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Reproductive Homonationalism and In/ter/dependence in Spain and Catalonia: “Feminazis” and Queer and Trans Reproduction

By Doris Leibetseder¹ & Leon Freude²

Abstract

Spain and Catalonia are timely and crucial examples for analyzing homonationalism and queer and trans reproduction with Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART). This essay employs Puar’s (2013) formulation of “homonationalism” as an ideology that privileges LGBTIQ people while simultaneously discriminating against other types of people. The Catalan independence process provides us with important insights into the relationship and interdependence between queer and trans reproduction and the state or nation. Queer and trans people’s reproduction is dependent on the laws of the state, the state depends on the reproduction of its population, and most Western EU-states want to appear as LGBTIQ-friendly. A selection of eight in-depth interviews will be analyzed with the following questions in mind: Are there any differences between Spain and Catalonia concerning access to queer and trans reproduction? Do comments regarding queer and trans reproduction employ racializing or homonationalist ideologies? Is queer and trans reproduction an issue in the Catalan independence process? How do queer and trans people based in Catalonia navigate their reproductive challenges in relation to Spain and Catalonia? These interviews formed part of an EU-funded project on queer and trans reproduction in Europe. In this article, we highlight both the struggles for queer and trans reproduction as well as the complicity of some queer and trans people’s reproduction with homonationalist strategies, and whether and how Spain and Catalonia deploy these homonationalist tools.

Keywords: Homonationalism, Queer and trans reproduction, Spain, Catalonia, “Feminazis”

Introduction

In eight in-depth interviews with queer and trans people living in Spain and Catalonia who want to reproduce with ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology)³ or who have already used ART,

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³ The definition of ART varies across different contexts. According to the International Committee for Monitoring Assisted Reproductive Technology and the World Health Organization, ART “includes the in vitro handling of both human oocytes and sperm, or embryos for the purpose of establishing pregnancy” (Zegers-Hochschild et al., 2009). Their definition explicitly does not include assisted insemination (AI) with sperm from a partner or donor. For this project ART includes AI, if it is carried out in a medical setting.

we found many references to the articulation of nation, state, race, and sexuality, as the following quotes from our interviews show:

In Catalonia the guidelines [on artificial insemination] are from 2016. What happens is that in Spain, the assisted reproduction law is from 2006 and counts for the whole of Spain. This law says that we can access everything and that we cannot be discriminated against due to our orientation or identity. But in Catalonia, no. In Catalonia, we couldn't. I mean, they decided that we couldn't and that's it. (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

What the feminazi government cannot understand is that all the people who need it (surrogacy) and who have the money to do so, are going to the Ukraine, India, or California. (Interview 17, translated from Spanish)

As the nation-state often limits access to ART for LGBTIQ people, some of our interviewees had to go outside of Spain to consider options and possibilities for queer and trans reproduction, thus mapping territories of (im-)possibility for queer reproduction.

Another issue concerning queer and trans reproduction is that states may privilege only certain queer and trans people. Western states deploy homonationalist strategies to appear more progressive and LGBTIQ-friendly than other states, but at the cost of racifying and dividing humans into different groups. The terminology of "homonationalism" (Puar, 2007; 2013) describes the attribution of privileges to certain kinds of intersectionalities of sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and class while discriminating against others. With homonationalism, Lisa Duggan's concept of homonormativity (Duggan, 2003) has been developed further at the very specific intersection between sexuality and race/ethnicity in neoliberal times. Jasbir Puar's concept of homonationalism also gave homonormativity a geopolitical dimension; the West claims to protect sexual diversity and sexual minorities, portraying itself against or in juxtaposition to a backwards, intolerant, homophobic and even terrorist other and thus constructing a dichotomy of gay-friendly vs. homophobic nations (Puar, 2007). Within academic circles, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, the concept was taken up quickly and discussed passionately as a complex interaction of subjectivities of sexuality, race, and class (Ismail, 2020; Long, 2018; Craven, 2017). Through our research on queer reproduction in Europe, we became aware that the discourses on queer reproduction that are (re)-produced by queer subjects can be easily related to homonationalism.

Our material reaffirmed that the global dimension of the fertility industry enhances the stratification of queer and trans reproduction with regard to race, gender, health, class, and age issues (Dahl & Björklund, 2019; Dahl, 2018). To explore the articulation of discourses of nation, state, race, and sexuality in relation to the perceived barriers to and facilitators of queer reproduction, we analyze a selection of eight in-depth interviews with queer and trans people living in Spain and Catalonia.

Catalonia is not merely a province in the centralized state of Spain, but an "autonomous community"⁴ which has its own government and is allowed to introduce and have certain separate laws of its own. However, Catalonia started a movement to become fully independent from Spain

⁴ The correct term for the political and administrative entities beneath the central state in Spain. There are 17 autonomous communities in Spain, plus two autonomous cities. "Province" in Spain refers to an administrative unity between autonomous communities and municipalities. Spain has 50 provinces and two territories similar to provinces.

and to become a state and nation on its own. In a more historical analysis, Brice Chamouveau (2018) focuses on LGBT rights on a national stage, pointing to a Spanish homonationalism, as legal changes come mainly from the central Spanish government; thus, the autonomous communities have less importance in Chamouveau's analysis. Taking into account our interviews, we notice that Chamouveau's point might have been correct in certain time periods, but Catalonia is trying to challenge this interpretation concerning queer reproduction. Sadurní Balcells and Pujol Tarrés (2015) have even gone so far as to suggest that Catalonia's aim is to depict Spain as backwards and homophobic as opposed to a queer friendly Catalonia.

