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ARTICLE

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Fighting for Space Within the Cis- and Heteronormative Public Sphere: An Analysis of Budapest Pride

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Abstract

The article presents the urban space use of the LGBTQI+ community in a post-socialist and illiberal country, Hungary, by focusing on the historical development of Pride marches within the capital. Examining these events' routes, current regulations, and resistance related to Pride, the article observes acts of silencing and the disruption of silencing concerning the LGBTQI+ community. First, we rely on sexual and intimate citizenship studies (e.g., Plummer, 2003; Richardson, 2017) to highlight the public/private divide and related (in)visibility and human rights issues associated with the LGBTQI+ community within a cis- and heteronormative environment. Second, queer geography and the geography of sexualities are used to better understand the cis- and heteronormative environment within which sexual and gender minorities exist and operate. Regarding the Hungarian context, we assume that "a gradual extension of public space use" is present concerning the public events of the LGBTQI+ community in Hungary (Takács, 2014, p. 202). The article analyzes three aspects concerning the Pride parades held in Budapest through the 3R analytical lens and connected silencing and the disruption of silencing: the spatial routes of the Budapest Pride, related regulations, and the resistance to and of LGBTQI+ visibility in an urban setting. First, through maps, we visualize the routes of the Budapest Pride parades from 1997 to 2022 to understand how the visibility of LGBTQI+ and allies is constricted and regulated in the spatial dimension. Second, following the regulatory approach of the Budapest Pride organization, we focus on how the police ensure these events' and attendees' safety and whether cordons—physical symbols of division between participants, police, and bystanders or protesters—are necessary. The third aspect elucidates the resistance against and toward the visibility of LGBTQI+ people in the urban setting.

Keywords

Budapest Pride; Hungary; LGBTQI+; Pride march; queer space; visibility

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1. Introduction

What is Pride exactly, and what is its relevance to the LGBTQI+ community (hereinafter interchangeably referred to as sexual and gender minorities)? While its origins are well-known, related to the Stonewall riots in 1969 in New York, how has its scope shifted? Turesky and Jae-an Crisman (2023, p. 262) note that "the event…evolved from a struggle for queer recognition and freedom from police violence to a space of commodified celebration, with corporate sponsors eager to brand the event with their names." While some suggest that Pride is about the recognition of the rights of the LGBTQI+ community, others, in contrast, refer to it as a commercialized event, coined "pinkwashing," and its recognition-related goals as a way towards greater assimilation and homonormativity (Browne & McCartan, 2020; DeGagne, 2020). Another distinct standpoint is that Pride is a celebration of queer joy, a tool to disrupt hetero- and cisnormative norms in public spaces with bodies that defy and transcend gender norms and binaries.

This article captures the history of Budapest Pride through queer space use and its potential to disrupt the silence of the hetero- and cisnormativity of the urban setting. Focusing on a significant symbolic event like Pride, our aim is to contribute to the broader field of queer geography and sexuality studies by bridging a gap in the literature regarding queer space use in a post-socialist and illiberal country. It departs from a brief overview of the post-socialist and illiberal context and LGBTQI+ rights development in Hungary, and is followed by a section focusing on the theoretical approaches to Pride marches and the specificities of Budapest Pride. The theoretical background is divided into two sections: spatial and legal. The article uses the geography of sexualities and queer geography (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Binnie, 1997; Johnston, 2005; Oswin, 2008) to reflect on the sexualized and gendered aspects of public spaces. Simultaneously, it draws on research in sexuality, as well as sexual and intimate citizenship studies (Plummer, 2003; Richardson, 2017), to emphasize the public/private division and how this relates to exercising certain human rights in the public sphere. More specifically, it addresses the freedom of assembly and expression in the "heterosexual space." In line with the thematic issue, the article focuses on Budapest Pride marches to identify acts of silencing and the disruption of silencing as intimate citizens exercise their freedom of assembly and expression within a cis- and heteronormative urban environment. The third part establishes the research objectives and methodology, while the fourth section provides an analysis of Budapest Pride based on the authors' preliminary analytical frame, the 3R lens (routes in spaces, regulations, resistance). The final part concludes the article with the main findings, their discussion, remarks on the research's limitations, and potential future research goals.

1.1. Post-Socialist and Illiberal Context of Hungary and the State of LGBTQI+ Rights

The socialist period and the post-socialist transformation continue to exert influence on the use of urban spaces, urban planning, and territorial governance. Following the collapse of socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, democratic institutions were established, but the democratization process faced challenges (Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008; Tuvikene, 2016). The social transformations necessary for creating a democratic system did not occur, and the shift to free-market capitalism hindered the adoption of Western democratic norms (Szelényi & Csillag, 2015; Varró, 2010). Systemic corruption and dysfunctional relationships between levels of governance, driven by political power and economic dependencies, posed significant obstacles. These interdependencies meant that national-level politics exerted strong control over municipal governance, including the utilization of urban spaces (Csizmady et al., 2022; Jávor & Jancsics,

2016). Additional post-socialist characteristics include low levels of public participation, negative attitudes towards politics, and a lack of civic engagement (Gille, 2010). Due to the inherited effects of the socialist demobilization strategy in Hungary, public participation is lower than in other post-socialist countries, according to European Social Survey data. The proportion of respondents who had participated in a lawful public demonstration in the last 12 months before the wave of data collection was 2.7% in 2010 and 2.2% in 2018 (Mikecz, 2023, pp. 18–20).

