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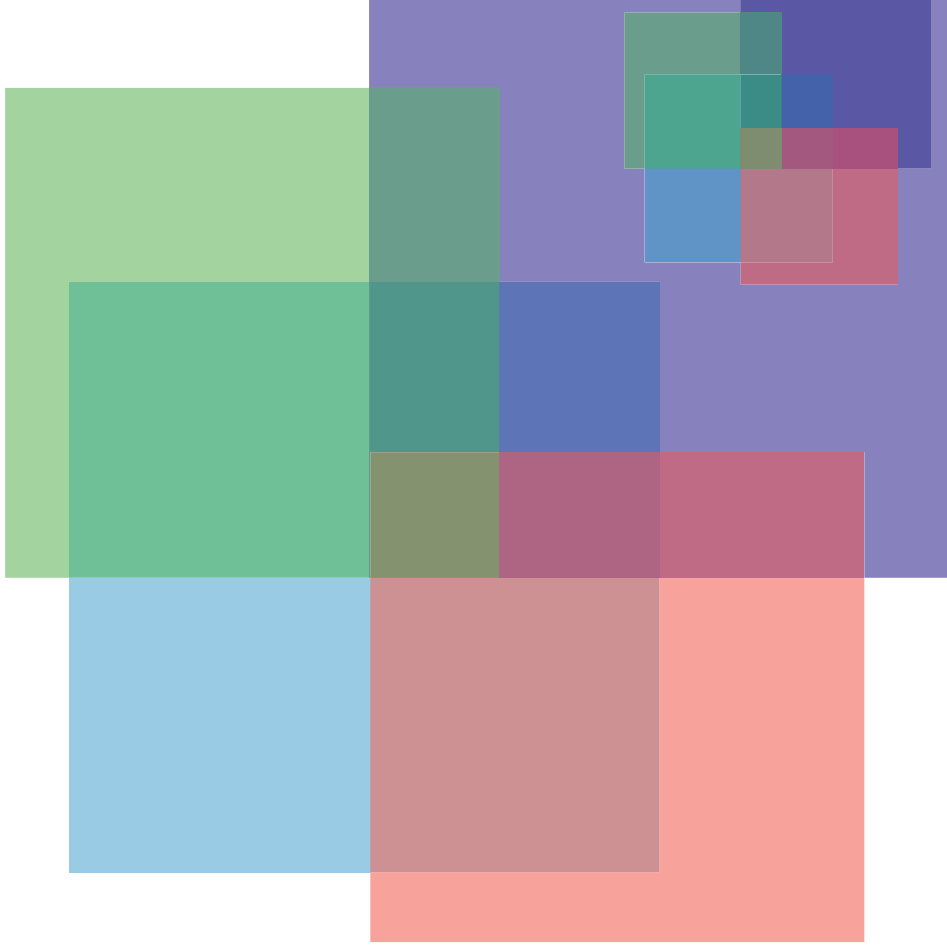
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CHAPTER 4

Human rights and LGBT rights: dominant discourses and resistance practices in the spanish State¹

*Luciana Moreira Silva**

Introduction

As some critics have suggested, human rights have been manipulated, with a particular human rights discourse being attached to a set of ideas that uphold and even reinforce a liberal and neoliberal scheme. In this respect, and in line with Samuel Moyn (2014), human rights and neoliberalism feed off each other, reinforcing neoliberalism and drawing a line between the rights that are admissible and defensible and those that are not admissible or defensible — that is, those rights that get in the way of neoliberal interests.

With the aim of discussing this claim, I will examine the fieldwork carried out within the project INTIMATE — Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe,²

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² Coordinated by Ana Cristina Santos at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra.

specifically the interviews held with experts (activists and/or political experts), as part of a specific study conducted between April and July 2015 on lesbian coupledom. To this end, I will examine how LGBT rights can be defended³ in order to achieve equality within the neoliberal discourse on human rights, and the effectiveness of LGBT rights in Spain, an almost unique example in terms of the legal advances made in such a short period of time as the three decades that have passed since Franco's dictatorship. In relation to the effectiveness of LGBT rights in Spain, I will analyse how bisexuals, gays and lesbians have managed to progressively access rights in the Western world, as well as look at the efforts made by social movements in Spain to achieve legal rights. Based on interviews I held in Madrid in 2015 with activists and political figures, I will try to understand the extent to which the interviewees apply a more normative or more resilient discourse according to their knowledge of legal and/or social changes within Spain, as well as the extent to which interviewees consider that these changes have had a positive impact on people's lives.