Spain and Catalonia are timely and crucial examples for analyzing homonationalism (Puar, 2007; 2013) and queer and trans reproduction. Firstly, ART access (especially surrogacy) and the new "trans law" have been debated publicly in Spain. Secondly, queer and trans reproduction played an important role early in the Catalan independence movement but lost its momentum with time. As Paul B. Preciado writes in his comparison between being trans (and transitioning) and becoming a free nation, the process of becoming in both cases means to leave something behind or to get rid of something, to reject a certain identity of gender or nation. Neither a nation nor gender has an "ontological truth" or an "empirical necessity," of which certain "affiliations or demarcations" have to be the result; instead, in the same way as gender cannot exist outside of collective practices imagining and constructing it, "a nation does not exist outside a collective imagination and construction" (Preciado, 2018, p. 225f, translated from Spanish by first author).

The interviews we are analyzing were funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship Program (EU's Horizon 2020, Grant Agreement 749218). Our project title was "QTReproART: Towards an Inclusive Common European Framework for Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART): Queer & Transgender Reproduction in the Age of ART," We analyzed the interviews with the following questions in mind: are there any differences between Spain and Catalonia concerning access to queer and trans reproduction? Are there any homonational and racifying comments regarding queer and trans reproduction? Is queer and trans reproduction an issue in the Catalan independence process? How do queer and trans people based in Catalonia navigate their reproductive challenges in relation to Spain and Catalonia?

Summing up our interview analyses, we noticed that contradictions and the diversity of LGBTIQ experiences became central. Spain is at the forefront of LGBTIQ rights, but not in terms of queer and trans reproduction. Catalonia legally allows queer and trans reproduction but does not put it into practice. There is a gap in the diverse demands and reproductive struggle of LGBTIQ people. Some of the interviewed cis women claimed that the LGBTIQ-movement is dominated by men and does not care about their specific demands regarding reproduction, and these women suggest building alliances with feminists. The demands on queer and trans reproduction made by persons with a uterus also make sense within a broader feminist agenda for more bodily autonomy and less medicalization of pregnancy. Also, our interviewees sort territories and nations according to their LGBTIQ-friendliness and their reliability.

For the production of this paper, the first author was in charge of the project and carried out the interviews. The corresponding author took part in the dissemination of the call for participants, transcribed the interviews, and did the themed data analysis for this article. The in-depth and semi-structured interviews were carried out 2017-18 mostly via Skype or another online video tool. We recruited the interviewees using a questionnaire distributed by NGOs and activists through a snowball method. Once we analyzed all the responses, we selected different profiles by taking into account age, origin, gender, and perception of income. The characteristics of the interviewees selected for this article are specified in Table 1.

Table 1: Interviewees and their Characteristics

| Nº | Age | Gender | Identification | Perception of income | Region | Country of Origin |
|---|-------|--|--|--|----------|-------------------|
| 7 | 26-35 | woman | gay/lesbian | coping on present income | CAT | ES |
| 13 | 26-35 | woman | gay/lesbian | finding it difficult on present income | CAT/ VAL | ES |
| 14 | 36-40 | woman | gay/lesbian | coping on present income | CAT | URU |
| 15 | 26-35 | man | bisexual | finding it difficult on present income | CAT | ES |
| 16 | 21-25 | other: trans*, transgender, queer, boi | queer; complicated, butch, queer, pansexual, sapiosexual | finding it difficult on present income | CAT | ES |
| 17 | 46-55 | man | homosexual | coping on present income | MAD | ES |
| 19 | 41-45 | man | homosexual | living comfortably on present income | VAL | ES |
| 20 | 36-40 | man | gay/lesbian | coping on present income | MAD | ES |
| Key: CAT=Catalonia, MAD=Madrid, VAL=Valencia, ES=Spain, URU=Uruguay | | | | | | |

Source: Authors' own construction.

We can show that despite the efforts to select different profiles, the eight interviewees are similar in the following sense: their highest level of education is mostly higher education, they are working or studying, and most of them are in a relationship. We also know that they live in or just outside big cities and are “out” at work and with their families.

Queer Reproduction in the Spanish and Catalan Conflict

From 2017 onwards, the debate about surrogacy has entered Spanish politics and public discourse (Blanco, 2017). Yet another issue shook the political ground in Spain in 2017, the Catalan independence referendum. The violence used by the Spanish police to prevent Catalan people from voting in this referendum caused international concern (Reuters, 2021). The Spanish state is still contested, and although queer and trans reproduction is not in the center of its instability, the particular situation of Spain and Catalonia provides us with important insights into the relationship between queer and trans subjects aiming to reproduce and the state or nation they live in.

