

P03- Affective citizenship: on the role of emotions in social, urban and environmental policy

Emotions, relations and citizenship: grounding multiculturalism to an ethics of care

Alessandro Pratesi Cooren, a.pratesi@chester.ac.uk, University of Chester (UK)

Research on migration and citizenship has shown the multiple challenges involved in the attempt to find comprehensive and systematic theoretical frameworks of analysis. Global developments and global economic crises contribute to reshape our understanding of citizenship and migration and their shifting boundaries. The necessity to provide different types of migrant people (asylum seekers, work seekers, refugees, migrant workers, irregular migrants) with fair and adequate responses raises key issues in terms of the social and ethical framing of the problem, which requires going beyond unilateral, inflexible and value-neutral definitions of entitlement to rights. This article focuses on the multiple—but, I argue, reconcilable—definitions of civic entitlements and responsibilities of those social actors who represent a possible synthesis between private and public spheres, centre and periphery, national and international, tradition and social change, overcoming dichotomous logics of inclusion/exclusion which typically characterise the concept of citizenship. More specifically, it points to the complex interplay between migration and citizenship by looking at the vast potential of citizenship discourse surrounding same-sex parents and their ability to be *included* without being *incorporated* or assimilated into pre-existing models of parenthood. Same-sex parents share many of the issues and concerns of other *unequally entitled citizens* who inhabit cultural, legal and political limbos; liminal, in-between areas whose borders are still not clearly defined. Their emotion-based, micro-situated, interactional model of social inclusion can therefore be applied to other unequally entitled citizens, including different types of migrant people, and used as a theoretical model of *anti-assimilationist* citizenship.

Keywords: Cultural entrepreneurs; emotional energy and emotional capital; migration; sexual, intimate and cultural citizenship; anti-assimilationist social inclusion; unequally-entitled citizens; world families.

1. Introduction

Theoretical and methodological advances in migration research have been invoked by several scholars, particularly in light of the changing nature of international migration, and with the awareness of the necessity to untangle its complex interplay with the

concept of citizenship (Boucher and Gest, 2014; Boswell, 2007; Janoski, 201; Massey et al., 2006). Boucher and Gest (2014) have recently emphasised how current scholarship on migration still lacks ‘a common category for analysis’ (2014: 10) in which the multiple variables that come into play—class, gender, race/ethnicity, education, religious affiliation, age, sexual orientation, migration regimes of the receiving countries, etc.—may be analysed in a systematic way. What is mostly needed is a comprehensive and systematic theoretical framework of analysis, a common denominator, a theoretical model of inquiry which may be used for both analytical and policy purposes. Such a necessity becomes even more urgent in light of the relatively recent repressive shift of the concept of citizenship (no longer than a hundred years) which has had and is having a considerable impact on the institutionalization and regimentation of the phenomenon of migration.

Research on citizenship (Castles, 2014; Dauvergne and Marsden, 2014; Erel, 2009; Fortier, 2010; James, 2014; Lister, 2003, 2007; McNevin, 2006; Shachar, 2014; Stychin, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2007) has shown the multiple challenges involved in the attempt to overcome current limited and limiting uses of the language of citizenship while at the same showing the vast potentialities of citizenship discourse offered precisely by its ‘multivalent and politically indeterminate character’ (Stychin, 2001: 286). Hannah Arendt’s foundational definition of citizenship as the ‘rights to have rights’ (Arendt [1951] 1958), as the bedrock to fulfil the right to belong to some kind of organised community, still represents a benchmark for analyses on migration, nationalism and human rights (Shachar, 2014; Dauvergne and Marsden, 2014). Nevertheless, our ‘basic right to have rights remains deeply fragile and insecure so long as we can be deprived of membership in an organised political community’ (Shachar, 2014: 115).

Global developments and global economic crises contribute to reshape our understanding of citizenship and migration and their shifting boundaries. Among the several issues concerning the necessity to provide different social actors with fair and adequate responses, James (2014) emphasises the issue of the *social* and *ethical* framing of the problem, which requires going beyond unilateral, monolithic, inflexible and value-neutral definitions of entitlement to rights. More specifically, the author suggests the necessity to ground the *ethics of rights* to ‘an *ethics of care* through which fundamental questions of difference/identity, inclusion/exclusion, and mobility/belonging are negotiated’ (James, 2014: 221). An earlier, eminent proposal of an ‘ethic of care’ in

terms of political argument had been suggested almost twenty years ago by Joan Tronto (Tronto, 1996).

This article focuses on the multiple—but, I argue, reconcilable—definitions of civic entitlements and responsibilities of what some scholars (Beck, 2006; Beck and Grande, 2010; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2014) call ‘world families’, i.e. all those social actors who, by virtue of their geographical or symbolic mobility and their increased contacts with and proximity to disparate cultural and national groups, represent a possible synthesis between private and public spheres, centre and periphery, national and international borders, developed and developing world, traditional and liberal politics, overcoming the binary constructs of inclusion/exclusion which usually define the concept of citizenship. More specifically, it points to the complex interplay between migration and citizenship by looking at the vast potential of citizenship discourse surrounding same-sex parents and their ability to overcome a mere binary logic of inclusion (via assimilation) / exclusion (via marginalisation). It will address in particular the following questions: what can we learn from the forms of inclusion and entitlement experienced by same-sex parents when we try to analyse them within a specific theoretical framework exportable to other contexts? To what extent their (private) lives and stories may be relevant to other forms of stigmatised and excluded minorities, such as national, racial or ethnic minorities? How to address the perennial dilemma of reconciling state regulation and control, on one hand, and the human need and quest for inclusion in social, economic and political communities which respect and value individuals’ dignity and diversity, on the other? How to contextualise such dynamics of inclusion and exclusion within our growingly complex, diverse, global, immigrant democracies in which the issue of ‘membership has become multifaceted’ (Shachar, 2014: 115) and the configurations of sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender and class are realigning to contemporary forces of securitization and nationalism? (Puar, 2007).