1 Human rights, LGBT rights and neoliberalism

There is no doubt that human rights are a work in progress, an ongoing struggle to identify silences and inequalities in the name of universal equality among human beings. Nevertheless, it is also true that human rights are a Western creation, and for that reason not as universal as they are claimed to be. As Tom Campbell (2006) points out, some authors trace the beginnings of the history of human rights back to events and documents that emerged in Europe, which are linked solely to people and states in

³ The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans persons. I use the concept of "LGBT rights" as an umbrella term to refer to non-standard sexual and gender identities, although I consider that the focus of this text is, above all, the achievement of rights by gays, lesbians and/or bisexuals; in other words, rights related to sexual orientation and in particular lesbian couples.

Europe and North America: Westphalia, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights (1689), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and so on. Moreover, these documents were always written following tensions or conflicts between Western political powers which meant that states were obliged to generate strategies to protect themselves from violence or encroachment upon their rights by other Western states. Human rights have always responded to critical moments in time that have led to the establishment of a discourse based on dignity and liberty. Notwithstanding, this dignity and liberty is based on a Western liberal revolution, which is also rooted in huge inequalities.

As maintained by Costas Douzinas (2007), another important aspect of this criticism is the very concept of what it means to be a human, which varies throughout the world. The scope of rights depends on this concept. Douzinas claims that a “minimum of humanity is what allows man to claim autonomy, moral responsibility and legal subjectivity” (Douzinas, 2007:53). In this sense, there is an essential and dangerous link between citizenship and fundamental rights. The legal system and bureaucracy have penetrated humanity to such an extent that those people with a better knowledge of the Western language of human rights have more of a privilege when it comes to making their demands known. Douzinas (2007:56) states that a “refugee whose claim to enter the recipient country has been constructed in human rights terms is a more privileged subject — more ‘human’ — than someone else”.

Another criticism of the conventional discourse on human rights comes from Samuel Moyn (2014), who criticizes the way in which “international human rights can offer a toolbox of legal and other standards to guide, tame, and ‘civilize’ an era of transnational market liberalization that has generally improved the human condition” (Moyn, 2014: 149). Moyn believes that the criteria used to evaluate the failure of strategies in the sphere of human rights are very superficial. The solution to this problem would be

to demand more sophisticated assessment criteria and develop a political framework capable of protecting them, recognizing that merely defending the concept of human rights at times of extreme inequality is simply naive.

These authors are aware of the risk of constructing a human rights discourse as a modern and optimistic process characterized at all times by constant improvement, while failing to link colossal human rights violations with a selfish, capitalist and neoliberal Western structure. On the one hand, as defended by Moyn, there is a subtle sense of civilizing the other that stems from European colonialism, as if Europe — and the United States — could eternally shoulder what Rudyard Kipling termed, in his eponymous poem, the white man's burden. On the other hand, there is a certain cynicism behind human rights, given that the West continues to commit brutal human rights violations and arbitrary actions — above all, in dealings with the non-Western world.

Authors writing in the sphere of queer theory also voice strong criticisms of this system. Lisa Duggan (2002) links the work of neoliberalism to a policy of assimilating LGBT demands. For Duggan, the neoliberal model is principally associated with economic and commercial policies, the “brand name for the form of pro-corporate, ‘free market’, anti-‘big government’ rhetoric shaping Western national policy and dominating international financial institutions” (Duggan, 2002:177). Although the author is referring to the situation of the United States, this model has been applied to — and, to a great extent, has an impact on — many other parts of the world. Duggan goes further, linking this economic endeavour to a cultural endeavour in the following sense:

in a wide range of cultural policy territories—from public spending for culture and education to the ‘moral’ foundations for welfare reform, from affirmative action to marriage and domestic partnership debates—neoliberalism’s profoundly

antidemocratic and antiegalitarian agenda has shaped public discussion. (Duggan, 2002: 177)

In line with this definition, it can be understood how work for LGBT rights was adjusted to fit in more or less easily with a model that ostensibly seemed democratic, universalist and expansionist but ultimately reveals a neoliberal sexual policy that makes efforts to assimilate — at least in legal terms — primarily bisexuals, gays and lesbians into a neoliberal system based on consumption and Western economic expansion.