The post-2010 illiberal turn is closely tied to the legacy of the socialist regime (Olt et al., in press). Illiberal elements often mirror features of the socialist system, such as re-centralization (seen in territorial planning) and the extensive power of the state to intervene in municipal affairs (Glasius et al., 2020; Kneuer & Demmelhuber, 2020; Waller, 2023). For instance, the local business tax can be reduced in some municipalities at the government's discretion, and developments can be implemented without the local authority's consent (Pálné Kovács, 2020). In the 1990s, the aim of the new municipal law (Hungarian Parliament, 1990) was to ensure local sovereignty. However, after 2010, a new process of re-centralization began, restricting municipalities' ability to execute developments and take significant action to mitigate social inequalities. Moreover, dependence on national-level politics has been strengthened; political loyalty from local governments can impact a municipality's development potential by influencing the allocation of development funds (Csizmady et al., 2022; Hegedüs & Péteri, 2015; Jelinek, 2020; Olt et al., in press).

In post-socialist and illiberal countries, the state uses public spaces to reinforce national identity (e.g., in Budapest, after 2010, several public spaces were renamed for this purpose) and may partially promote cis- and heteronormative identities. Marginalized social groups, including the LGBTQI+ community, have limited visibility and usage of public spaces (McGarry, 2016). Nonetheless, social movements and initiatives are striving for the free, accessible, and visible use of public spaces. These efforts can lead to positive developments for the LGBTQI+ community, offering opportunities for governments to address exclusion and discrimination.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the transnationalization and globalization of LGBTQI+ norms and rights can also lead to contestation (Ayoub, 2015, 2016; Guasti & Bustikova, 2023). Indeed, many scholars have reflected on anti-gender movements and right-wing sexual politics in Hungary and the use of "gender ideology" as an empty signifier to legitimize and normalize hate speech as an end goal (Barát, 2022; Grzebalska & Pető, 2018; Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017), as well as the concept of genderphobia—"an ideology about the fearfulness of gender…the action of fear-mongering for political effect," and "an aversion to addressing and critically interrogating gendered differences and [the idea of] gender as a social construct" (Takács et al., 2022, pp. 38–39).

Recent legal changes reflect the shift in gender and sexual minority rights and related political discourse since 2010. Notably, in the Fundamental Law, a hetero- and cisnormative understanding of marriage and family is indicated. Furthermore, "the right of children to a self-identity corresponding to their sex at birth" is protected by the highest Hungarian law (Hungarian Parliament, 2011b, art. XVI (1)), impacting the recognition of trans and non-binary identities. This seems to align with the 2020 ban on the legal gender recognition of adults, a procedure that was formerly ad hoc and not regulated. The recognition of kinship ties between parents and children was already limited as Hungary only recognizes the institution of registered partnership, not marriage, for same-sex couples (Sipos, 2023). It became further restricted by changes in the adoption system

by giving legal preference to married couples over single adoptees who may (or may not) be from the LGBTQI+ community (Sipos, 2021; Sipos & Szalma, 2023). In 2022, a child protection referendum ended in an invalid result following the 2021 June amendments to the Child Protection Act. This amendment prohibits not only pornographic content but also the depiction of sexuality as having a purpose in itself, and the promotion of gender deviation from sex, gender reassignment, and homosexuality for children under the age of eighteen (Hungarian Parliament, 1997, 6/A). Connected to this amendment, the phenomenon of "homofoil" (*homofólia*) is taking place—bookstores are being fined for not wrapping up books containing LGBTQI+ characters, visibly signaling "18+ content," and separating them from other publications.

2. Pride—March, Protest, Commodity, or Celebration?

2.1. Theoretical Approaches: Space and Law

Pride marches and parades have intertwined elements of the personal and the structural. Butler (2015) theorized how bodies act in spaces, discussing performativity and subversiveness. The author explains "the spatial organization of power" involving "the allocation and restriction of spatial locations in which and by which any population may appear" (Butler, 2015, p. 85). Johnston and Waitt (2016, p. 102) describe Pride events as "located, fleshy material, indeterminate parades" which "are entwined in particular sets of ideas of gender and sexuality and create geographies of (not) belonging, where people may feel both in and out of place." Following the concept of performativity, Johnston (2005, pp. 127–129) explored two Australian gay Pride parades, relying on the notion of camp. The latter entails an almost parodic exaggeration of gender norms and expressions intended to challenge and subvert binaries of masculinity and femininity as well as heterosexuality and non-heterosexuality. Johnston (2005, p. 130) emphasizes that during Pride marches, "audiences expect to see bodies that defy normative assumptions of gendered/sexed and sexualized bodies, while…at the same time, they attempt to construct bodies as either masculine or feminine." In this way, Pride is a dissident public performance and defiance of cis- and heteronormativity within the public sphere. However, the "geo-temporal" perspectives of Pride must also be addressed. The notion of "geo-temporal dislocation" highlights how politics, actions, or ideas are "relocated" from their original geo-temporal context to a new one, disrupting their initial state. Indeed, the integration of Pride events into the local context can be different based on the "histories and geographies" of countries (Slootmaeckers & Bosia, 2023, pp. 2–3, 16). Plummer (2001, pp. 243–245) considers public spheres "multiple, hierarchically layered and contested." "Gay and lesbian public spheres" create a distinct, visible, and positive culture that seeps into broader public spheres and, on the other, offers "alternative, subaltern cultures." Plummer (2003, p. 70) recognizes—through the concept of intimate citizenship—the idea that personal and public aspects of our lives are interconnected, and even those "that appear to be personal…are connected to, structured by, or regulated through the public sphere."

