

A Guide to Countering Gender and Identity Disinformation

WHAT is Gender and Identity Disinformation (GID)?

Gender and Identity Disinformation (GID) involves the deliberate spreading of false information targeting individuals based on their gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation for political, cultural, or ideological purposes. These campaigns exploit societal divisions, harm individuals already vulnerable to violence and discrimination, and weaken democratic systems.

WHY Should We Care About GID?

IT SILENCES MARGINALISED VOICES

By targeting women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and activists, GID suppresses civic participation, leaving critical perspectives unheard.

IT EXPLOITS SOCIETAL NORMS

It manipulates stereotypes and cultural values to deepen prejudices, sow discord, and maintain oppressive power structures.

IT FUELS HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Disinformation campaigns often escalate to real-world harm, including harassment, psychological trauma, and physical violence.

IT UNDERMINES DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

By eroding trust in governance, media, and institutions, GID weakens the foundations of democracy.

IT FRACTURES SOCIAL COHESION

It fosters community divisions, making building mutual understanding and trust harder.

HOW to Counter GID?

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to reach? Are you trying to educate allies, or persuade people who believe GID narratives? What elements of people's identities or values can you speak about to persuade them effectively?

INVESTIGATE AND EXPOSE

Identify GID patterns, track narrative sources, and reveal actors or platforms behind disinformation.

PROVIDE CONTEXT

Link GID campaigns to broader societal impacts, emphasizing harm to democracy and marginalized groups.

COUNTER HARMFUL NARRATIVES

Publish positive, evidence-based stories that challenge stereotypes and celebrate resilience.

EDUCATE AND COLLABORATE

Raise awareness about GID tactics and work with fact-checkers and experts to enhance reporting.

EXAMPLES

Georgia On 2 December, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze called President Salome Zurbishvili “hysterical,” discrediting her role in protests against halting Georgia’s EU accession. He framed her as “emotional” and accused her of orchestrating a “maidan” to overthrow the government. This rhetoric reflects a broader agenda to undermine the opposition by portraying them as leading Georgia into a war with Russia, as well as employing GID to paint President Zurbishvili and other women as irrational and unfit for leadership.

Armenia Female MPs in Armenia faced GID after proposing amendments to extend domestic violence protections to non-married couples. Online news outlet Hraparak, funded by former pro-Russian President Robert Kocharyan misrepresented the reforms, claiming they aimed to protect homosexual relationships under the guise of “Western values.” This distortion aligns with efforts to delegitimise women-led reforms by framing them as foreign impositions rather than addressing local social issues.

Poland During his 2020 re-election campaign, Polish President Andrzej Duda equated LGBTQ+ rights with a destructive ideology, calling it “worse than communism.” This narrative aimed to galvanize conservative voters by framing LGBTQ+ advocacy as a cultural threat, suppressing progressive voices and advancing a divisive agenda.

CHECKLIST FOR ETHICAL REPORTING ON GID

Question	Yes	No
Have I verified all claims, statistics, and sources to ensure they are accurate and not manipulated as part of a disinformation campaign?		
Does my coverage use inclusive, precise, and non-stigmatising language that avoids reinforcing harmful gendered or identity-based stereotypes?		
Does my reporting highlight diverse voices, especially from affected communities, without tokenising or reinforcing victimisation narratives?		
Have I minimised potential harm to individuals featured in my reporting and ensured anonymity for vulnerable sources if requested?		
Have I consulted local experts or affected communities to ensure cultural accuracy and avoid external biases? <i>Assess your level of bias using the Harvard University Implicit Association Test </i>		
Do my images, headlines, and captions accurately represent individuals without reinforcing stereotypes or sensationalising the issue?		
Have I avoided deepfakes, misleading visual content, or AI-generated distortions commonly used in GID?		

REPORTING GENDER AND IDENTITY DISINFORMATION

“A web of abuse: How the far right disproportionately targets female politicians” 

This investigation reveals how far-right groups orchestrate online abuse against female politicians across Europe, aiming to silence and intimidate them. The report provides specific cases and discusses the broader implications for democracy.

This article follows the GID coverage guidelines:

- ✓ The article references specific instances and provides data, such as the disproportionate number of mentions of Katharina Schulze by the AfD on Facebook, indicating thorough research and fact-checking.
- ✓ The report highlights gendered abuse of female politicians across Europe, emphasizing resilience and encouraging support while offering cultural context on online abuse in different political environments.
- ✓ While the primary focus is on exposing the problem, the article also highlights the resilience of female politicians facing such abuse, implicitly encouraging support for affected individuals.
- ✓ The piece acknowledges that abuse often targets multiple aspects of a politician’s identity, including gender, race, and physical appearance, reflecting an understanding of intersectionality.
- ✓ The article includes examples from various countries and political backgrounds, offering a diverse perspective on the issue.
- ✓ The collaboration with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) adds expert analysis, enhancing the article’s credibility and depth.
- ✓ The investigative nature of the piece suggests a deliberate effort to present findings objectively, without undue bias.
- ✓ The article discusses the abuse without exposing victims to further harm, maintaining their privacy and focusing on the systemic issues at play.

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