As a consequence, I consider it to be absolutely necessary that we keep in mind that granting rights can sometimes represent a mere formal change targeting those groups that do not bring into question the capitalist and neoliberal system on which the human rights project is constructed. On the other hand, given the scope of this work, it is also necessary to understand the extent to which the granting of formal rights to groups of people including LGBT has an effective impact on the lives of people, or whether it is just a strategy for assimilating such groups into the Western economic system. In this respect, Phelan indicates that

in sexual discourse, hypo-descent⁴ serves to consolidate heterosexual identity by locating any queer desire in ‘queers’ safely outside of straight people. It also fixes gays and lesbians as types rather than agents. Thus while naturalizing queer identities appears as an empowering option within liberal discourse it does so by hiding the complexities of queer lives. (Phelan, 1997: 64–65)

Lisa Duggan, Shane Phelan and other authors argue that the neoliberal discourse assimilates LGBT and queer identities into a normative model. At the same time, as Phelan suggests, these

⁴ “Hypo-descent” is the term used for the automatic classification of the children from the union of people in distinct socio-economic or ethnic groups to the socially subordinate of these groups.

identities are situated on the other side of a line in a space for non-heterosexual practices; reserved for all sexual discourses that do not fit into the hegemonic discourse. Likewise, a close examination is also required of the tensions between assimilationist politics and the experiences of LGBT people whose rights are supposedly being guaranteed.

2 Assimilationism, politics, activism and sexuality

Regarding sexual and political identities, it is important to approach them with an understating of their semiotics and of the meaning of the terms gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer. The concept of queer is more recent and wide-ranging, encompassing sexual orientation, gender, sexual identity, and other categories such as class, ethnicity, age, dis/ability, etc., which also challenge the norm, thereby taking on a broader political and academic meaning. Shane Phelan (1997) explores the meaning of queer as a political identity and its great power for challenging the heteronormative regime. Queer theory and the discourses of queer activism have been developed based on the most radical methods that disrupt normative sexual and cultural models, fighting against the assimilation not just of gays and lesbians but society in general into a supposedly reasonable, egalitarian and democratic system that conceals a capitalist, patriarchal and unequal regime, that of neoliberalism. As argued by Jasbir Puar (2007), based on the enormous differences between queer action and white, classist and almost exclusively male homonormativity, we are living in queer times, and:

queer times require even queerer modalities of thought, analysis, creativity, and expression in order to elaborate upon nationalist, patriotic, and terrorist formations and their imbricated forms of racialized perverse sexualities and gender dysphorias. (Puar, 2007: 204)

On the other hand, some LGBT movements still find it difficult to accept radical queer models. In the case of Spain, from the interviews that I held with activists and political figures it is interesting to note how some of the interviewees omit or even reject queer theories and activism, while others embrace them as a radical form of fighting against the politics of cultural and economic normativity within the so-called European debt crisis.

Indeed, one of the most significant hallmarks of LGBT and queer activism is that LGBT rights are human rights and as such, as has been argued before, are linked to criticism of a Western, neoliberal, capitalist system. As touched upon previously, a human rights scheme can be used at a local or regional level to maintain a certain status quo, in particular with regard to the economic and social systems that frame these human rights. Increasingly, homophobia is penalized, while civil partnerships and marriage are permitted in more countries and the right to parenthood is being extended to gay and lesbian couples with a view to ensuring that — at least at a legal level — these people can fit into a Western and capitalist system which is, paradoxically, based as much on individualism as on the family. Ultimately, the family is the perfect platform for consumption, but also for assistance and care, a fact that facilitates the dismantling of the welfare state which, when it is strong, can represent a great enemy of liberalism and capitalism. Thus, consumption lies behind assimilation into the norm. Margot D. Weiss states the situation as follows:

Politics has retreated from the public sphere into the domestic, the intimate. In this newly privatized setting, it is the relationship within families, structured through consumption, rather than a civic relationship between individuals and the state, that serves as the locus for engagement: consumer citizenship. In this context, sexuality emerges as a highly contested and conflicted zone. As the public sphere itself is increasingly accessed, debated, and imagined in private,

personal, intimate terms, sexuality grafts the cultural to the economic. (Weiss, 2008: 89)

If we examine the case of Spain from a broader macro-structural perspective, consumer citizenship is a reality, above all in Madrid. Assimilationism of gays — and lesbians into a lesser extent — can be clearly observed in the current process of gentrification that has taken place in the LGBT neighbourhood of Chueca in Madrid: the growing appearance of LGBT symbols in specialist stores, LGBT hotels and hostels, saunas (the majority of which are gay saunas), LGBT travel agencies and, of course, Pride Madrid, which has gradually become a conventional consumerist festival.

In relation to this, even though LGBT and queer people in the Western world are capable of employing the human rights discourse to defend themselves and fight for their rights, they also face a tremendous risk of falling into the neoliberal assimilationist trap. We also need to be conscious of the fact that LGBT rights have not been accompanied by deeper changes to legislation, and even less at social and/or cultural levels. Thus, LGBT and queer activism, which have different focuses (and taking in consideration that the queer movement is more radical destabilizing the normative system), work to fight against the discrimination that is exacerbated by a neoliberal regime. As Ana Cristina Santos states:

The idea that people — often citizens — are entitled to recognition and protection from discrimination based on the intimate and sexual lived experiences highlights the need to challenge and expand the mainstream notions of citizenship (Phelan, 2001), namely by queering it and creating the space for dissident sexualities (Bell, 1995; Bell and Binnie, 2000). (Santos, 2013: 37)

In this respect, it is interesting to note that Mónica Redondo, an activist in lesbian and queer associations since the 1990s who is

currently involved in the queer collective Asamblea Transmaricabollo de Madrid, maintained in our 2015 interview that even in the sphere of legal equality:

queer and LGBT movements still have a lot of work to do. Marriage is a right, and it is great to have equal marriage but it is a very small achievement in comparison with all the work that is still required. We should not fool ourselves in this respect. (Interview with Mónica Redondo, 2015)

From a queer perspective, Mónica Redondo points out that it is still necessary to work to combat the established economic and cultural order. Meanwhile, it is only fair to point out that changes in the legal sphere represent a very important step in the path towards social change. One of my interviewees, who is a feminist and political figure who I opted to maintain anonymous, states:

What happens is that the law legitimizes. As soon as a law says that gays and lesbians are equal before the law, this makes them symbolically and socially equal — it's not entirely like that but... [...] There is nothing more radical than achieving equality of rights, and that is what we are going to do, and yes, in order to do that, we have to talk with the right wing, it's essential to talk with the right wing. Because this has nothing to do with... In one sense this has nothing to do with political ideologies. (Interview with Anonymous, 2015)

According to the interviewee, Spain is a pretty equal country. Nevertheless, Mónica Redondo, Inmaculada Estévez (activist involved in the Fundación Triángulo, which provides guidance for a group of older lesbians) and Isabel Gómez (spokesperson on lesbian issues for Spain's most important LGBT association, the FELGTB,⁵) all of whom are activists in this field, agree that recognition in the

⁵ Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales (Spanish State Federation for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals).

legal system is a long way from true equality with heterosexuals. In general, people have to approach LGBT or queer associations or other institutions that defend human rights in order to feel safe and seek legal and emotional support. Inmaculada Estévez states that:

Yes, of course it happens. Couples do experience harassment. Why don't they make the news, why don't people know about it? Probably because we don't report it. I am convinced that 90% of attacks on lesbian couples or lesbians are not reported. [...] I know cases of people who, while they haven't actually been sacked from their job, have experienced their lives being made... Yes, they've been harassed. (Interview with Inmaculada Estévez, 2015)

Likewise, Isabel Gómez focuses on a lack of effective protection for LGBT and queer people, maintaining that she constantly receives complaints from the FELGTB, mainly related to incidents of "harassment in the street and other types of harassment such as a female couple who lived in an apartment and their neighbour was constantly harassing them" (interview with Isabel Gómez, 2015).