The concept of *cultural citizenship* (Pakulski, 1997) might be helpful here to address these questions. According to Pakulski, cultural citizenship represents a new set of claims—including the right to symbolic presence and visibility vs. marginalisation, the right to dignifying representation vs. stigmatisation; and the right to affirmation and propagation of identity vs. assimilation—involving the idea of a *full inclusion* in the culture of a specific society. The right to visibility, the right to dignifying and dignified representation, the right to affirmation of identity, and the right to appreciation and valuing of differences apply to many forms of cultural citizenship currently denied.

These include, although from completely different perspectives, a whole set of *unequally entitled citizens*, who inhabit several sorts of legal and political in-between, liminal areas whose borders are still not clearly defined. This article explores the complex, articulated parallels between same-sex families and other forms of unequally entitled citizens; its aim is to initiate a theoretical discussion around the possibility to develop comprehensive, systematic ideas of entitlements and responsibilities overcoming the limitations of current definitions of citizenship.

2. Sexual citizenship: a potential model of inclusion?

During the 1990s, LGBT movements and activism have been characterised by a gradual move towards *identity* and *relationship* based rights claims contrasting with *freedom of sex* based rights claims of earlier political campaigns (Richardson, 2000). Parallel to this, a new emerging literature has highlighted the links between citizenship and sexualities discourse (Wilson, 2009; Langdrige, 2013) and the necessity to develop broader definitions of citizenship, including cultural dimensions and new forms of belonging, beyond the traditional contexts of law, politics and welfare (Turner, 1993; Pakulski, 1997; O'Byrne, 2003; McLaughling et al., 2011; Richardson and Monroe, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2007). More specifically, a growing literature on same-sex partnership and parenthood has discussed the ways in which nonconventional forms of intimacy and care may represent an opportunity to overcome the binary logic of social, legal and political entitlement and to explore possible strategies of resistance against heteronormative definitions of citizenship while at the same time avoiding marginalisation. Research work has shown how both same-sex partnering and parenting have contributed to broaden and redefine conventional notions of families, intimacies and relationships (Berkowitz, 2007; Duncan and Smith 2006; Hicks, 2011; Langdrige, 2013; Mallon 2004; Rabun and Oswald, 2009; Roseneil and Budgeon 2004; Shipman and Smart 2007; Smart 2007; Stychin 2001, 2003; Stacey, 1996; Weston, 1997; Weeks et al., 2001). This broadening and redefinition of customary notions of families, intimacies, relationships and parenthood has also implied an expansion of the concept of citizenship, not only with regard to the acknowledgment of sexual diversity but also in terms of plurality of life styles and choices (Plummer, 2003).

On the other hand, more critical assessments of the potential implications of the social and legal recognition of same-sex couples and parenthood have pointed to the risk that civic entitlement may depend upon compliance with the duties and responsibilities of

what defines a ‘good citizen’ according to neoliberal agendas of social control and regulation (Bell and Binnie, 2000; Bertone, 2013; Brown, 2012; Cossman 2007; Edelman, 2004; Eng, 2010; Phelan 2001; Richardson 2000, 2004, 2005; Seidman, 2002). These more critical appraisals underline the extent to which (hetero-)normative assumptions about sexuality and family constitute the basis of the existing notions of citizenship. Thus, a number of scholars have argued that hegemonic forms of sexuality socially construct the idea of ‘normal citizen’, that heterosexuality is the necessary (if not sufficient) condition for full entitlement of rights and obligations and that such socially constructed notions of sexual citizenship are both reflected and reproduced by a dominant heteronormativity (Kimmel and Llewellyn, 2012; Richardson, 2000b; Seidman, 2010).

The risk that the access to rights may be conditional upon compliance with conventional, conservative and discriminatory definitions of citizenship has also been highlighted by Butler (2002) who argued that one of the biggest problems on campaigns for same-sex marriage, for example, is related to the fact that these latter may reinforce the hierarchy between more or less ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ (and, therefore, more or less entitled) lives and couple relationships. The hierarchy, in other words, would be solidified into a new distinction between more or less legitimate queer relationships and statuses (Butler, 2002). ‘And even if the question is not one of marriage, but of legal contracts, of augmenting domestic partnership arrangements as legal contracts—Butler maintains—‘certain questions still follow: why should it be that marriage or legal contracts become the basis on which health care benefits, for instance, are allocated? Why shouldn’t there be ways of organizing health care entitlements such that everyone, regardless of marital status, has access to them?’ (Butler, 2002: 21). A similar argument can be applied to same-sex parenthood. In other words, if some of the rights of heterosexuality are extended to gay and lesbian individuals, what happens to those gay/lesbian individuals who do not take up those rights? Whose life choices and sexual desires cannot be transformed into marriage, parenthood or other forms of ‘acknowledged’ family life? What are the implications in terms of identity politics for different LGBT social groups? Do the non-married and/or childless queers become the *illegitimate others* against which the ideal of marriage and family is supported?

