

Families, Relationships and Societies

Migrant Mothers: Performing Kinwork and Belonging across private and public boundaries --Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	FRS-D-16-00077R4	
Full Title:	Migrant Mothers: Performing Kinwork and Belonging across private and public boundaries	
Article Type:	Special Issue	
Keywords:	migrant mothers, kinwork, citizenship, ethnicity, participatory theatre	
Corresponding Author:	Tracey Reynolds, Ph.D University of Greenwich London, UNITED KINGDOM	
First Author:	Tracey Reynolds, Ph.D	
Order of Authors:	Tracey Reynolds, Ph.D	
	Umut Erel	
	Erene Kaptani	
Abstract:	<p>This paper explores how migrant mothering kinwork challenges private and public boundaries, giving rise to new conceptions and practices of citizenship. We highlight the potential of participatory theatre methods - specifically forum theatre and playback - for understanding the relationship between mothering, ethnic belonging and citizenship. We also assess the significance of migrant women's kinwork within their families and communities for re-framing notions of citizenship (anonymised for review). Our analysis gives particular focus to two scenes developed as part of the participatory theatre project, which took place with a group of ethnically and racially diverse mothers in East London. The first scene entitled 'Where is my food?' draws attention to the mothers' kinwork and reproductive labour operating at the boundaries of the public/private dichotomy and also highlights gendered household dynamics. The second scene, entitled 'At the Community Centre' examines everyday encounters at the community centre, and how 'cultural work', which is pivotal to the mothers' kinwork inform inter-generational relations. The paper argues for a more embodied understanding of citizenship in order to broaden understanding of migrant mothers' kinwork in making new citizens.</p>	
Order of Authors Secondary Information:		
Funding Information:	Arts and Humanities Research Board (AH/K00591X/1)	Umut Erel

Introduction

This paper explores how migrant mothering kinwork challenges private/ public boundaries and this gives rise to new conceptions and practices of citizenship. We highlight the potential of participatory theatre methods - specifically forum theatre – for understanding the relationship between mothering, ethnic belonging and citizenship. The analysis is influenced by Isin’s (2008) concept of ‘enacting citizenship’ to argue that citizenship is about more than claims to formal rights and duties. Instead, our notion of citizenship takes into account migrant mothers’ social, cultural and economic contribution to local, national and transnational fields through their kinwork and family practices. Importantly, this study takes the approach that migrant mothers’ caring work and practices within the intimate sphere of kin (family and friends) re-frames notions of citizenship (Erel et al 2018). It disrupts dominant narratives of citizenship, which see their subjects as members of the nation state (Erel et al 2017a). Migrant mothering also disrupt the logic of public debates concerning what it means to be a ‘good citizen’ and the boundaries of who may be perform citizenship. This work is both timely and significant in challenging public and media debates that oftentimes position racialized migrant women and their children as the ‘enemy within borders’ (Redclift 2014). In Britain ‘visible minorities’ families from diverse ethnic and racial origins are cast as a hostile threat to the nation. In media debates migrant and minority ethnic families are typically associated with violent extremism e.g Muslim families (Joppke 2009); exploiting and ‘cheating’ the state welfare system e.g African families (Aspinall and Chinoyua, 2016) and in engaging with dysfunctional family patterns that result in violent and criminal

activities e.g. Caribbean families (Reynolds 2005). As outlined in the Casey Review (2016) into social integration these negative stereotypical images reinforce the view that migrant families do not fully integrate into British society. Moreover their supposed failure to fully adhere to British cultural values is seen as threatening the security and wellbeing of the nation. These stereotypes create a barrier to migrant and minority ethnic families claiming full rights and entitlements as citizens, or indeed being seen as rightfully embodying a subjectivity as citizens (Diehl et al, 2009; Afshar 2009; Erel et al 2017 b).

Our discussion begins by establishing the connections between the theoretical and methodological approach adopted. We highlight the principles of participatory action research, and within this, the main method of participatory theatre that we used in our study. Participatory theatre as used in this study highlighted the ways in which migrant mothers, through their embodied performance, make citizenship claims: this disrupts the normative discourses around citizenship. Their kinwork also disrupts normative notions of citizenship. The next section contextualises the concept of kinwork and citizenship within broader constructions of racialized motherhood. We outline how kinwork goes beyond privatised notions of caring for one's family, and there is a blurring of the public and private spheres (Hill-Collins 1990; Reynolds 2003). As racialized and gendered bodies the migrant mothers, and the kinwork they practice, are subject to racialized gendered inequality. Thus, we explore in our analysis how challenging and responding to (perception of) racialized encounters represent exemplars of enacting citizenship. Our analysis particularly focuses on two scenes with a group of ethnically and racially diverse mothers. These scenes were developed as part of the participatory theatre project that took place with these

women in East London. The first scene entitled, 'Where is my food?' draws attention to the mothers' kinwork operating at the boundaries of the public/ private dichotomy and also highlights racialized gendered household dynamics. The second scene, entitled 'At the Community Centre' examines everyday encounters at the community centre, and how their embodied status as citizens creates for the migrant mothers new cultural forms of intergenerational, care and kinwork, which take place in local and transnational contexts (cf. Kofman and Raghuram 2015; Baldassar and Merla, 2013).