Based on these interviews, it is hard not to conclude that some LGBT and queer people do not feel safe or respected in society. Although collective rights have been achieved, there is still a long way to go before LGBT and queer people enjoy full individual rights and individual respect.

To conclude this section, it is important to highlight that despite legal equality, if access to rights also means access to citizenship (and this is indeed the case), for some LGBT and queer people there is still a gap between being gay, lesbian, transsexual or bisexual and being a citizen with full rights. Both LGBT and queer activists criticize this deficit, even though they work in different spheres.

3 From legal equality to a nationalist discourse

As stated previously, the assimilation of queer identities into a normative economic regime gave rise to the concept of homonormativity, which, to return to Duggan, is more of a political and economic strategy that targets the LGBT population. That author calls this

a 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. (Duggan, 2002: 179)

Within the US context, Jasbir Puar is also very critical of homonormativity, linking the concept with a “US sexual exceptionalism” (cf. Giorgio Agamben). In this respect, she claims that this US exceptionalism is the product of “a narrative claiming the successful management of life in regard to a *people*” (the US population), which is notable because “an exceptional form of national heteronormativity is now joined by an exceptional form of national homonormativity, in other words, homonationalism” (Puar, 2007: 2). According to the author, homonationalism is a barometer that facilitates an understanding of how bisexuals, gays and lesbians evaluate the achievements made in the country when it comes to LGBT rights, and the extent to which these achievements are turned into a matter of national pride, alongside an almost xenophobic attitude and indifference to the racial and national privileges inherent in the framework of homonormative policies.

If we apply Puar’s analysis to the Spanish context, it is important that we analyse the stark ideological division that has characterized Spain — even before the Spanish Civil War — as an example of a permanent state of exceptionalism. The poet Antonio Machado wrote a poem on the two Spains, referencing the political division between the progressive, constitutional and secular left and a

reactionary, patriotic and religious right, a division that drove the country into a horrific civil war. The idea of these two Spains struck such a chord in people's minds that today the concept continues to be cited almost as a proverb. Indeed, the idea also inspired historian Paul Preston, who expanded the idea in his book *Las tres Españas del 36 (1936: Three Visions of Spain)* with the aim of discussing a progressive option inherited from the other two positions that would lead to the current Spanish democracy. The transition to democracy brought about in the social and cultural spheres great changes based on a strong feminist movement, and LGBT and queer activism, as well as the political aim of transcending dictatorial conservatism and moving closer to other countries adhering to a liberal logic. This means that Spain's conventional LGBT discourse still contains a kind of sexual exception constructed on a discourse approaching homonationalism, based on the framework of LGBT rights in this country.

In this respect, a certain national pride could be detected in one of my interviews with a person involved in activism and politics in Spain, who I decided to maintain anonymous. This is a discourse that is proud of — but also idealizes — the rapid progress made in the granting of LGBT rights in Spain, seeming to fail to take into account the macro-structure of homonormative policies with economic purposes:

So I think the reason is that when Franco died and democracy arrived, when it comes to sexual freedoms, sexual ethics and rights related to relationships and sexuality, we progressed very quickly. We went so quickly that we overtook everyone else, who progressed more slowly. (Interview with Anonymous, 2015)

In order to sustain this pride on the legal changes that have taken place in Spain, the interviewee ignores the recent (2013) setback represented by PP politician Ana Mato's denial of access

to medically assisted reproduction on the national health system to lesbians and single women.⁶ It is important to note that the rejection of this measure and of other changes required in access to parenthood makes no mention of the enormous financial burden placed on lesbian couples when accessing medically assisted reproduction techniques in the private health sector:

I think there is legal discrimination in assisted reproduction, in the law, but I don't think it is very... I don't think it is even very effective. It is significant, but it isn't very effective. Assisted reproduction is in itself something that is done in the private health sector — everyone that I know... Because it takes a thousand years in the public health system, and even more so now with cuts; that is, nobody gets access to it, whether heterosexual or... That is to say, there is a significant legal discrimination, but it barely affects the lives of anyone. (Interview with Anonymous, 2015)

It is important to point out that the nationalist discourse on LGBT rights has almost entirely ignored other important social changes — such as a more liberal sexuality that can, in part, be attributed to the feminist movement — that have made it possible to gradually improve our understanding of homosexual practices and/or identities. As Raquel Osborne highlights, “the trinomial equation sex=marriage=reproduction as the predominant model in our societies has also collapsed, giving rise to the range of ways of experiencing sex, relationships and maternity/paternity which are spreading in the world today” (Osborne, 2008:87).