James’ suggestion (2014) to anchor the entitlement to rights to an *ethics of care* as a way to overcome the inadequacy of current definitions of citizenship within the context of post-global, neoliberal era seems to be useful here to address these and other questions

and will therefore represent the topic of the following session, which illustrates and discusses the findings of an empirical, phenomenological study on informal care that included different types of ‘differently entitled’ caregivers.

3. Overcoming the limits of current definitions of citizenship through a micro-situated, emotion-based definition of inequality

3.1 A phenomenological study on informal care

Addressing the contradiction between the necessity to create more caring, more just and more inclusive societies and the neoliberal principles currently underpinning our societies represents unquestionably a crucial task for contemporary scholars of migration and citizenship. Whilst care is a fundamental component of our everyday lives, relationships and intimacies, holding important philosophical and moral implications, it also possesses significant implications in terms of status inclusion/exclusion, social justice, equality and citizenship. The literature on care, however, tends to pay more attention to its ‘costs’ and to define care in terms of duties and responsibilities rather than in terms of *rights*, neglecting the implications in terms of exclusion that those who are denied such rights experience. As a corollary of this, care related policies tend to be defined in neutral terms, reinforcing inequalities based on gender, class, race/ethnicity, age, ablebodiness and sexual orientation.

The research on which this article is based was aimed to propose a more inclusive and reliable *phenomenology of care* and to examine its multiple implications in terms of status inclusion/exclusion. Parenthood and parental care, in fact, are conventionally constructed and thought as typically heterosexual and heteronormative, leaving LGBT people out of the picture. Thus, a further aim of the research was shedding light into the interactional and emotional dynamics through which care can produce forms of inequality which are not (only) related to the care activity in itself, but rather to the feeling of *entitlement to care* or its lack thereof.

The complex relationships between *sexual orientation*, *parental care* and *social inclusion* discussed in this article are based on the findings of an empirical research on informal care¹ conducted in the USA between 2005 and 2007. The sample of gay and lesbian parents on which this discussion is built was part of a larger purposive sample of 80 informal caregivers, 40 men and 40 women, involved in childcare and/or elderly care.

¹ Defined as unpaid and non-professional care work of a physical, psychological and social nature that is provided by relatives, partners, or friends.

Based on a multi-method, phenomenological approach, the qualitative data were gathered through a series of research instruments and techniques which included semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, diaries, online discussion forums between members of LGBT parents' associations, interviews with key-informants and stakeholders, secondary sources on LGBT parental care collected from local associations, extensive literature reviews on care, emotions, gender, sexuality and parenthood, newspaper articles, and the web.

From the theoretical point of view, the study drew on those aspects of the sociology of emotions that explain *inequality* in terms of *emotion-based processes* which occur at the level of micro-situated interactions (Barbalet, 2001; Clark, 1990; Collins, 1990, 1993, 2004; Gordon, 1990; Hammond, 1990; Hochschild, 1979, 1995; Katz, 1999; Kemper, 1978, 1990; Scheff, 1990; Smith-Lovin, 1993; von Scheve and von Luede, 2005). The idea was intersecting care, emotion and sexual orientation and analysing their role to understand other, less explored and less visible aspects of care and care related inequalities. More specifically, the study was based on Collins' theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), according to which the fundamental mechanisms defining both the individuals' interconnections and their positions (or statuses) in society possess an *emotional* nature rather than a merely economic, cultural, social or political one. Collins claims that the emotional dynamics underlying the social structures are based upon feelings of status membership or inclusion in groups or coalitions. This sense of status membership is described in terms of *emotional energy* (EE), which is similar to the psychological concept of drive but with a specific social orientation: it is the long-lasting emotion that builds up across situations and makes individuals initiate or fail to instigate interactions. Emotional energy comes from various chains of interaction, and it ranges from the highest heights of enthusiasm, self-confidence and initiative, when the interaction between people is successful, to the deepest depths of apathy, depression and retreat from action when the interaction is unsuccessful. Let's now have a closer look at how the theoretical model works and helps clarifying the crucial link between care, emotions, sexual orientation and inequality.

3.2 Emotions, heteronormative definitions of parental care and social exclusion

The theory is based on the Goffmanian hypothesis that situated actions and interactions constitute the micro-foundation of macro-structures (Goffman, 1959, 1967). Every interaction generates different effects in terms of *status membership* depending on the

characteristics of the interactants and the ingredients of the interaction itself. When the interaction is successful, there is a sense of belonging/status inclusion which increases the levels of Emotional Energy (EE); when it is unsuccessful, there is a sense of status exclusion which corresponds to a drain of Emotional Energy (EE). Thus, successful interactions generate EE (initiative for action, enthusiasm, etc.) which becomes part of people's supply of what I shall call *emotional capital* (see also Illouz, 2007); unsuccessful interactions reduce EE which means withdrawal from further action, lack of enthusiasm, etc. and ultimately implies a decrease of people's supply of *emotional capital*. It is a similar mechanism to earning money: successful transactions make people earn money and money increases their financial capital; the difference, here, is that we are dealing with emotions rather than money. As a corollary to this, privilege, power and status are not merely related to material and cultural resources but they also include emotional ones, and we can think about social stratification as an unequal distribution of emotional capital (EE). People's chance to gain or lose emotional capital is strongly affected by their perceived sense of status membership/inclusion acquired through micro-interactions. Along with that, we can try to empirically grasp social stratification through a careful, fine-grained analysis of how emotional stratification is enacted in micro-situations.