The Study

The project draws on findings from the Arts Humanities and Research Council funded study 'Migrant Mothers Caring for the Future: Creative Interventions into Making New Citizens' (AH/K00591X/1). As part of the study we conducted three-hour weekly participatory theatre workshop sessions. These took place with a group of migrant mothers in East London, U.K . over a period of seven months (February–August 2014). The workshops combined 'Playback' technique (Fox 1994) and Forum Theatre as part of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1976). In terms of Playback this involved the migrant mothers (also referred to as the participants) sharing individual stories about their everyday encounters including their kinwork and caring relationships, experiences of racism and access to health and social welfare services. These stories were then acted out by professional actors, re-telling and re-playing their stories back to these women. According to Kaptani and Yuval-Davis 2008, Playback theatre creates more reflexive distance than is possible in everyday life allows, allowing participants to see themselves and their interactions with others

in a new way. Playback requires relationships of trust and reciprocity in sharing experiences. It produces meaning by building a triangular conversation between actors, individual tellers and the group of participants. Narratives of individual tellers often relate to each other, elaborating on a particular theme, perhaps refining particular themes, perhaps showcasing alternative or contradicting experiences (ibid). In the workshops, forum theatre followed on from the playback scenes. The director and activist Augusto Boal (1979) developed Forum Theatre, as part of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The framework and set of techniques is based on the principles of collective empowerment and emancipation. Boal termed the participating audience members, *spect-actors*, for the process aims to overcome the boundary between passive spectators and actors and allow participants to practice elements of both roles (spectators and actors) simultaneously. Forum Theatre enables participants to become actively involved in using the theatre as a rehearsal for change in the social world. Participants construct dramatic scenes of their choice based on their personal experiences and then show the scene to the other participants, who intervene by taking the place of the protagonist and to develop strategies for changing the course of action. This allows participants to try out multiple possibilities for social action and helps to reflect on how individual and collective experiences relate to each other (Erel et al 2017a). During these sessions, the migrant mothers put themselves forward to act out particular experiences of social problems or dilemmas they had experienced. Other mothers (participants) stepped into the scene in order to intervene in the scene. They did so by embodying the particular scene by taking the role of the protagonist (the mother), and attempting to change the course of action and create a more desirable outcome. As a result of participants intervening in the performance to change the course of events, forum

theatre becomes not only a critical site of negotiation, but also a site of collective mobilisation and empowerment for migrant communities encountering marginalisation and inequalities across many multi-cultural European nations (Reynolds and Erel 2016).

Participatory theatre methods therefore develop a new methodological model and approach to understanding acts of citizenship. Migrant mothers, as a result of their family and community practices, are able to claim full and legitimated citizenship rights (Pakulski 1999; Ryan and Vacchelli 2013). In our study, participatory theatre, as a social intervention tool, stimulates the mothers' creativity and thinking to reflect on changes to and within family and community relationships. The mothers' performances and participation in the workshops showed them to be claims-making citizens who were able to clearly articulate through their performances, their understanding of their rights and responsibilities to family, community, nation state. They also negotiate and contest hegemonic citizenship discourses, which we describe later in this article. The methods of participatory theatre provide a creative space and collective platform for the migrant mothers' voices, stories and performances to take centre stage. These women's voices are usually marginalised in society (Erel et al 2017b). Participatory theatre methods are congruent with the principles of participatory action research and social justice (O'Neill and Hubbard 2010), which recognises the importance of valuing all voices (O'Neill 2017). It adopts a grassroots and 'bottom up approach in generating new knowledge, which is transformatory and interventionist in its approach' (Erel et al 2017a).