Based on these theoretical approaches of queer geography and intimate citizenship studies, we assume that Budapest Pride represents this phenomenon as intimate citizens exercise their freedom of assembly and expression in a regulated "heterosexual" public space, the streets of Budapest. Thus, our interest is in understanding Budapest Pride within the Hungarian context, where intimate citizens are temporally present within the "(hetero)sexualized" urban space (Binnie, 1997).

The silencing of intimate citizenship acts or the disruption of that silencing can be affected by the formal regulation of space use: Who is allowed to be "loud and proud" and how? According to Mitchell (2013), the state ensures freedom of expression and its democratic framework and regulation. The state regulates how and where freedom of speech may be realized. The regulation of space use, property rights, and the authorities controlling spaces (e.g., the police) also implies the regulation of free speech. Even if intimate citizens exercise their freedom of assembly and expression, silencing in urban spaces involves regulating space in a way that either restricts these freedoms or limits them in such a manner that the resulting protests and marches have minimal or no impact at all. Our initial 3R framework approaches this by identifying route usage, regulations (including the related role of judicial and law enforcement authorities), and acts of resistance.

Pride is understood in this article as a public event where intimate citizens can exercise their rights, especially the right to assembly and expression, to gain visibility and voice, advocate for their rights and disrupt the silencing cis- and heteronormative spatial environment and its regulation.

2.2. Budapest Pride

The first-ever Pride march in Hungary took place on 6 September 1997, called Gay Pride Day (*Meleg Büszkeség Nap*). While this was the first official march, there were many precursors, most notably Pink Picnics and film festivals. On 13 September 1992, the first Pink Picnic (*Pink Piknik*)—a precursory Pride-like event—took place on Three Border Mountain (Hármashatár-hegy), a safe place relatively secluded from public eyes. This was followed by further Pink Picnics until 1996 (Hanzli & Nagy, 2022, pp. 143–145). After 1997, every year—except 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic—Pride marches were organized between June and September. Additionally, since 2013, LGBT History Month has been organized on an annual basis (Hanzli & Nagy, 2022, p. 204). This is the year that the Budapest Pride LGBTQ Film Festival became an event separate from the Pride marches.

Academic papers recount the general history of homosexuality and queerness in Budapest and Hungary by focusing on what happened before, during, and after the state-socialist period, as well as the historical development of "queer spaces." Newer contributions focus on LGBTQI+ rights or how history affects current trends both within the activism of the community and society's perception of the community itself (Hanzli & Nagy, 2022; Kuhar & Takács, 2007; Kurimay, 2020; Renkin, 2015; Takács, 2014; Tóth, 2013). While queer history has been researched thoroughly in Budapest and Hungary, the article aims to contribute to the research of Pride parades by examining silencing and the disruption of silencing via the tangible case of Budapest Pride, highlighting the interplay between the expressions of non-cis- and non-heteronormative citizens within "heterosexual" public spaces through which the division of private and public, personal and political is defied (Plummer, 2003; Richardson, 2017).

3. Research Objectives and Methodology

This research scrutinizes the case of the Budapest Pride marches using a preliminary model to examine how silencing and the disruption of silencing occur through the use of space, the legislative framework, and the social mobilization of resistance. For these three aspects, acts of silencing and the disruption of silencing are identified. In line with this preliminary 3R model (routes in spaces, regulations, resistance), the following questions are tackled: How did the routes and number of participants associated with Budapest Pride change,

and what is the relevance of specific routes regarding the geographical location of the legislative seat (the Hungarian Parliament) in Budapest? What legal framework can be identified for regulating space use, and does it aid or restrict Budapest Pride and the LGBTQI+ community? Finally, how is resistance present regarding these events?

To answer these questions, we systematically collected information on every Pride march from 1997 to 2022 using academic and online sources to create a database containing important data about the events. This includes dates, number of participants, and routes (highlighting their distance to Kossuth Lajos Square, where the Parliament building is located). It furthermore covers slogans, information on invited speakers and their speeches, and details regarding the use of cordons. If cordons were utilized, the database specifies which group's movement was limited (Pride march attendees or counter-protesters).

The research employs—in addition to details about the length of each Parade's route—details on the availability of estimated participant numbers as a proxy for assessing the visibility of LGBTQI+ individuals and allies. The visibility of LGBTQI+ minorities can be investigated through a range of other sources, including the analysis of printed and social media representations (e.g., content and visual analysis, number of followers and/or attendees confirmed at social media events). However, considering the nature of this event, which dates back to 1997, data concerning the (approximate) participant count emerged as the most accessible, enabling a more objective comparison. It was also deemed the most pertinent information for emphasizing the "popularity" of each parade.