Now, within the context of parental care, we can visualise the micro-situated mechanisms of production of EE by looking at the internal conversations between the subject caregiver and a whole set of generalised others or what Wiley (1994) calls *permanent visitors*, all those "others" who are variably present in our thinking processes and with whom we constantly interact through our internal conversations (Wiley, 1994; Archer, 2003; Doucet, 2008). Heteronormative definitions of parenthood, constantly reproduced and transmitted by different types of permanent visitors (media, peers, families, institutions, etc.) define who is entitled to the status of 'legitimate parent' and who is not. As a consequence, during their internal dialogue(s) with all these permanent visitors same-sex parents constantly verify or disconfirm their status inclusion and/or membership to a wider imagined community of 'entitled parents'. Most parents tend to ask themselves questions about the quality of their parental practices, the 'goodness' of their parenting styles etc. However, whilst heterosexual parents might ask themselves: *Am I a successful parent? Am I a good enough parent?* in the case of same-sex parents the questions become: *Am I a legitimate parent? Am I acknowledged as a fully entitled and fully legitimate parent? Does my parental experience belong to or can it be included*

into conventional, legitimate, normative definitions of parenthood? The difference connected to parental care is redefined as a difference between those who feel ‘fully entitled’ to care and those who ‘do not feel fully entitled’.

It is the *felt experience of care*, mediated by the ongoing process of reflexivity and the internal processes of thinking, I claim, that makes a difference (and therefore creates inequality) between those parents who experience parental care as a source of status inclusion / membership and those who experience it as a potential source of exclusion. Put in these terms, thus, parental care is not only about *tending to* or *caring for* someone but it also possesses important implications in terms of status inclusion/exclusion, membership, entitlement and citizenship. Without necessarily being aware of it, all parents participate in this invisible process of inclusion/exclusion through their care activities. Parenthood, thus, becomes a crucial site to observe the unceasing reproduction of *emotional stratification* that is at the basis of social inequality. If this is the case, one might be induced to think that gay and lesbian parents are condemned, almost by default, to feel excluded and/or marginalised, as same-sex parenthood is still not acknowledged as ‘legitimate’ and culturally acceptable everywhere. However, as we will see in what follows, this is not always the case.

4. The complex interplay between Care and Citizenship

4.1 From status exclusion to status membership

One of the startling aspects of my research was that, for the majority of the same-sex parents I met and interviewed, parenthood seems to produce unexpected effects in terms of *status inclusion* and *status membership*, therefore in terms of increase of people’s *emotional capital*. Indeed, as one of the interviewees clearly highlighted, parenthood becomes “*an easy way to connect with people*” and seems to open the doors to a sort of universal language of care or familiar lexicon connected to child rearing, facilitating dialogues between gay/lesbian and heterosexual people which would probably not occur otherwise. The connecting power of care, its cultural and social implications and its consequences in terms of sexuality neutraliser are underlined for example by the following interviewee, who emphasises how, in the end, same-sex parents and heterosexual parents share similar experiences and how such experiences end up bridging worlds which did not interact with each other before:

...You have to wake up in the middle of the night and feed the kid and you have to change the diapers and you have to figure out what you're gonna do about day care or after-school programs and all the tensions and all the issues for any family [...] are the same regardless of whether the parents are opposite or same genders. And that's very, once again, it's very educational and enlightening to people, many of whom, probably, just it never occurred to them to think about before.

The dynamics of status membership/inclusion seem to be particularly evident in the following excerpt, where a single adoptive father describes his parenthood as a sort of gateway allowing him to access to the "club of heterosexual parents" and—as he says—to be "accepted into a totally different society":

You have a different level of credibility with straight couples... I coached my son's baseball team, I was a baseball coach, you know. And... I didn't come out and say I was gay or anything, I just did my job as a baseball coach. Most of the people in the urban setting are not stupid. I'm a white man with a black child, they're gonna figure out I'm probably gay. But I would have never had those relationships with those parents without a child [...] And it's like *you belong to their little club* and you talk about the same things and you talk about struggles at school and your kid and oh, it's like being accepted into a totally different society.

Gays and lesbians who become parents seem to dispel the collective obsession and concern with their sexuality (Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Mallon, 2004; Langdrige, 2013) and acquire a completely new social identity and visibility. Whilst their identification as homosexuals and lesbians confines them within the limited sphere of sexuality, their social identity and visibility as 'parents' transform them in ordinary people whose sexuality is not anymore the main issue at stake. The 'respectable' part of their new social identity as parents becomes their front-stage (Goffman, 1967) and overshadows what is habitually confined to the backstage, i.e. their sexuality. The 'normalisation' process accompanying same-sex couples who decide to have children and their transformation in ordinary people is quite effectively emphasised in the following quotes:

[...] most of the time I just feel like a mom, I don't feel like a lesbian mom in an interracial, interfaith family.

