barrier presented by Hungary's post-socialist context may require new vocabulary, in order for such a critique to distinguish itself from the 'socialism' of the past. The second is the need for Hungarian LGBTI activists to define their terminology and reclaim the word 'queer' as an LGBTI politics which distinguishes itself from forms of LGBTI activism which mirror Lisa Duggan's notion of 'homonormativity' (2003). This would allow for an economic critique based on material conditions to be incorporated by an LGBTI activism which is not prey to market forces or relying on international strategies and frameworks. In the words of Joanna Mizieliñska, it is necessary "to do queer locally, which means to build a theory which is more suitable to our practice" (2011, 101).

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