⁶ Ana Mato served as Spain's Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality from 22 December 2011 to 26 November 2014, at which point she resigned due to her involvement in a corruption scandal. The Partido Popular (People's Party, PP) is a Spanish right-wing conservative party.

4 Types of activism and their resistance strategies

As evidenced above, despite legal equality and nationalist discourses, there is a gap between being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual and being a citizen with full rights. This is why social movements and associations are still an important network and safe space where the majority of effective actions with some level of queer focus are organized. In reference to the law on civil partnerships, Gracia Trujillo also explains that the problem is that legal changes should be followed by social changes, but that this did not happen in the past and is not happening now either:

Criticism of the priority given to the law on common-law couples by a large part of the LGBT movement does not mean, however, that queer groups were against sexual minorities achieving legal progress. These changes are perceived as something positive, but they are not shared as central political objectives of mobilization. (Trujillo, 2008: 219)

Moreover, we must highlight the words of Margot D. Weiss (2008) and her assessment of a practical example of the different points of view on marriage held by activist movements: on the one hand, the perspective of the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF), an advocacy organization representing BDSM, swing and polyamorous communities; and the perspective of the Gay Shame queer activist group on the other. The author claims that:

Gay Shame's critique in the face of citywide support for marriage equality and the NCSF's deployment of married, heterosexual normalcy to defend a kink conference represent differing strategies available to activists in the neoliberal United States today. (Weiss, 2008: 88).

The author believes that "sexuality is a crucial point of mediation between the intimate and the social, the private and the public,

and bodies and body politics”, and that “these new forms of queer activism might point a path out of the social imaginary of U.S. neo-liberalism itself” (Weiss, 2008: 97–98). The author takes a more cautious position while upholding certain actions on the part of institutional groups, as long as such actions in some way confound and question the normative system. In other words, the assimilation/subversion dichotomy is reductionist, since even within organizations understood to be assimilationist it is possible to find practices that go beyond the rejection or acceptance of marriage as an institution (the same goes for other legal and/or social standards) and that bring with them a subversion of heteronormativity. BDSM is a sexual practice that does not fit in with traditional assumptions on sexual practices; nevertheless, it cannot be understood as something at a far remove from people who have entered into a marriage.

The interviews held clearly demonstrate that both forms of activism — those that employ more assimilationist strategies and those that resort to more radical strategies — are participating in stronger forms of resistance and are capable of sustaining a more efficient network providing care, assistance, and legal and emotional support than that provided by the state itself when it comes to meeting the needs of LGBT and queer people. A good example is that mentioned by Isabel Gómez, the FELGTB interviewee, on the protocols of the Federation and trade unions:

Now we have created a protocol and we are working with trade unions so that the unions can take on the role of spokespersons, so that when a worker doesn't know what to do they are the ones who are trained, and are trained to be able to make their demands heard as rights and that this obfuscation cannot happen at the level of the spokesperson that is meant to represent them. (Interview with Isabel Gómez, 2015)

Another important form of resistance can be found in social mobilization, which uses strategies that have an impact on social

morals and traditionalism with a much stronger queer focus. This is not a new strategy, either in Spain or within other queer protests. Raquel Osborne recalls the first lesbian street action in Spain, when a couple engaged in the first lesbian kiss in public:

Support for two women arrested for openly kissing in the street led to the first *Besada* (“kissathon”) in the history of feminism and lesbianism in Spain in 1987. This type of protest has been repeated at numerous feminist or gay demonstrations, attracting the attention of the media and giving visibility to lesbians for the first time. (Osborne, 2008: 94)

In this respect, it seems that Spanish activism was able to learn lessons from its roots, given that current forms of protest continue to offer a resource for social struggles. Mónica Redondo gives two good examples: firstly, she points out that “at the last Pride [2015] [...] we even saw a small group of *femme* lesbians⁷ protesting with banners saying *lesbianas reivindicando el derecho a parir* [lesbians demanding the right to breed]” (Redondo, 2015). It is interesting to note that when describing the act of giving birth they avoided using the traditional Spanish expression “dar a luz” (give birth) with the aim of opposing the normative system and its discourse.