The theatre workshops were led by a facilitator, and co-author of the article, Erene Kaptani, who is trained in dramatherapy and social research. Professional actors and musicians also assisted with these sessions. A total of twenty migrant women living in Hackney, East London were recruited through the networks of a carers' group using non-purposive sampling methods. All of these mothers had school age children. They came from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds, including Somali, Nigerian, Polish, Lithuanian, Turkish, Kurdish, Congolese women and had migration trajectories which included family migration, and labour migration. During the workshops the mothers also developed a short theatre performance piece that was based on movement, and dance. The scenes were presented to social researchers and academics at an end of project conference. These can be accessed on the project website <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/migrant-mothers/>ⁱ

Working with a participatory theatre researcher who is trained in dramatherapy ensured that the participants could perform with their bodies and voices particular scenes that were meaningful in their kinwork. Kaptani (forthcoming) argues that theatre processes involve sharing, and being allowed to 'mess about' through movement. This offers migrant groups an alternative way - beyond writing and speaking - to communicate their experiences. Oftentimes interview based forms of research work to reproduce institutional practices of social exclusion (ibid). This was particularly evident for our group of migrant mothers who were from low-income working class backgrounds. Almost all of the mothers lacked any recognised educational qualifications and their spoken and written English language competences were limited. Therefore, the creative and embodied ways in which the

participants used movement, their bodies and actions to communicate their experiences allowed them to enact citizenship. These women became active agents, rather than passive recipients, in making claims of their bodies to improvise, and find 'solutions' to the challenges and problems they encountered in their everyday lives. The mothers' narratives about their intimate and family relations are brought from the private sphere into the public realm through their theatre performances during the workshops, blurring the distinction between public and private boundaries.

The workshops were supplemented by individual in-depth interviews with the mothers. These interviews explored their feelings about participating in the workshops, as well their experiences of mothering and motherhood. Themes included: mother-child relationships; access to health and welfare services; family migration, and what it means to be a migrant mother in British society. The mothers also reflected on the policy changes they would like to see. This produced substantial narratives for each of the participants. Grounded in a constructivist ontology (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), thematic analysis was used to identify memorable and significant events and analyse differences and similarities of experience across all of the participants. Working with the mothers to co-produce knowledge on family, kinwork and citizenship, we set out to challenge traditional discourses around migrant mothering which typically situate them as unwilling or unable to integrate into UK society (Casey Review 2016). The participatory methods of forum theatre and Playback helped the migrant mothers to articulate the ways in which they actively create new forms of citizenship through their cultural, and kinwork. The dramatised illustrative moments they produced; highlighted and generated the integrative components of macro-meso and micro everyday interactions in these

women's lives, which is later discussed in the analysis (Lutz 2010; Yuval-Davis 2011).

Negotiating Public discourses of Motherhood, Kin-Work and Citizenship

The substantial body of anthropological literature on kinship has long emphasised the importance of kin-work for the maintenance of kinship ties (see di Leonardo, 1984 and 1992; Alber and Drotbohm, 2016; Dossa and Coe 2017). For instance, Povinelli's (2006) analysis of kin-work considers normative ideas around love and intimacy in the period of European colonialism and Empire. She theorizes that liberal governance operates through discourses of individual agency and social constraint, the latter determined by complex and multi-faceted modes of relatedness and sociality organised along kinship ties. During the 1980s anthropologist Micaela di Leonardo (1987) popularised the notion of kin-keeping as work, highlighting the importance of women's role in using kin-work to cross public and private boundaries. The study by Dossa and Coe (2017) into transnational ageing in a Canadian context similarly highlights the public performance of private kin-work by elderly Muslim migrant women in an institutional setting (palliative hospital) as a way of opening up dialogue about differing cultural values and practices held about death and dying by Muslim patients and their non-Muslim palliative care professionals and workers.

The link between 'race', racialization and motherhood encourages particular kinds of mothering work and kin-work practices that extend beyond the private realm (Stack, 1974; Hill-Collins 1994; Stack and Burton 1994). This link suggests kin-work encapsulates a concept that is much broader than paid work; domestic work and

childcare. As Black feminist scholar, Patricia Hill-Collins (1994:48) observes, inherent tensions exist for racialised and ethnicised mothers in raising children, especially in Western societies, such as the UK, that seek to denigrate them. The mothering work and practices these mothers engage in reflect 'the dialectical nature of power and powerlessness in structuring mothering patterns and the significance of self-definition in constructing individual and collective racial identity' (1994: 49). Other feminist scholars have utilised a framework of kin-work to reflect on the collective labour of gendered family-centred networks that sustain intergenerational relations (Doucet 2009), these also include transnational care responsibilities, across households (Zontini 2004; Baldassar and Merla 2013).