The number of participants of Budapest Pride marches was compiled from the event organizers' official website (https://budapestpride.hu), an online printed press database by Arcanum Digitheca, and other online sources. Considering the dates of the Pride marches, using a margin of one month on either side of the event, the following keywords were used to collect relevant printed and online press articles: *melegfelvonulás* (gay march), *melegbüszkeség* (gay pride), "Pride," *meleg* (gay), *leszbikus* (lesbian), and *homoszexuális* (homosexual).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the parade was canceled in 2020, resulting in a total of 25 parades for which data were collected. Participation data for 15 years were accessed through the organizers' website, containing the organizers' estimates. For an additional four years, the estimates given in newspaper articles were based on the organizers' estimate but are not available on the organizers' website. Thus, participant numbers were estimated for six marches without referencing the parade organizers. When exact participant numbers were not provided, and only a range was given, we calculated the average of the range for our analysis.

The approximate length of the route of each Pride march was calculated using Google Earth by manually adding and connecting the main points, followed by their visualization. The written descriptions of these routes are available online on Budapest Pride's website on the history of Pride (https://budapestpride.hu/tortenetunk).

The objective was to provide a comprehensive overview of how silencing and the disruption of silencing can occur in a spatially and temporally fixed event (Pride) whose goal is to enhance the visibility and social inclusion of sexual and gender minorities considering the current socio-legal context in Hungary.

4. Analysis

We developed an analytical framework based on which Budapest Pride marches were analyzed. The 3R lens (Figure 1) aims to scrutinize three aspects to better understand silencing and the disruption of silencing. First, the spatial component (including material and symbolic aspects of space use); second, the regulations encompassing the legal framework (including positive and negative aspects, such as freedom and its limitations); and third, resistance through material and symbolic elements focusing on how space is used within the established regulatory environment. Through the first and second components (spatial and legal aspects), we discover how intimate citizens are using space within the freedom and the limits of legal regulations. The third component encompasses these two elements (space use and legal framework) to assess moments of resistance. This includes briefly examining both supportive and opposing stances of social movements and mobilization related to minority groups' rights and equality.

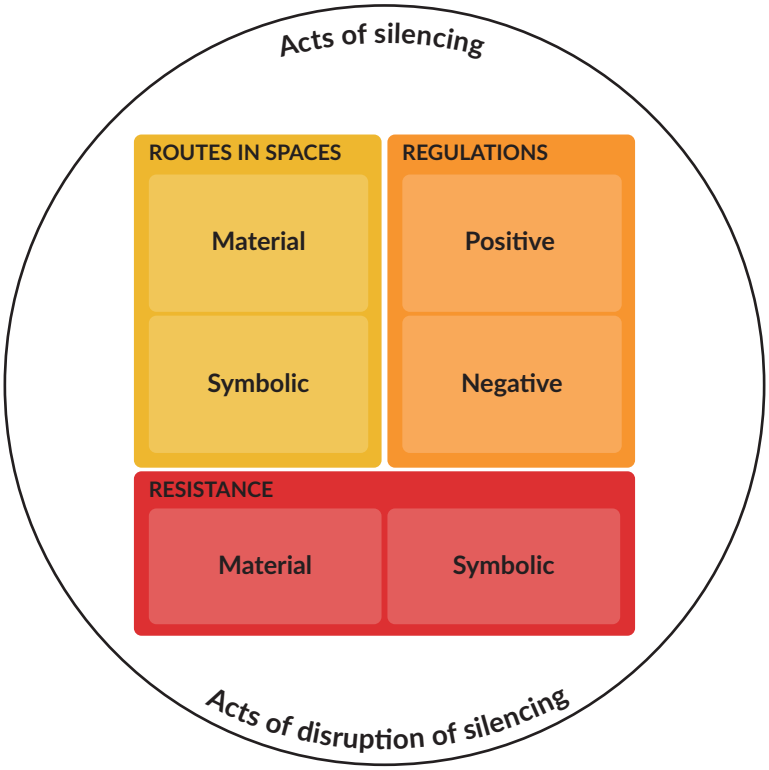

Figure 1. 3R framework (routes in spaces, regulations, resistance).

4.1. Routes in Spaces

Within the 3R analytical framework, routes in spaces are the most visible representation of how the LGBTQI+ community could be present and use public space through the Budapest Pride marches (see Figure 2). As theorized within the geography of sexualities and queer geography, public space is inherently filled with sexual and gender codings, sexed bodies, as well as an everyday hegemony of heterosexuality (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Binnie, 1997; Hubbard, 2008). To be visible is to question these norms of public space and its use. Thus, silencing and the disruption of silencing can occur through space use of sexual and gender minorities.

Regarding the routes in spaces, there are several considerations regarding Budapest. First of all, given the inherent qualities and characteristics of the city, specific routes and squares are considered more suitable for gatherings of significant numbers of people regardless of their purpose (protests, marches, sports events, open-air parades). Second, Pride is about visibility, amongst other core objectives. In Budapest Pride's mission statement, the parade serves as the primary means of expressing and transmitting the organization's values, fostering community, and raising awareness about inequalities faced by the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, it recognizes Budapest Pride's high-level visibility and prominent symbolic role in advocating for the rights and equality of the community (Budapest Pride, 2013, p. 9). Third, related to being a symbol of resistance, the article briefly discusses the role of the Parliament building (Országház) regarding the routes of Budapest Pride.