I don't think of gay dads or straight dads or non-gay dads, I just think of dads. . . . And this is what I strive for. I want people to start to see us as dads, not gay dads. [...] we're just that, it's okay, we're just both dads.

Consistently with other research on same-sex parenthood (Clarke, 2007, 2008; Hicks, 2011; Nelson 2007; Patterson, 1995; Patterson and Riskind, 2010; Pratesi, 2012; Stacey, 2006), these examples support the argument that the difference (aka inequality) connected to parental care responsibilities is not merely related to people's gender, marital status or sexual orientation, but it is rather a difference between *being* or *not being a parent*. In other words, it is the difference between those who have child care responsibilities and those who have not such responsibilities that determines the unequal distribution of status, emotional capital, and entitlement; therefore, unequal forms of citizenship. Citizenship, as we saw, is a controversial concept that can be understood in a variety of different ways. The entitlement to what I have called elsewhere the *right to care* (Pratesi, 2011), i.e. the right to be and to feel fully entitled as a parent and to develop intimate relationships with whomever people feel like, is one of those.

'Being a parent' involves a significant identity shift transforming gay and lesbian people in ordinary people. This seems to resonate with previous literature which highlights how in Western societies *parenthood*, rather than (merely) heterosexuality, is the condition for a full social entitlement as a 'normal citizen' (Turner, 1999, 2008; Richardson and Turner, 2001). Parenthood is playing a crucial role, by creating and encouraging a separation of gays and lesbians from their sexuality (Pratesi, 2012). 'Being gay' or 'being lesbian' is increasingly constructed as a *social* rather than a *sexual* identity (Langdrige, 2013; Pratesi, 2012; Warner, 1999). Social changes are shaping new forms of entitlement which, in some parts of the world, have led to the emergence of a new citizenship discourse asserting the 'normality' of being gay and lesbian (Puar, 2007; Richardson, 2004; Seidman, 2002). The fact the 'being a parent' dramatically affects and transforms gay/lesbian identities is also supported by one of the lesbian mothers I interviewed, who described her experience of parenthood as something that made her feel as "*being part of the mainstream*".

4.2 The sexual politics of Neoliberalism

If it is true that citizenship is a process of identity-making which is simultaneously co-constructed and shaped by both the State and its subjects, by broadening and

intertwining the borders of sexuality and citizenship we also redefine the notions of gay/lesbian identity, what it means (or is expected to mean) *being gay* and *lesbian*. In other words, the process of ‘normalisation’ of lesbian/gay citizens seems to take place primarily through their adherence to hegemonic heterosexual norms defining appropriate forms of relationships and intimacies. It is the monogamous couple, within a specific domestic and domesticated context, that is increasingly becoming the banner of lesbian and gay claims to citizenship (Seidman 2002; Richardson 2004; Richardson and Monro 2012). Thus, implicit in this process of normalisation, there is a risk of heterodirected identity adaptations or changes, which would involve the *assimilation* of LGBT citizenship into mainstream heteronormative and heterosexist notions of citizenship rather than an *affirmation* of equal rights within the reciprocal acknowledgment of diversity and otherness. Duggan (2002) describes this risk in terms of ‘new homonormativity’, which ‘...does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustain them, while promising the possibility of a demobilised gay constituency and a privatised, depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (Duggan, 2002: 50).

While the civil recognition of same-sex partnerships and the right to care for one’s children are crucially important, by claiming such recognition recent lesbian and gay politics are drawing on what the Neoliberal State also desires in the forms of state-sanctioned, heteronormative and regulated relationships and intimacies. Neoliberal acceptance and recognition of lesbian and gay rights might be interpreted as an additional form of social control and regulation aiming to ‘domesticate’ and neutralize any presumed threat to social order (Phelan, 2001). Besides, there might be other hidden agendas and interests behind neoliberal state practices which have to do with the functional and/or instrumental aspects of such recognition. As emphasised by Brown (2012: 1066) ‘Neoliberalism is not just an economic theory, but a form of governmentality’ that creates and corroborates commodified and marketized interpretations of the relations between public and private spheres, promoting personal responsibility and individual choice and autonomy in contrast with collective and equally distributed obligations and responsibilities. If we look at the main principles of neoliberalism—economic freedom, individual freedom and personal responsibility—it is not difficult to understand the implicit advantages for neoliberal states of incorporating and/or assimilating lesbian and gay people—possibly White, educated and upper-middle

class—into state projects and agendas, particularly in a context of constant withdrawal of the state from many areas of welfare provision.

Within such a context, the civil and legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships and care responsibilities may well go hand in hand with neoliberal policy agendas to the extent that ‘these are seen as a form of private welfare, providing economic interdependency and support’ (Richardson and Monro, 2012: 82) in times of austerity and global financial recession. Put it simply, the argument of neoliberal states might be: you are welcome to become part of the club of ‘normal citizens’ as long as you accept our rules, our ways to define ‘respectable and legitimate’ forms of sexual citizenships and, even more, as long as your personal responsibility covers those areas of care and welfare provision of which we are not, we cannot or we do not want to be responsible. In sum, if in contemporary Western societies lesbians and gays are more socially and culturally visible and in less stigmatised ways, certain forms of citizenship tend to be ‘assimilationist’ rather than portraying sexual and gender diversity as a value in itself. This potential downside becomes particularly evident and salient with same-sex parenthood, i.e. with the right to be acknowledged as a *legitimate carer*. One thing is affirming a different (acknowledged, legitimate, dignified and valued) model of parenthood and another thing altogether is being co-opted within a pre-existing and hegemonic model of parenthood. Such an alternative has to do with the critical distinction between toleration/acceptance of difference and otherness, on the one hand, and appreciation/valuing of difference, on the other (Richardson and Monro, 2012).