Spain was the first country to introduce same-sex adoption in 2005, harmonizing the legislation for the whole country, although some autonomous communities had already introduced it beginning in 2000 (Imaz, 2017). Concerning ART treatment, Spain is one of the leading countries in this regard and LGTBQ people benefit from this. The first law on ART in 1988 did not explicitly exclude lesbians (Leibetseder, 2018), but reproductive technologies were not used by lesbians partly because even in the 1990s there were legal proceedings taken against lesbian

mothers who lost custody of their children due to their sexuality (Trujillo & Falguera, 2019). In 2006, under Zapatero's progressive government, a new law on ART was elaborated. Lesbian couples were discriminated against in relation to heterosexual couples. In a heterosexual couple, it is assumed that the mother's partner is the father of her child, whereas lesbians were required to be married in order for the non-birthing partner to also be recognized as a mother (Trujillo & Falguera, 2019). Catalonia was an exception here, as they still maintained the less bureaucratic and symbolic civil unions, including the possibility of filiation and parenthood (Trujillo Barbadillo & Falguera Ríos, 2019).

However, this soon changed. During Pride Week in 2021, the Spanish government approved the draft of the so-called "ley trans" (trans law) combining several changes in favor not only of trans and non-binary persons but also lesbians. The changes concerning reproduction are, firstly, that lesbians no longer need to be married in order for the non-birthing partner to be recognized as a mother, and secondly, that lesbians and all trans people who have the capacity to gestate are offered fertility treatments by public health institutions (Álvarez, 2021). This new Spanish trans law followed the more trans-inclusive Catalan laws and alleviated the challenges to access ART for trans people, non-binary people, and lesbians.

Thus, once the new law is implemented, Spain should be on a homonationalist and transnationalist route to granting access to ART, except for gay cis men. Gay men can access adoption, though there are almost no national adoptees. Another possibility is surrogacy abroad, as it is banned in Spain (Leibetseder, 2018). Since 2017, the Catalan government allows paid parental leave for public-sector employees (also for gay parents) who use surrogacy. Recently the Supreme Court judged that surrogacy violates the rights of the mother (surrogate) and child and that intentional parents need to adopt their child born from a surrogacy process abroad (RTVE, 2022). Referring back to our research questions, we can outline that periodically there have been differences between Catalonia and Spain regarding queer reproduction, but currently both entities are more or less aligned.

Data Analysis and Results

In this part, we analyze queer and trans peoples' experiences with regard to the nation and its respective institutions in Catalonia and Spain, as well as expressions of racism or alignment with neoliberal ideology and traditional visions of the family. Overall, we aim to trace homonationalism in discourse surrounding LGBTIQ people living in Spain and/or Catalonia.

Nation, State, and their Institutions

In this part, we investigate how the interview subjects situated themselves as queer subjects in relation to the nation-state. We observed few positive comments and many more negative comments regarding the nation and its institutions. A migrant, lesbian mother (via IVF) from Uruguay praised the inscription process of her child at the Catalan registry as easy: "The person who assisted us treated us fantastically, did it really well, I mean, in spite of how nervous I was. [...] He did not ask us for the evidence from the clinic. I suppose that it was because we were married" (Interview 14, translated from Spanish). A bisexual male interviewee considered the Department of Family of the Catalan autonomous region to be the first trust-worthy institution to ask for information on adoption procedures:

Darn, the first thing I could think of was the Family Department of the Catalan Government (laughs). [...] In principle, I think that I would start with the Department for Family. I

suppose that they have some people to inform you – it's their job – and I think that they would do it in a more neutral way. Sometimes I am a bit suspicious of some adoption agencies and all that... so I trust the public sector more. (Interview 15, translated from Spanish).

An interviewed trans person labeled the Catalan Health Care Service as good for trans people: "It's a medical service but they also do this social stuff. They train the health service professionals. Their treatment of trans people is good ..." (Interview 16). Overall, we observed a positive attitude towards the state in these quotations, which is not shared by all queers.

When Ulrika Dahl and Jaqui Gabb warn "how easily white same-sex couples' rights to reproduction and family-making fit into queer (neo)liberalism (Eng 2020) and homonationalism, (Puar 2007)" (Dahl & Gabb, 2019, p. 231), they might have been thinking of quotes similar to the aforementioned ones. Dahl and Gabb criticize Western narratives of progress concerning LGBTIQ issues, because certain LGBTIQ groups do not experience this progress, and intersectional aspects remain largely hidden and are not analyzed. The white privilege and citizenship privileges of belonging and fitting in to the nation are often not discussed. In the case of the aforementioned quotes, marriage is assumed to guarantee fair treatment (while non-married couples, singles, or other relationship forms would have had a more difficult time), which needs to be outlined as one of the conditions of reproduction within queer life. Trust in public institutions is also born from a distrust of the neoliberal market, in this case adoption agencies or fertility clinics. This alignment of queers with the state can be interpreted as being opposed to the market.