After the democratic transformation of 1989, the Hungarian local government system became highly decentralized, leading to significant fragmentation. Budapest has a two-tier system of local government: the Municipality of Budapest and its 23 districts' local governments (Hungarian Parliament, 1990). However, the Municipality of Budapest does not represent a higher level above the districts; it possesses its own territory within Budapest, and it also "performs all tasks related to area and settlement development, as well as area planning, settlement planning, and settlement operation that affect the entire capital city or are connected to the capital city's special role in the country" (Hungarian Parliament, 2011a, para. 23 (1)). Therefore, the broad autonomy granted to the local governments of the 23 districts provides flexibility for each of them to devise distinct responses to the evolving socio-political landscape (Egedy et al., 2016; Tosics, 2006). Although the re-centralization process significantly altered various aspects of local governance, the autonomy of municipalities in addressing social issues has remained unchanged as long as their actions align with their financial capabilities (Csizmady et al., 2022).

Figure 2. Routes of Pride marches in Budapest between 1997–2022.

Thus, the Municipality of Budapest and 23 districts have the authority to decide on policies related to the LGBTQI+ community within their jurisdiction. These policies are typically symbolic and rarely extend beyond the level of communication. Initiatives aimed at inclusivity include displaying the rainbow flag on municipal office buildings, offering venue rentals in municipal buildings to LGBTQI+ organizations, supporting LGBTQI+ organizations through communication channels, and local politicians participating in events organized by LGBTQI+ organizations. On the other hand, there are districts in Budapest that are opposed to the LGBTQI+ community. These governments attempt to restrict activities perceived as LGBTQI+ propaganda (e.g., banning a book featuring LGBTQI+ characters in institutions run by the local government) and may engage in hostile communication regarding LGBTQI+ issues. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the Fundamental Law and the legal framework are more restrictive of LGBTQI+ rights in general, regardless of the municipal authorities' approach to such matters.

It is not surprising that the first march had the fewest participants (around 300–400 people) and was the shortest route (Figure 3). 2009 was an interesting year due to the shortness of the route and the month (September). In the previous two years, Pride participants were subjected to serious attacks. Thus, organizers may have opted for a shorter route. Additionally, this was the year the Registered Partnership Act was introduced and entered into force on 1 July 2009, allowing same-sex couples to legally recognize their partnership (Hungarian Parliament, 2009). Most participants attended the latest Pride marches (2021 and 2022), with about 35,000 attendees. A steadily increasing spike in the number of participants has been visible since 2013.

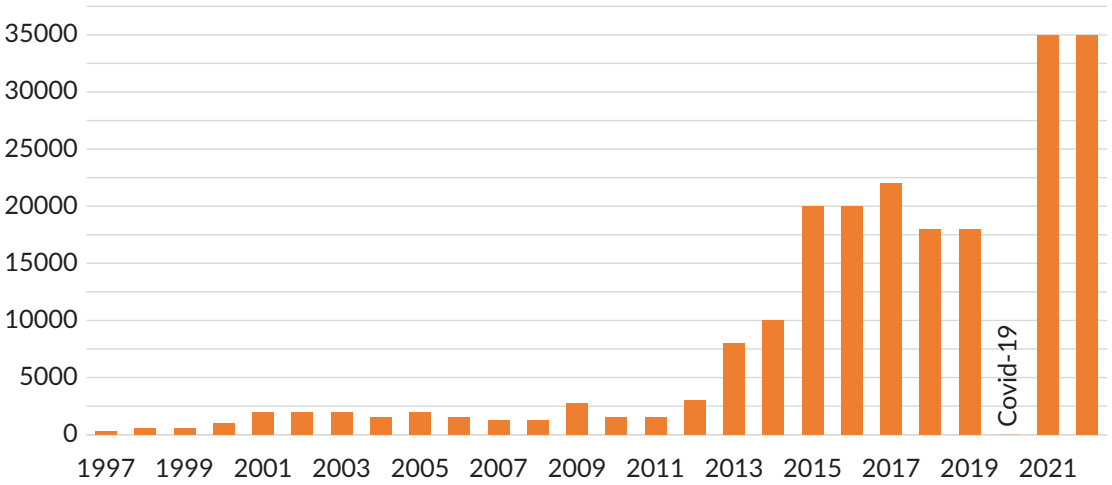

Figure 3. Number of participants in Pride marches in Budapest between 1997 and 2022.

The home of the legislative process, Parliament, and its closeness or distance from Pride routes is of interest as several protests were held in front of this building to express disapproval of specific legislative measures (almost countless since the 1989 democratic regime change). Renkin (2015, pp. 427–428) recounts the 2011 Pride march and its—both symbolic and spatial—distance from Parliament:

> The 2011 Dignity March almost ends at Parliament. But not quite. Banned from entering Kossuth tér—the square surrounding Parliament—we pack into the narrow space of Alkotmány Street. Through the police barricade at [the] street's end, we can just see the Parliament. Clustering together, listening to

> optimistic speeches, the irony of our almost-inclusion is amplified by masses of chanting skinheads on the fence's other side—in Kossuth tér, in front of Parliament.