Nevertheless, whilst some of the risks described above are real, both Brown (2012) and Langdrige (2013) also emphasise how, by representing capitalism, neoliberalism and homonormativity in terms of unquestionable and all-encompassing macro-structures, we might actually overlook the micro-dynamics and everyday practices that can significantly contribute to either the maintenance of the status quo or to social change. Monolithic, ideological and unalterable representations of these macro structures fail to take into account the specificities of contexts (metropolitan/urban vs. rural/peripheral), socio-economic conditions (social class, social capital, cultural capital), and perspectives (the vast diversity involved into the concept of LGBT community, for example, or the different, intersectional issues related to the concepts of race and ethnicity). In other words, without denying the inherent risks of homonormative, hegemonic forces shaping the complex relationship between sexuality and citizenship, we need to acknowledge the not-so-visible power of situated action and interaction, particularly in light of Collins’

theory (Collins, 2004) and its Goffmanian notion that it is precisely at the level of individuals' interaction that the (micro-)foundation of macro-structures occurs. It is in light of these considerations that the notion of *cultural citizenship* (Pakulski, 1997), involving the idea of full inclusion in the culture of a specific society, may become the *trait d'union* for different social groups and minorities which, in terms of citizenship, are at the crossroad of inclusion/exclusion.

The 'world families' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2014) I mentioned in the opening of this article include a heterogeneous and tension-filled set of social actors who share in common the potentiality to bridge traditional distinctions between public and private, centre and periphery, national and international, able-bodied and physically/cognitively impaired, heterosexual and homosexual, bypassing dichotomous ideas of inclusion/exclusion which typically characterise the concept of citizenship. *World families* is the term that Beck et al. (2006, 2010, 2014) use to represent this social and cultural diversity which resonates with the notion of 'cultural rights' described by Pakulski (1997) in terms of a new set of claims including the right to symbolic presence and visibility vs. marginalisation; the right to dignifying representation vs. stigmatisation; and the right to affirmation and propagation of identity vs. assimilation. The complex, articulated potential parallels between same-sex families and other forms of unequally entitled citizens is what I wish to explore next.

5. Avoiding *assimilation* and *marginalisation*: potential parallels between same-sex families and other 'unequally entitled' citizens

LGBT people share many of the issues and concerns of other 'unequally entitled' citizens who inhabit several sorts of legal and political limbos; liminal, in-between areas whose actual and symbolic borders are still not clearly defined. Their (private) stories and experiences are not only relevant to them, but also to the wider communities of these less entitled and less visible citizens and to their civil, legal, social and cultural rights. The right to visibility, the right to dignifying and dignified representation, the right to affirmation of identity, and the right to appreciation and valuing of differences also apply to many other forms of cultural citizenship currently denied. Same-sex families challenge and redefine the symbolic, cultural and social boundaries of citizenship, reflecting an interesting and potentially democratising paradox: they look for social and legal inclusion within pre-existing and more or less conventional definitions of families and intimacies,

somehow reinforcing and legitimating such definitions, and at the same time they claim their unique *right to care* by offering a new, nonconventional perspective on intimacy and care which may represent an example anti-assimilationist form of inclusion and entitlement.

The phenomenological analysis of the multiple implications of care discussed in this article unfolds the complex relationships between micro-(interactional) and macro-(structural) levels of analysis and sheds light into important and yet less visible and still unexplored aspects of parenthood concerning status inclusion/exclusion, citizenship and social change. More specifically, I have highlighted the centrality of emotions to routine operations of social interaction (Barbalet, 2001) and their explanatory role in unfolding the micro-situated dynamics through which the complex relationships between different forms of affiliation/membership (sexual orientation, marital status, parenthood) can be fruitfully analysed to reinterpret the concept of citizenship and try to overcome some of its current limitations. Whilst these unexplored or less visible aspects are relevant for all kinds of parents, regardless of their sexual orientation, the social and cultural implications of same-sex parenthood are also eminently *political*. Paraphrasing Marcuse (1955), who described the ways in which capitalism flourishes and maintains its hegemony through a process of ‘resistance through incorporation’, we could say that same-sex parents resist the hegemonic attempts to incorporate aspects of same-sex parenthood that fit with neoliberal, capitalist and individualist agendas through a process of inclusion and affirmation of equal rights (to care) within a context of mutual acknowledgment and valuing of diversity.