In terms of the legal framework, Spain was presented as a country that was advanced with regards to LGBTIQ rights, but not in terms of surrogacy, as one gay male interviewee summarized: "[...] because Spain, as you know is a country well advanced on this subject, because marriage was already legalized many years ago, I am married to my partner, but the issue of paternity is something new" (Interview 19, translated from Spanish). Spain was considered a country where queer and trans reproduction was easy, as long as one did it legally. However, a gay cis man who went through surrogacy praises public health care access to reproductive technologies except for surrogacy. Gay interviewees remarked negatively on the lack of a serious debate on surrogacy, and the many prejudices in the population.

Spaniards were characterized as conservatives in their opinions on maternity. A lesbian activist confirmed that family being genetically related is over-idealized in the Spanish population, due to the continually strong presence of the Catholic Church. Referring to Spain in general, interviewees remarked on a traditional, romantic, somewhat conservative, and backwards view on maternity and femininity: "Well, for the whole Spanish society, surrogacy is a bit complicated because here, motherhood is ... I think that it is a bit idealized" (Interview 20, translated from Spanish). In the same spirit, an interviewee described the Spanish society's ideal of family as conservative due to the need for a genetic relationship: "[...] in Spain, culturally there is an issue about the family as being something consanguineous, that the issue of genetics has a lot of weight. In fact my mother doesn't like it that much, what we're going to do. Because it won't be genetically ours. You know that culturally it has a lot of weight" (Interview 7, translated from Spanish).

Once again, some of the interviewed gay men spoke out about the problematic treatment of surrogacy. They experienced their situation as "alegal" (Spanish, meaning neither legal nor illegal) because surrogacy is not legal within Spain but a legal loophole allows for transnational surrogacy. These interviewees considered that while a lot of progress has been made regarding queer reproduction, in terms of surrogacy, they feel stuck. The Social Democrats were one of the

main guarantors of LGBTIQ rights in Spain, but they now block surrogacy because of feminist concerns. The two interviewed gay men who are traditionally close to Spanish Social Democrats felt lost in this political panorama. One of the interviewed lesbian women recognized the delicate situation in which the Spanish Social Democratic party was situating itself with regard to these tensions.

All this fits in with the discussion on homonormativity and homonationalism in Spain. On the one hand, Spain is characterized by a long-lasting military dictatorship and steeped in Catholicism (Santos, 2013), but at the same time, it is one of countries with the highest degree of tolerance towards gays and lesbians (Takács & Szalma, 2020; Takács & Szalma, 2011). Spain offers legal protections for sexual minorities (López-Clavel, 2015) and was one of the first countries to introduce equal marriage (Takács & Szalma, 2011). In becoming the third country in the world with same-sex marriage, the Social Democratic government used same-sex marriage actively as a homonationalist tool to project an imaginary of progressiveness and modernity (Sénac, 2018). The Spanish state introduced excellent LGBTIQ regulations (Enguix, 2017; Pérez-Sánchez, 2017) resulting in homonormativity. Luciana Moreira Silva explains that after the democratic transition “a kind of sexual exception built on a homonationalist discourse based on the LGTB rights framework of the country also persists” (Silva, n.d.). The meaning of family was amplified or amended, and sexual and parental differences were added. In terms of queer and trans reproduction, the battlefield remains open. Queer families stabilize the idea(l) of family and claim it at the same time, but they also destabilize the idea(l) of genetically related family, as the interviewees 7, 19 and 20 above explained.

While the aforementioned interviewees emphasized problems and obstacles surrounding queer reproduction, another interviewee referred to queer reproduction as an act of normalization of queerness: “it is important to normalize daily [same-sex] family life, not only to (be visible) and to come out on the streets during pride and dance there, but also to let people know that [cis] gay men have children too and not to hide their family life. People are curious and want to know about their family life” (Interview 17). In this sense, they confirmed Marcin Smietana’s research outcomes, which showed that gay fathers who had used surrogacy were trying to normalize their families (2016). However, various interviewees argued that heteronormativity stays strong, even though the norm is not explicitly homophobic.

Health care was a great concern, mainly for the interviewed cis women. A gay man stated that ART was expensive but, with the exception of surrogacy, was usually covered by the health system, suggesting that there were no important problems for cis women. Two of the interviewed cis women argued to the contrary that there were important challenges; they said that Spain lacked a real welfare state and that public health care did not fully cover ART for queer people. They explained that health care professionals lacked specific training on how to interact properly with queer and trans people and their reproductive issues (Interview 7, 14). Furthermore, Catalonia lacked some infrastructure such as a public sperm or egg bank.

The Catalan case offered very interesting insights into how Catalan queer and trans people navigated between the territorial conflicts in Spain strategically. A lesbian cis woman explained:

In Catalonia the guidelines are from 2016. What happens is that in Spain, the assisted reproduction law is from 2006. This Spanish law says that we can access everything and that we cannot be discriminated against due to our orientation or identity. But in Catalonia, no. In Catalonia, we couldn’t. I mean, they decided that we couldn’t and that’s it. And in Spain there was an amendment, the law from 2006 was very broad, but not very specific.