Based on our dataset, between 2016 and 2019, the Pride marches either started or ended at Kossuth Lajos Square (Kossuth Lajos tér). Nevertheless, most marches either completely "avoided" the Parliament building or "passed by" it. The following quote from Kinga Göncz (MEP from the Hungarian Socialist Party) at the 2011 Budapest Pride reflects this: "It was good that the gay pride march ended in Constitution Street [Alkotmány utca]," because "with the new constitution we will have plenty of work to do," referring to the then newly adopted Fundamental Law (Hungarian Parliament, 2011b), which contains a heteronormative understanding of marriage. She also recalled that "until 2008, gay pride marches did not require police protection. She hoped that the current situation was only temporary" ("Felesleges volt a félelem," 2011). Although in certain instances the route might seem "accidental" owing to the urban layout, it can also be understood as dissident public performativity challenging cis- and heteronormative spaces, as previously delineated in the works of Butler (2015) and Johnston (2005).

4.2. Regulations

The legal framework is crucial in regulating modes of space usage in terms of amplifying and silencing different "voices": The positive side of regulations is the freedom to exercise rights, while the negative one prohibits certain acts, limits, or restricts the exercise of rights. Generally, the right to assembly (interconnected with freedom of expression) can be exercised peacefully, which allows for the potential disruption of silencing of cis- and heteronormativity in the public sphere. However, this right can be restricted lawfully in a proportionate manner to achieve specific objectives deemed "necessary in a democratic society" (Council of Europe, 1950, Article 11). For example, the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950, Article 11) lists the following in: "the interests of national security or public safety…the prevention of disorder or crime…the protection of health or morals or…the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

The obligation to notify authorities is a further restriction of the exercise of this right. In Hungary, Act III of 1989 on Right of Assembly regulated the organization of events in public spaces until 2018. Regarding the notification obligation, it stated that organizers were obliged to notify relevant assembly authorities—in Budapest the Budapest Police Headquarters—"at least three days before the planned date of the event" (Hungarian Parliament, 1989, para. 6). After the introduction of a new act, this obligation's timeframe changed to "not earlier than three months before the assembly is to be held and at least 48 hours before the call for assembly" (Hungarian Parliament, 2018, para. 10(1)). The notification must include the organizer's name and address, and the meeting's specificities, including its name, location, time and date, purpose, the number of organizers and expected participants, and whether it is reasonable for the police to be present. Organizers can submit notifications in person or by writing (both through mail and an online system) three months before the date of the event. Thus, even if Pride is "disruptive and subversive" regarding sexual and gender norms, intimate citizens can only participate in these marches if certain regulatory measures are fulfilled, which requires deliberate organization.

Regarding competing events, paragraph 12(1) of Act 2018 states that priority shall be given to one event over the other based on which notification arrives earlier at the assembly authority (Hungarian Parliament, 2018, para 12(1)). This restriction—concerning the duty to notify—soon became a strategic "race for space."

For example, on 24 and 25 April 2021, several right-wing political actors notified the Budapest Police Headquarters about 19 public events to be held on the same day as Budapest Pride (24 July 2021) on similar routes. The events' purpose was noted as "protest[ing] against…LGBTQP propaganda" and aimed to block LGBTQI+ organizations from taking up space for the Pride march. Notably, one was submitted by Előd Novák, president of the Our Homeland Movement (Mi Hazánk Mozgalom), a far-right wing political party with an anti-LGBTQ stance, too early—three months and 10 seconds before the proposed public event's date. Even though the assembly authority rejected this submission, the first instance court, the Curia, annulled it. It noted that although the submission was made at 23:59:50, the request arrived at the assembly authority through the online system 13 seconds later. It remarked that the authority "had two certificates with different dates at its disposal, yet it accepted the certificate with a content that was unfavorable to the applicant as the basis for its decision" (Curia, 2021). Finally, the assembly authority withdrew its favorable decision regarding the route of Budapest Pride for 2021: The Our Homeland Movement took over Andrássy Road (Andrássy út)—one of the widest routes in the center of the capital with multiple pedestrian roads—and Budapest Pride went from Madách Square (Madách tér) to Tabán by crossing the Danube, the natural frontier, and dividing line between Pest and Buda.

Another instance of restrictive regulation, which can be regarded as an act of silencing, was the Budapest Pride ban in 2011–2012. In Resolution 01000/37289-15/2011, the assembly authority decided to prohibit the extension as well as the previously confirmed route of the Pride march. Its reasoning included balancing the right to freedom of movement and the right to assembly, justifying the prohibition of the public event due to its impact on traffic flow (Budapest Police Headquarters, 2011). However, the reasoning for the impediment of the traffic was challenged, and the court overturned the ban, stating that the assembly authorities' arguments were unfounded. However, in 2012, a similar banning decision was delivered by the assembly authority regarding the Budapest Pride (called Walk of Gay Dignity at the time). On September 18, 2014, the lower court's decision was upheld by the Regional Court of Appeal of Budapest, which declared that "the Budapest Police [had] committed direct discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation when banning the Budapest Pride March in April 2012" ("Court reaffirms that police," 2014). The court highlighted that the decisions of the authorities serve as a model for members of society; thus, a discriminatory banning deriving from police decisions violates human dignity and can intensify already existing hostile emotions towards the said community, which can manifest in protests.