The relatively invisible experiences of same-sex families possess therefore important implications in terms of citizenship and social change. Shedding light on the emotional dynamics revolving around same-sex parenthood and their implications in terms of status inclusion or exclusion is crucially important not only to explain, but also to facilitate such change. Lesbian and gay parents are accelerating this process of social change, representing something completely different, intrinsically and ontologically different, which resonates with the concept of *cultural citizenship* (Pakulski, 1997). They become *cultural entrepreneurs* producing social change through their intimate and yet eminently political choices and care practices. In fact, by gaining social visibility through their care responsibilities, enriching the possible definitions of family and parenthood, challenging stereotypical gender roles and fighting against hegemonic sexualities, gay and lesbian parents carry on a ‘peaceful battle’ involving simultaneously *social* and

cultural aspects. A battle based on their unique ability to *be* and *feel included* without *being* and *feeling incorporated* or assimilated into pre-existing models of parenthood. No matter how contemporary neoliberal cultures may try to incorporate and control aspects of same-sex relationships and intimacies that fit with capitalist and homonormative agendas, gay and lesbian parents claiming their ‘rights to care’ represent a momentous, radical historical change which can be seen as *a model of anti-assimilationist citizenship*. They produce social change by being visible, being ‘out there’, and ‘having to live in close proximity to heterosexual cultures (in the negotiation with schools, other mothers, local communities, etc.) whilst not being able—or willing—to inhabit the heterosexual ideal’ (Ahmed, 2004: 152).

The cultural gap between the heterosexual script(s) and the visibility and specificities of gay and lesbian parenthood (including the ‘embodied difference’ of the family) unavoidably involves a reworking of the script: hence, social change. Clearly, as emphasised by Ahmed (2004: 152), the script reworking should not be taken for granted as it does not necessarily involve any ‘conscious political acts’ (parenthood is a quintessentially private and intimate matter, not a political one) and it is contingent on other social variables including class, age, education and status. However, the closer that lesbian/gay parents get to spaces defined by heteronormativity, ‘the more potential there is for a reworking of the heteronormative’ (Ahmed, 2004: 152), to the extent in which the *proximity* ‘shows’ how non-normative, nonconventional forms of kinship, relationships and families are possible and do not provoke the same reaction they would if they were hidden and concealed.

This emotion-based, micro-situated, interactional model of inclusion can be applied to other unequally entitled citizens, such as migrant people, refugees and their families. And the way in which the citizens of Lampedusa and Catania (Sicily) have reacted and are reacting to the hundreds of refugees and migrants who regularly reach the Italian coasts seems to further support the ‘credibility’ (Becker, 2001) of the micro-situated, bottom-up theoretical approach to social inclusion discussed in this article. The dramatic visibility and sudden proximity of the constant waves of numerous migrants and their children reaching the Italian coasts (when they manage to survive) rework at the micro-level, through forms of situational solidarity, the nationalist, uncaring, neoliberal politics concerned with issues of security, defence and protections of borders imposed at the macro-level. Micro-dynamics of situated and contextual inclusion occur at the level of

face-to-face interactions, somehow providing a social and political template of how a truthfully inclusive, caring and multicultural society might look like.

Increasingly, critical theorisations of carework, intimacy and citizenship from feminist, multicultural and global perspectives have highlighted several ways to bridge the gaps between the theories and practices of care, sexuality, intimacy and migration, providing a broader, more grounded, intersectional understanding of citizenship (Epstein and Carrillo, 2014; Fudge, 2014; Kershaw, 2010; Longman et al., 2013; Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 2007). For example, Longman et al.'s comparative, intersectional analysis of 'mothering' in non-conventional mother-child relationships (2013) shows how carework and its micro-based, affective potential to shape politics of inclusion and recognition becomes a form of 'citizenship practice' which changes hegemonic understandings of belonging and entitlement. Kershaw's claim the 'caregiving *for identity* is political' (2010) advances the debate on the contested status of carework as a form of political citizenship. Fudge (2014) discusses the extent to which universal *human rights* and *citizenship* discourses intersect when migrant workers claim for greater protection in a growingly globalised world. Epstein and Carrillo (2014) illustrate the concept of '*immigrant sexual citizenship*' by discussing ethnographic data from a study on Mexican gay and bisexual male immigrants to California and describing the multiple, intersectional challenges they face. Regardless of their different perspectives and specific focuses, what these visions of citizenship share in common is the necessity to overcome deceptive dualisms (public—private dichotomy) and situate the debate on citizenship within more inclusive, intersectional boundaries.

Concluding remarks: towards a micro-situated and emotion-based model of social inclusion.

Situating the debate on citizenship within the contexts of broader, intersectional sets of unequally entitled citizens allows to overcome misleading dualisms between *marginalisation* and *incorporation* and to look for anti-assimilationist strategies of inclusion. Gay and lesbian parents—with their ability to bypass both homonormative definitions of parenthood and marginalising definitions of cultural/sexual citizenship—represent a possible model of inclusive and non-incorporating citizenship precisely because of the still ambivalent and politically undetermined nature of their civic entitlements.

Thus, the nonviolent, micro-situated and emotion-based model of social change represented by these *cultural entrepreneurs* can be plausibly exported to other social groups, contexts and settings, creating the foundations for more caring, more just and more inclusive societies. Both my research and a growing literature on LGBT parenthood support the argument that same-sex parenthood provides a fertile opportunity to explore possible avenues of resistance against macro-structural forces while at the same time avoiding marginalisation (Berkowitz, 2007; Duncan and Smith 2006; Hicks, 2011; Langdrige, 2013; Mallon 2004; Pratesi, 2012; Rabun and Oswald, 2009; Roseneil and Budgeon 2004; Shipman and Smart 2007; Smart 2007; Stychin 2001, 2003; Stacey, 1996; Weston, 1997; Weeks et al., 2001). The question then becomes how to apply the vast potential of citizenship discourse relative to same-sex couples and parents to other contexts, other social groups, other forms of unequally entitled citizens such as, for example, national, racial or ethnic minorities and how to intersect this with other important variables such as class, gender, education, age, etc.