And in 2013, the Spanish Minister of Health said that she was stopping it, that she wouldn't give access to ART to a female couple and single women. In fact, she said, the words were: the lack of a man is not a medical problem. That makes you think, come on. So now it's being recovered, the new minister we have now is recovering the access. And now the state is trying to make a new LGTB law, which would guarantee access for any person with the capacity to be pregnant. [...] [According to] the guidelines in Catalonia, until 2016, we didn't have any access. (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

Here we can see that Catalonia had its own regulations and lesbians could not access ART in Catalonia for a long time, despite Spain allowing it from 2006 until 2013. However, in 2016 Catalonia started offering ART within the public health system for lesbians, but with a very slow process as the same interviewee complained. It was hard to get the guidelines which regulated the access for lesbians to IVF in Catalonia:

That in Catalonia we have the circumstances we have. We have had no government for many months. And this is used for everything. [...] We have been with no government for five months. And we have been asking for the meeting for a year and a half. [...] and they have been responding with excuses. Hmm, it was the year of the planning of what is going to be on the 1st of October, the referendum, etc. So other things are given priority. And when the guidelines for the assisted reproduction was approved, it was around the 28th of June, during Pride Week. And it was at the end of a legislature... The first referendum did take place on the 9th of November and there was going to be a change [...] (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

Once the guidelines were approved though, problems did not disappear. While Catalonia managed to appear more progressive than Spain when the interviews were held, it still failed at implementing the new guidelines on IVF in practice as the same lesbian interviewee said:

When the protocol was approved at the public clinic, the health department did almost nothing to distribute it, to announce it. We inquired, we asked, etc. They made a video, a video that nobody sees. They said they were going to show it in the adoption centers. I haven't seen it. I mean, I have only seen it on the web. They had a poster prepared that, by the way, was very sexist too, because it said: ask your male doctor or female nurse. (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

What is argued here is the discursive construction of a LGBTIQ-inclusive Catalonia without its materialization: "The idyllic, idyllic. In Catalonia there is no public bank of semen, or eggs. There were plans, but in the end it was very complicated, and they decided against it. I think that this has to be a priority for us because you also have a lot of trans persons who want to use it, who need it" (Interview 7, translated from Spanish). Catalonia's homonationalist strategy was to just appear LGBTIQ friendly without caring about the proper implementation of its guidelines.

Another pending task for the Catalan administration was LGBTIQ training of healthcare professionals. One interviewee noted, "Besides training to professionals, in Catalonia we have a law against LGTB-phobia, on LGTB rights, eh... and article 11 exactly says that you have to train all the professionals from the public sector, you need to train them" (Interview 7, translated from

Spanish). This specific Catalan combination of high legal and formal standards with a low implementation caused frustration:

Hmm, at the public clinic, from the first day, it was already horrible. The second question was: since when do you know that you are homosexual? [...] And from the minute zero, at, at the public clinic I felt abused. [...] And there, at the public clinic, it was only my uterus and that's it. All this physical partition of your body in one place and you in the other. To the point that at the time of the insemination, at that time, I felt abused [...] with the sentence [uttered by the male doctor who carried the artificial insemination out] that you are not an easy girl, that is actual abuse. (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

Not only did LGBTIQ training seem to be necessary, but also a basic feminist training.

Differences between Catalonia and Spain have existed and remain, though we cannot say that Catalonia always positions itself as more LGBTIQ inclusive or exclusive. Catalonia may seem to be more inclusive recently, but when it comes to the implementation, it appears to be misleading. On the other hand, queer and trans reproduction is definitely an issue in the Catalan independence process, but it is criticized as being merely symbolic. However, LGBTIQ people seem to use the opportunities that both entities—the central state (Spain) and autonomous community (Catalonia)—offer them and interact according to their convenience. Lesbians for example could access ART in Madrid until 2013, and since 2016, they can use it in Catalonia. So, if they traveled to other provinces, they could also access it (except between 2013 and 2016). And both Spain and Catalonia are using the LGBTIQ access to ART as a way to strategically display their homonationalism. Departing from Preciado's comparison of being trans and becoming a nation, we see that LGBTIQ issues including queer and trans reproduction seem to be embraced by independentists. Possible symbolic benefits are assumed, letting the movement shine in a progressive and liberal light while no real material costs are granted (e.g. sperm banks or speeding up of ART waiting lists). In this sense, intersectionality and inclusion remain symbolic while it is more difficult to reach real implementation.

The nation-state often limits the access to ART for LGBTIQ people (Leibetseder & Griffin, 2020; 2018), therefore our interviewees go beyond the borders of the nation-state and consider options and possibilities for queer and trans reproduction outside of Spain. In doing so, they identify negative and positive examples. The interviewed cis-women referred to Nordic countries (e.g. Netherlands or Denmark) as the countries where you could buy sperm. One interviewee acknowledged that Spain and Catalonia had a strong fertility industry lobby, and therefore insemination at home was not promoted at all (Interview 7). The ART industry in Spain attracts intended parents from all over the world but without necessarily benefitting queer and trans people. In this sense, Spain and Catalonia are points of reference for ART, but not for queer and trans reproduction. Focusing on surrogacy, the interviewees looked to the USA, the UK, Portugal, and Canada as ideal and regulated solutions. The USA appeared to be a paradise for both surrogates and intended parents. Everything seemed to be well regulated, and that regulation was also transferred in obtaining legal parenthood in Spain. It was also argued that surrogacy in the USA was not a problem because attitudes towards commercial use were more positive. However, a European solution would be more altruistic, according to the respondents. The distinction between poor or rich, between the Global North and South also appeared. Here the interviewees maintain that surrogacy in poor countries was associated with exploitation; they also associated poor

countries and countries from the Global South with a more distant attitude towards queer intended parents.