4.3. Resistance

Within resistance, we identify material and symbolic elements. Resistance is captured first and foremost through social movements for and against the objectives of the Budapest Pride marches. The social movement connected to the Pride marches was briefly presented within the "routes" section.

The first notable forms of resistance against Budapest Pride marches were the counter-protests in 2007 and 2008. These can be categorized as both material and symbolic, as they had organizational implications for the following marches. In 2007, several counter-protesters chanted antisemitic and homophobic messages while others threw eggs, bottles, and Molotov cocktails at those participating in the Pride march. Several Pride march participants were attacked due to their (perceived) sexual orientation and/or gender identity ("A 2007. július 7-i meleg büszkeség," 2007). In 2008, the attacks intensified both prior to and during the march to the extent that participants had to leave the endpoint (Felvonulási Square [Felvonulási tér]) under police escort for

safety reasons. An article highlighted that "upon the police's request, the gay pride march took a shorter route this year, which was then shortened further: due to far-right counter-protesters, [it] turned back two streets before Oktogon" (Czene, 2010). As Takács notes (2014, p. 202): "After these events, many LGBT people felt restricted in their use of public spaces, being aware of potential attacks, abuse and other acts of hostility."

These incidents led to 10 years of cordon use—separating participants from "outsiders," including potential allies, and "restraining" the values of freedom and visibility represented by these Pride marches. These measures were taken to guarantee the safety of attendees. Furthermore, organizers invited participants to remove any symbols related to Pride, including rainbow makeup, pins, and flags, to avoid being harassed or attacked. In 2018, the policy shifted by establishing entry- and exit points and finally erecting cordons to separate counter-protesters from the marches, not the other way around (Diószegi-Horváth, 2018). Thus, in a way, protection from violent attack translated into a silencing regulation of the organizers of Budapest Pride marches, resulting in an inclusion/exclusion dichotomy for the LGBTQI+ community.

As symbolic elements of resistance, the database includes all the slogans of Pride marches. These encompass references to visibility, coming out, and the freedom of sexual and gender minorities (e.g., "Off with the mask!" [*Le az álarccal!*]; "Freer on the outside" [*Kívül szabadabb*]), as well as human rights, equality, and progress made so far (e.g., "Act for diversity and human rights" [*Tégy a sokszínűségért és az emberi jogokért*]; "Living–together–equally" [*Együtt–élve–egyenlően*]; "20 years of power!" [*20 esztendőnk hatalom!*]). Interestingly, as discussions on marriage equality and the institution of registered partnership unfolded in the Hungarian Parliament, organizers opted for slogans that mirrored these developments (e.g., "A spade, a hoe, and a big bell—equal opportunities for marriage!" [*Ásó, kapa, nagyharang—egyenlő esélyeket a házassághoz!*]; "We are one family!" [*Egy család vagyunk*]). The slogan of the last three years was "Take back your future!" [*Vedd vissza a jövőd!*], a potential reference to the shrinking rights of LGBTQI+ people. Another matter is how these marches were titled by the organizers: From 1997 to 2007, they referred to them as the Gay Pride Day Parade [Meleg Büszkeség Napi felvonulás], while from 2008—the year the most atrocities happened—the event became known as Gay Dignity March or Walk of Gay Dignity [Meleg Méltóság Menete]. In 2009, the event was renamed Budapest Pride (Renkin, 2015, pp. 409–410; see also https://budapestpride.hu/tortenetunk).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

With a focus on the historical progression of Pride marches in Hungary's capital, the article aimed to investigate the use of urban space by the LGBTQI+ community in a post-socialist and illiberal context. The article relied on two theoretical approaches. To explore the spatial dimension, contributions from queer geography and geography of sexualities were used, and for the legal dimension, the notions of intimate and sexual citizenship were addressed. Based on these, the article understands Pride marches as temporally and spatially fixed public events where intimate citizens, especially non-cis- and non-heteronormative ones, exercise their freedom of assembly and expression. The purpose is to advocate for their rights, to raise awareness of the inequalities faced by the LGBTQI+ community, and finally, to disrupt the silencing of the cis- and heteronormative spatial environment and its regulation. As highlighted before, "there is a spatiality to Pride events and…Pride festivals differ both in content and political import depending on where and how they are created" (Browne & McCartan, 2020, p. 187). Recognizing the contribution of other scholars concerning Pride events (Ammaturo, 2016; Slootmaeckers, 2023), this article addressed the specificities of

Hungary and Budapest to present a more thorough account of Budapest Pride's history, emphasizing its spatial and legal dimensions.

Within the analysis of Budapest Pride, the 3R lens (routes in spaces, regulations, resistance) was developed by the authors and applied to a database regarding Budapest Pride marches between 1997 and 2022 to identify acts of silencing and the disruption of silencing (Table 1). First, it sought to delve into the transformation of Budapest Pride marches' routes and participant count. Second, it aimed to identify the prevailing legal framework concerning the LGBTQI+ community and what aids or constrains the organization of and participation in Budapest Pride. Lastly, it explored the dynamics of resistance within this spatial-legal context.

Table 1. Acts of silencing and the disruption of silencing within the 3R lens.