Undoubtedly, the role of social and political institutions, the role of national and supernational entities and politics (EU), the role of media, the role of education, the role of peers and/or the multiple and diverse members of ‘world families’ described by Beck et al. (2014) as ‘pioneers of cosmopolitanism’ are all fundamental. However, there may be other theoretical and practical suggestions emerging from the arguments discussed in this article. Perhaps, for example, the necessity to connect the citizenship discourse to an *ethics of care* highlighted by James (2014) and supported by several of the arguments here discussed may be expanded by and integrated with an *ethics of respect*, respect of diversity and dignity of every individual, in which fundamental questions of difference/identity, inclusion/exclusion, visibility/invisibility, entitlement/responsibility are universally granted but at the same time individually negotiated. And perhaps it is not by chance that parenthood—and same-sex parenthood in particular—represents a key site to explore the vast potentialities of a micro-situated and emotion-based model of social inclusion and entitlement. Parenthood, I have argued in this article, transforms the *sexual* identity into a *social* and socially constructed one, redefining the notion of gay and lesbian identities and expanding the concept of normalcy. If gay and lesbian civil rights are still considered by many as sectarian or of no interest for the wider society, children’s rights (and parental rights) seem to maintain a universal and universally shared appeal, which intersects social, cultural, geographic and political borders.

Same-sex families and parents need therefore to extend their *right to care* to and seek support from other social groups of more or less entitled citizens, and if this is going to happen, it is more likely to happen in the name of their children than in the name of their individual/sexual rights. Discriminating against same-sex parents also means discriminating against their children, and this might explain, at least in part, the reasons why the reactions against same-sex parenthood seem to be somehow less harsh or even less ideologically charged than the reactions against same-sex marriage. The search for new alliances, then, both with ‘fully entitled’ and ‘unequally entitled’ citizens may represent an additional way forward to expand both the concepts of citizenship and normalcy. In fact, it is not a question of being included in the realm a pre-existing, prescriptive, heteronormative ‘normalcy’ but rather an expansion and redefinition of the concept of normalcy itself, by which a variety of equally acknowledged, legitimate, and respected ways to parent and make a family might peacefully coexist. A similar argument, I have claimed in this article, can be applied to other contexts and social groups characterised by unequal distributions of civic entitlement in order to foster genuine forms of multiculturalism and genuine forms of cultural citizenship. Proximity and visibility are key: proximity ‘shows’ how unfamiliar, unconventional forms of kinship, relationships and families are possible and enlarge and enrich the cultural spectrum of the hosting society. Any form of discrimination and phobia, ultimately, is deeply characterised by ignorance and an irrational fear of the unknown. The gap between the cultural scripts of the hosting society and the visibility and specificities of migrant people’s cultural scripts inevitably involves a reworking of the scripts and the ‘hosting’ society stop being definable as such and become a new, richer and authentically multicultural society.

Research has shown examples of the astonishing power of children and parental care in mediating and facilitating multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism at school, in Europe and in the United States. How can these and other examples of micro-situated inclusion illustrated in this article represent a benchmark to overcome current limited uses of the language of citizenship? To which extent the suggestions above indicated may represent a viable venue and path for more inclusive and more just societies across social, economic and cultural borders? How can we export and apply the concept of *emotional capital* and its powerful capacity to avoid marginalisation and incorporation to other contexts and social minorities, going beyond the specificities of parental care?

The examples of micro-situated inclusion discussed in this article have not the ambition to be representative of all socially marginalised groups and the complexity and variability of several dimensions (class, education, age, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, the *micro-situated and emotion-based model* of social and cultural inclusion here illustrated, I claim, can be applied to other contexts. Same-sex parenthood and marriage translate into the coexistence of two seemingly irreconcilable needs: the necessity of coming to grips with membership and civic entitlement and the inevitability to also (re-)define and (re-)affirm the sense of belonging to gay and lesbian identities. In this article I have examined how getting insights into this paradox and using it as a theoretical model of anti-assimilationist citizenship and social inclusion may involve potential benefits for other marginalised or liminal communities. However the extent to which such potential can be realised still needs to be further explored and will crucially depend on our ability to *care about* and *value* cultural differences.

Acknowledgements

Preliminary versions of this paper were presented at various events where I benefited from engaged and valuable responses that have helped me immensely in refining the arguments presented here. An early version of this paper was developed at the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN)-Central European University (CEU) Conference: *Nationalist Responses to Economic and Political Crises*, Panel on 'Intimacy and Migration', Budapest, 12th-14th June 2014. Thanks to Attila Meleg (Corvinus University of Budapest) and Nyiri Pál (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam) for their feedback. I also wish to thank Randall Collins (University of Pennsylvania) and his colleagues at the Department of Sociology (UPENN) where the research here illustrated was originally based for their invaluable guidance and support.

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