Others associated human rights with LGBTIQ rights and supporting surrogacy. In the case of Spain, they saw the European institutions as guarantors of civil rights that would force Spain to fulfill LGBTIQ rights by recognizing their parenthood after surrogacy and hoped that Spain would follow European allies in the long run. This was also mentioned in a broader context of family policies. Spain was presented as being unusual in the European context as, on the one hand, it lacked family policies and, on the other hand, was characterized by a very strong family-centered and heteronormative welfare regime. This positioning of Europe as a guarantor of civil rights was shared with the majority of the independence movement.

Cis Male Domination in the (Patriarchal) LGBTIQ Movement

In the struggle of lesbians for access to IVF and other ART, one of our lesbian interviewees criticized the dominance of male gays in the LGBTIQ movement:

[...] within LGTB activism in Spain and in Catalonia, most of them are gay men. This means that they do not understand anything. [...] And then they don't help much. Yes, they helped at the beginning with getting access [to ART], and that's it. But they do not understand all the implications and all that it involves, they get very much out of control. (Interview 7, translated from Spanish)

Therefore, she proposes to rebuild alliances with other feminists, rather than other LGBTIQ people:

And I think that what we need to do first of all, is that we have to meet all the collectives of LGTB women, trans* women and feminists, [...], because we don't have a common agenda either. We don't have a common working basis; we are separated from each other. So, we should find a common agenda on sexual rights [...] because there are very strong threats from anti-LGBT organizations and anti-womens rights, against abortion. They are very strong, they have a lot of money, and they are very scary (Interview 7, translated from Spanish).

Other parts of the LGTB movement—mainly gay men promoting surrogacy as their way to reproduction—view Spanish feminism as the real enemy of their reproduction. One of our interviewees reproduced some anti-feminist threats by employing the word “feminazism” as well as racist and nationalist ideology. Interviewee 17 explained,

This is the false (devious, two-faced) part of the feminazism. This is what we say in Spain, it is not feminism, but feminazism: [for them] gestational surrogacy is not necessary, because there are many children for adoption. [...] There are abandoned children, but they are in blocked situations. The adoption system needs to be re-done entirely, not just with a modification. (Interview 17, translated from Spanish)

He goes as far as using another metaphor for this “feminazi” ideology—“jihadism”: “What is disturbing for me is that this jihadist ideology, because for sure this is jihadism, because with this system they have cut the most basic, the dialogue and the debate. [...] if there is no dialogue and

no debate, there cannot be an understanding” (Interview 17). This quote shows one of the ideas of homonationalism—that the sexual other is white, and the racial other is homophobic (Puar, 2007). The metaphor of jihadism for feminists opposing surrogacy reproduces the discourse of irrational, backwards, barbarous homophobes. This discourse of under-development is often applied to Muslims or countries with a majority Muslim population and Puar’s concept of homonationalism tries to unmask it.

Another component of “feminazism” outlined in interview 17 is creating a poisoned debate: “The problem in Spain is that these women noticed that they lost the debate in the government and on the streets, they decided to destroy the table of the debate, so there cannot be a debate anymore any longer because they know they are going to lose the debate. And we are here at this point, we arrived at this historic stupidity” (Interview 17). He suggested that these women did not speak from their own experience and called for other women’s voices.

Our interviewee linked irrational backwardness—feminazism as jihadism—to the Spanish Social Democratic party and government: “What the feminazi government cannot understand is that all the people who need it (surrogacy) and who have the money to do so, are going to the Ukraine, India or California” (Interview 17). He exposed feminazism as a generational conflict in (socialist) feminism, pointing out that: “if you are a 60 year old feminist, you are for sure a radical feminist, and, on the other hand, if you encounter a girl of 28, she says that she is a feminist, but accepts gestational surrogacy” (Interview 17). He further complained that there were no young feminists in the government, “but recently the youth section of the social Democrats (who have less than 35 years) made a resolution with a majority of 80% and asked the government to please regulate surrogacy, because it is necessary.” Here he presented the young ones as the progressive ones, implying that they were the future and would win against the old feminazis who still lived in the past. The history of fitting into the homonationalist proposal is presented as a linear inevitability: “the forces that are against it [approval of surrogacy] do everything possible and impossible to delay the 22nd century” (Interview 17).