Redondo also bases her views on her perception of the potential consequences of the years of the crisis and how she was pleasantly surprised, going on to underline broad intersectional resistance strategies resulting from the documentary *Yes We Fuck!*, in which some transgender persons from Madrid participated with people with disabilities in a crip/queer alliance:

And nevertheless, creativity multiplies in times of crisis, doesn't it? And I also think this is interesting, in this respect, at this time. When the crisis — the swindle — began,

⁷ A stereotype of lesbian and queer subcultures used to characterize lesbians that take on more feminine roles traditionally associated with women.

I thought that this was going to be a catastrophe for lesbian groups and it doesn't seem to be that way. It seems that many people are reacting, mobilizing, moving away from that very aesthetic activism that existed before and that never moved beyond the merely aesthetic. [...] trans guys, from the former Pandi Trans, participated in the documentary *Yes We Fuck!* and have started doing things that seem to me to be very interesting. (Interview with Mónica Redondo, 2015)

Thus, a discourse based on individual and community rights is also used to criticize neoliberal measures. In this sense, it is necessary to take into account the changes that are taking place, albeit little by little, understanding that it would be a mistake to undervalue the concept of human rights and legal equality. Nevertheless, the road to follow involves a critical assessment of discourses, taking advantage of positive aspects such as the meaning that LGBT and queer movements give to these discourses as a form of struggle against inequality. Moreover, these movements — and, above all, those with a more radical perspective — can combat and are combating the neoliberal focus in human rights, superimposing on LGBT and queer struggles other issues such as ageism, ableism, racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and so on, without devaluing the general concept of human rights.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to recall the words of Tom Campbell (2006:78): “it is important to be suspicious about grandiose appeals to rights, particularly when expressed in abstract terms, because of the background ideologies that come into play when we seek to give the more concrete expression”. In my opinion, this is the case of LGBT rights in the Western world, and that a less careful vision of the granting of rights can be confusing. To a large extent, there is a neoliberal ideology behind the granting of rights that works to assimilate (mainly) rich, white homosexual men into the

existing Western system which is capitalist, patriarchal and sexist. Nevertheless, continual reports of violence, demands, and the need for direct action on the part of activist groups highlight that this assimilation is an economic strategy, and is a far cry from substantial representation of the LGBT population (and the extent of representation depends on the various identities in question), with concepts such as homonormativity and homonationalism being applied before laws, measures, or political/business actions with the aim of fostering massification. Ultimately, these economic and national strategies have minimal consequences for the general population, and even less so on the LGBT sector of the population, given that the focus of action continues to be a struggle against everyday adversities by highly radical and less radical collectives alike.

In this respect, the interviews carried out with Mónica Redondo and Isabel Gómez, who represent very different activist groups, are extremely interesting. Gómez spoke of an alliance between an LGBT federation and a trade union, which allowed me to explore the disruptive queer power of trade unions (and trade unions — at least in southern Europe — have a conservative left heritage that is to a certain extent sexist and homophobic), which are working to combat a lack of protection for LGBT workers. Even more significant are the examples given by Redondo linked to the documentary *Yes We Fuck!* and the corporeal power of a group of femme lesbians who use the jargon of the protest to achieve legal and social change.

Finally, while assimilation and/or nationalism seem to partially embody an intention to achieve legal changes with a view to accommodating the lives of LGBT and queer people, declaring their rights to be at least officially “defensible” in a society marked by heteronormative standards, it also seems that, from a historical point of view, resistance is playing an important role in social and cultural change and the subversion of such standards. Ultimately, given that our desires are always finding new demands and new forms of being and resisting, it seems that resistance is an ongoing — probably eternal — process.

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