3R lens	Silencing	Disruption of silencing
Routes in spaces	(Infra)structural limits of the town	Closeness to the Hungarian Parliament
		Being in the city center
		Growing number of participants
Regulations	Constraints on the freedom of assembly and expression (e.g., notification obligation on event organization in public spaces)	Guaranteed freedom of assembly and expression
	"Race for space"—competing events with (far-)right-wing actors	
	Institutional silencing in 2011–2012	
Resistance	Counter-protests and related atrocities in 2007–2008 followed by cordon use until 2018	Undisrupted organization of Budapest Pride
		Mottos of pride marches referring to visibility and human rights

As the routes in spaces, both material (number of participants and length of routes) and symbolic (proximity to Parliament) aspects were highlighted. These were crucial because, within these events, "streets are temporally 'queered,' exposing the normativity of heterosexual uses in space" (Browne & McCartan, 2020, p. 188). Thus, the number of participants and/or the length of routes can signal the extent to which non-cisnormative and non-heteronormative intimate citizens are present and can intervene in cis- and heteronormative public spaces. Although a low level of public participation is an ongoing post-socialist characteristic of Hungary (Gille, 2010; Mikecz, 2023), the Budapest Pride march has had a growing number of participants since 2010. This could be due to members of the community and allies showing up in the face of an increasingly stricter legal environment and hostile political environment in Hungary. Legal amendments restricting the rights of the LGBTQI+ community and political discourse could affect societal attitudes. Recent research shows that the social acceptance of the community has not yet changed substantially (Takács & Swart, 2021; Takács & Szalma, 2022).

The regulation element refers to the legal framework that allows or restricts how an intimate citizen can behave in the public space during a public event, specifically within the exercise of the freedom of assembly and expression. Butler (2015, p. 11) states that "when bodies assemble on the street, in the square, or in other forms of public space (including virtual ones) they are exercising a plural and performative right to

appear." Indeed, the possibility of attending Pride marches is the possibility to appear and disrupt cis- and heteronormative space by "queering" them within the spatial-temporal setting of the event. As Plummer (1995, p. 151) points out, "decisions around…access (or not) to representations, relationships, [and] public spaces" are part of the concept of intimate citizenship. In relation to the legal framework, the question of access is relevant, as two instances of silencing from authoritative institutions were identified: first, the Curia decision that allowed right-wing political actors to exercise their right to assembly—even though the formal requirements of notification obligation were not entirely met—and second, the Budapest Pride bans in 2011 and 2012 by the police. In the first case, the highest court of Hungary indirectly approved right-wing political actors' action in the "race for space." In the second case, when the police decision prohibited the extension and the previously approved route of the Budapest Pride march, the judiciary disrupted this act of silencing by declaring that state authorities play a role in society's perception of the LGBTQI+ community and that discriminatory measures may fuel negative sentiments towards it.

Finally, resistance was captured through material and symbolic elements. According to Ayoub (2016, p. 27), "Pride marches and parades are at the center of this collective [political act of] coming out…occupying the public space in resistance to heteronormativity." In response to this visibility and the disruption of silencing through Pride marches and slogans of freedom and equality, anti-LGBTQI+ resistance can be identified. Most notably, the 2007 and 2008 attacks were primary examples of counter-social movements aimed at silencing and making the LGBTQI+ community and allies invisible. These incidents led to the use of a form of material division—cordons—which guaranteed the safety of Pride participants but whose use was counter to the goals of such Pride events. The symbolic aspect of this furthermore reinforced the "us-versus-them" perspective and the idea of a "good intimate citizen" who does not deviate from cis- and heteronormativity, except perhaps within their own four walls.

This article introduced an analytical framework that has the potential to be applied to Pride marches and other events where freedom of assembly and expression is exercised through space use, thereby making a significant contribution to the literature on sexuality and queer studies. Additionally, this study has addressed a gap in the literature concerning the use of public spaces by sexual and gender minorities and allies within the spatio-temporality of Pride in a post-socialist and illiberal country. This provides insights into the dynamics of visibility and silencing and their disruption within this unique socio-political environment.

Despite its strengths, the article has some limitations. While the research focuses on Budapest Pride marches, it does not encompass related events and thus is selective in scope. Furthermore, the proxy of the approximate number of participants of Budapest Pride may not fully encompass the visibility of LGBTQI+ people and allies. Thus, the further inclusion of visibility indicators is needed. Additionally, the question of homonormativity (Duggan, 2002) may be further addressed in accordance with the elements of resistance. Regardless, the 3R analytical lens allows for an in-depth analysis of other Pride-related activities and specific aspects of LGBTQI+ visibility and activism.

Future research endeavors may focus on giving voice to the Budapest Pride (ex-)organizers and participants to uncover the reasons and practices for raising the visibility of the sexual and gender minorities within the Hungarian sociopolitical context. Building on the established database, a more nuanced analysis of elements of resistance elements would yield insights into language and symbol use by both Pride participants and counter-protesters, as well as the media's portrayal of these groups. Furthermore, the 3R analytical

framework analysis could also be applied to Pride in Pécs, the first rural county seat in Southern Hungary to hold Pride marches (since 2021). Apart from generating interesting results as an independent case study, this would facilitate a comparative analysis with Budapest Pride.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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