Obviously, to compare a liberation movement with Nazism does not validate the emancipatory struggle. It is rather the other way round; patriarchy is again trying to silence political progress. In Spain the term feminazi is used by (extreme) right wing and Catholic organizations such as Vox and the ultra-conservative Catholic group “Hazte Oír.” This group, for example, launched a bus campaign in 2019 for the International Women’s Day on March 8th. The bus showed the image of Hitler with red lipstick and the feminist symbol instead of the swastika on his uniform hat as well as the hashtag #StopFeminazis. The main message on the bus was “It is not gender violence, it is domestic violence.” The campaign called on conservative politicians to repeal the law against gender violence and LGBTIQ legal protections (El País, 2019). The term feminazis was created by organizations that are part of the anti-feminist movement in Europe and is frequently used against so-called “gender ideology,” as it is named by the extreme-right. If gay people repeat this term, they are undermining their own agenda, putting themselves in peril by promoting extreme right-wing and ultra-conservative Catholic ideas and driving a wedge between the gay and lesbian movement and between the LGBTIQ and feminist movement. All of this is leading to further fragmentation of movements, which are already under attack from the (extreme) right wing.

Racification and Racism

The interviewee equated feminazis with other ethnic groups to point to those who might prevent an adoption or surrogacy from happening. He started talking about feminazis after having

narrated the example of two ethnic groups. Firstly, he mentioned Roma children in foster homes who are rarely visited but just often enough to make sure that they cannot be adopted and secondly a Muslim gynecologist who disapproves of surrogacy.

The first comment was on Roma people who, according to the interviewee, leave their children in foster homes. He described a woman, perhaps a relative of the child (he used the term “tia” in Spanish meaning aunt or woman) who visited the child for one afternoon every two years, so the child could not be adopted. He said, “The law should be changed, so they can say to this stupid woman if you really love this child, she has to let the child go or has to take them home with her, but not just visit them for one afternoon in 2 years to fuck [mess] up their life. This is what she, the aunt, is actually doing” (Interview 17).

The second comment was about a Muslim female gynecologist who attacks gestational surrogacy:

And then you still find aspects, which are still religious, e.g. in a newspaper about ethical aspects on gestational surrogacy, where various persons, medical doctors, psychologists write about various viewpoints and finally the person who most attacked gestational surrogacy was a female gynecologist (working in Estremadura) and her name is [...]. So she is a doctor of Muslim origin and now you find that also in Spain, Muslims, with the four (few) medical doctors they have here, although they are many, only a few are medical doctors, and those have also formed part of the political fight about that this (surrogacy), that should not be allowed. (Interview 17, translated from Spanish)

In contrast to the observation of Nebeling Petersen & Myong (2015) or Lenon & Peers (2017), for whom racialization and queer reproduction seem to be intrinsically linked, we only detected these few examples of racifying speech by a single interview subject. This is in line with results from Freude & Vergés Bosch (2022; 2020) and Domínguez Amorós & Freude (2021) who argue that only residual elements of homonationalist values are left in Spain. Additionally, racialization does not occur directly linked to the reproduction itself, but in racist arguments against Muslims and Romas hampering queer reproduction. Interestingly, this racialization is then projected against parts of the whole socialist party describing their techniques as jihad. Here we see how the rights of queers and trans people are set in opposition to a constructed racialized threat, as is suggested by the concept of homonationalism (Puar, 2007). This can be linked to another incident when Spanish LGBTIQ organizations supported the expulsion of asylum seekers because they assumed homophobia on the part of the applicants (Fernández García, 2018).⁵

⁵ As Fernández García (2018) reports: “On August 29, 2017, fifty Saharawi young people began a hunger strike in protest against the denial of political asylum by the responsible Spanish authorities, after several weeks detained at the Madrid-Barajas Airport under the custody of the National Corps of Police and private airport security guards. Three days later, on September 1, a statement was published in which a dozen entities—LGBTQ+ associations, police groups and unions of the Ministry of the Interior among others—showed their support for the denial of asylum and the implementation of the rejection protocol and the return to the country of origin of two of the young Sahrawis due to an ‘incident’ in which they had allegedly uttered homophobic insults to the translator of the National Police Corps in charge of assisting them in the process. As a consequence of this decision, on September 4, another statement was released, this time in support of the expelled Sahrawis, signed by more than 40 entities of a very diverse nature—LGBTQ+ associations, anti-racist organizations and Muslim groups fighting against Islamophobia—and by more than 200 personalities belonging to activism and academia” (Fernández García, 2018, p. 72; translated from Spanish by the authors).

Neoliberalism

The right-wing Spanish political party, Ciudadanos, is even connected to the ultra-right wing: they do not remember the Spanish Republic positively and often defend the Franco dictatorship (Borràs, 2017; Wandler, 2020), and they engage in demonstrations, organizations, and even government with the extreme right party, VOX (Borràs, 2017). They did not support the universal right to public health (Blay, 2017); they celebrated the conquest of Latin America as Hispanity (Wandler, 2019a) and did not hesitate to fight gender equality and sexual diversity in government (Chávez Molina & Vergés Bosch, 2019; Wandler, 2019b). The party has a neoliberal profile (García de Blas, 2019).

The framework of homonormativity sustains links between neoliberalism and sexual diversity claims. We therefore wanted to inquire into the articulations of neoliberalism and views towards the family in the light of queer reproduction. Our interviewees referred to issues which were related to neoliberalism and social inequalities. In this sense, they said that the socioeconomic structure or context makes child-raising difficult, especially for queers. They also criticized the need for savings or loans as a condition of queer parenthood. The cost of housing for a family was mentioned too, as house prices are very high in Barcelona. Interviewees argued that specific assistance for queer parenting did not have any government support as spending on LGBTIQ-people would enrage the population during austerity cuts.

Considering IVF and similar ART, participants manifested that they would prefer solid public health institutions combined with community-managed services. The private sector was used as *ultima ratio* if the public one failed, but often ended up being the only viable option. In this case, small, personal, and more intimate clinics were preferred over big business solutions. Opinions varied on home insemination versus insemination in public clinics. Some recommended only the clinical way, while others complained that the clinics interfere strongly. Those clinics were accused of presenting home insemination as ineffective and dangerous in order to increase demand for services offered by them, which suggested a medicalization of queer reproduction. The fertility industry was even accused of bribing civil society organizations to promote fertilizations in clinics. Here we observe clearly that efforts to cover queer and trans reproduction by public health care widens the range of queer and trans people who are meant to reproduce, while neoliberal market solutions and procedures restrict the access to ART.

Those mentioning surrogacy discussed whether viewing the ideal surrogate as altruistic was a realistic and desirable ideal. Another participant criticized the fact that surrogacy was linked to LGBTIQ rights, though these were, according to him, completely different issues:

Lately an association people often make and that I find very dangerous is the relationship between surrogacy and LGBTI rights. For example, in Spain, the right liberal party, Ciudadanos, tries to link one to the other a lot... The fact of having a child who is genetically yours is a right, and I don't see it like that. Being a father is not a right, having a child who is genetically yours is not a right. (Interview 15, translated from Spanish)

This male gay interviewee also heard that the percentage of intended parents who used surrogacy was about 80% for heterosexuals and about 20% for LGBTIQ. He pointed out that it is therefore not okay to sell the fight for surrogacy as an LGBTIQ fight or right.

Discussion and Conclusion

After reviewing the interviews on queer and trans reproduction in Spain and Catalonia in the context of the interaction between nation, state, race, class, and sexuality, we see that many queer and trans people in Spain and Catalonia identify queer reproduction as the next or last battlefield for LGTBQ rights. They demand the recognition of their parenthood status, as well as public control and public services for queer reproduction, such as egg and sperm banks. There is no clear consensus as to whether there is a right to genetic parenthood or not. The demand for public services and infrastructure and the right to queer and trans reproduction links the debate inevitably to forms of homonormativity and homonationalism in the sense that the state embraces queer and trans people, and they, in turn, embrace the state. Interestingly, the homonationalist claim here is in opposition to the neoliberal fertility market.

Concerning the state, it becomes clear that queer and trans reproduction is a central question for state and nation, particularly in the context of the conflict over Catalan independence. For governments claiming to be guarantors of LGBTQ rights, it can be beneficial to show their administration in a progressive light. Policies of recognition are often associated with LGTBQ policies and appear to be for free whereas queer reproduction requires material and more redistributive policies, as our interviewees explained. Further, we saw that queer people appeal to the state by advocating for an increase in the birth-rate through queer and trans reproduction. The importance of the family in Spain with its fascist and national Catholic heritage does not necessarily mean the exclusion of queers and trans people from reproduction. Queer and trans reproduction can be interpreted as being embedded in a conventional family model or, contrarily, as a transformation of the concept of family.

An important topic in the debate on queer reproduction and the nation-state is surrogacy. Some of the interviewed gay men view Social Democratic feminists as barriers to altruistic surrogacy being allowed in Spain. On the one hand, this might be interpreted as the classic division between activism based on sex/gender focusing on the equality of men and women whilst acknowledging women's differences. On the other hand, there is activism based on sexuality, in the sense of liberation of a same-sex sexuality. However, not even the latter kind of activism is clear-cut about surrogacy. Some of the interviewed gay men are skeptical about surrogacy and warn of an instrumentalization of queer people and rights to allow surrogacy. Overall, reproductive homonationalist tendencies are seen in both nations. In Catalonia, especially, homonationalism was used on a symbolic level in the independence process, but then got put aside. Now with the new "trans law," Spain has caught up again with more progressive laws.

The most dangerous aspects are the racifying and racist comments regarding homonationalism and queer and trans reproduction. A White, cis, male-dominated LGBTIQ movement labels feminist concerns about surrogacy as feminazism and thus plays into the hands of homophobic and transphobic extreme right-wing and ultra-religious groups. A kind of counter-example or best practice example is the draft for the new "trans law" showing how LGBTIQ and feminist concerns can be taken into account when improving the experience and access to queer and trans reproduction without allowing transphobic feminist perspectives to have an influence.

Our analyses will hopefully contribute to further research on the connection between homonationalism and trans and queer reproduction in other geopolitical locations and how homonationalism can be seen in different state policies, in racifying comments by queer and trans people, and in the neoliberal agenda of fertility clinics. These different aspects of homonationalism help to point out dangerous alliances or dependencies for queer and trans people, which should be avoided at all costs.

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