As the above argument suggests, kinwork goes beyond privatised notions of caring for one's family, and involves community development that takes place in the public domain. Black and racialized migrant mothers, for instance, recognise that their kin-work encompasses particular types of work around identity formation and cultural work. The empowerment of self and children are critical components of political resistance to racial oppression in society (Reynolds 2005; Gedalof, 2009; Kershaw 2010). Consequently, the caring activities and collective labour involve racialized mothers encouraging their children to develop a positive sense of self, which in turn provide their children with the skills and resources that allow them to resist experience of racism, whilst also encouraging them to 'fit in' within this system (Erel et al 2018). Many Black and racialized migrant women, are actively engaged in caring for children and young people through their community and voluntary work (Sudbury 1998; Dominelli, 2006). The desire to improve migrant children's educational outcomes, and economic chances, similarly underpin these women's

engagement in voluntary work and as 'community workers' or 'community mothers' (Mirza and Reay, 2000; Reynolds 2003). The cultural resources used in racialized and migrant women's mothering practices to foster self-esteem and confidence in their children, constitutes community activism founded on political and social solidarity (Gedalof 2009; Ryan and Vacchelli 2013).

In an increasingly globalised world, migrant women are focused on family and community survival (Kofman 2013). In this context, the kin-work these mothers engage in is about ensuring the physical survival of their children and family (Lonergan 2015). According to Baldassar and Merla (2014), however, this goes beyond the focus on mother-child relationships to encompass care across generations and genders, and between home and host countries. In a very practical sense this reveals itself in migrant women disproportionately taking on low-paid, low status, physical demanding; oftentimes illegal and precarious paid work in order to circulate care for family between developing nations (eg Africa, Caribbean, South Asia amongst others) and the wealthier nations (in, for example, North America, Northern Europe and Australia for their family) (Reynolds and Zontini, 2014; Baldassar and Merla, 2012;). Maria Amigo's study (2012: 62), for example highlights how professional and skilled migrants from Latin American territories migrate to Australia to ensure a more promising environment and future for themselves and their children. In an ideological sense, migrant women's mothering is about establishing the skills, strategies and resources for their children, families and communities to survive and negotiate systems and structures of racialized oppression (Reynolds 2005; Erel 2011; Erel and Reynolds 2014).

Our study extends and builds upon this notion of kin-work, refracting it through the analytic framework of citizenship. T H Marshall (1953) proposed that citizenship has developed in steps from firstly judicial rights, protecting citizens from arbitrary state violence, to secondly political rights, such as voting rights, and then finally leading social rights providing social security and solidarity between citizens in a welfare state. Feminist scholarship, including the earlier work of Sylvia Walby (1994) emerged to critique this perspective of citizenship rights as progressing sequentially. This work pointed out that such an account of citizenship takes male, White experiences as normative and does not pay attention to the effects of hegemonic conceptions of society as structured by a public/ private divide. Protection from arbitrary violence, for example, has not been realized in substantive form for many women who are subjected to domestic violence. One of the reasons for this is the assumption that what happens in the home pertains to the private realm, which in liberal accounts of citizenship is considered a safe haven from state intrusion. Yet, this conception of the home as private sphere misrepresents the home and intimate sphere as one which is free from politics, hierarchies and power relations (Anthias, and Yuval-Davis 1992). Crucially, as suggested by the work of black feminist scholars; this ignores how intersections of gender, class, race and migration status are closely intertwined in constructing notions of the public/ private divide (see Yuval-Davis 2006; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006).

According to Lutz (2010) this operates for migrant women at intersecting macro, meso and micro levels. At the macro level they are concentrated in low pay and status domestic work (e.g. caring for children or sick/elderly adults or cleaners). The meso level involves the redistribution of migrant workers' own domestic work in the

private/intimate spheres, which is typically performed by other female relatives such as the grandmother, aunts etc. It is at the micro-level where migrant women's individual practices, identities and positions come to the fore (ibid: page). The concept kin-work also contests the public/private dichotomy which separates out and distinguishes work performed in family/household from paid work performed in the labour market. As Lutz (2016) points out many racialized and migrant women work in other people's homes as domestic workers but also undertake paid work in their own homes - as part of family businesses and more recently undertaking more highly skilled jobs in the home (e.g. as teleworkers, consultants or freelancers). Therefore, the physical location of the workplace and home should not divert attention from migrant women's economic contribution to society.

Public/private boundaries of citizenship

The focus on kin-work in 'reframing migrant mothers' citizenship (Erel 2011) raise the question to what extent citizenship is embodied? Bacchi and Beasley (2002)'s study critiques the limited attention given to embodiment in feminist theorizing around citizenship. Particularly the way in which women's bodies are conceived by policy discourses in terms of ownership, control, rights and protections. So for example, the normative depiction of victimhood is commonly associated with migrant women. Dustin and Phillips (2008) make a similar argument by charting the shift in Britain's policy focus on migrant women away from a cursory endorsement of multiculturalism to a growing preoccupation with the abuses committed within migrant communities against women (eg. genitalia mutilation, sexual trafficking, honour killings, forced marriages). Underpinning this construction, as Diehl et al (2009)

argue is that these women are ill equipped to deal with western norms of gender equality and citizenship entitlements. It then becomes the responsibility of other (White Western middle class) women to speak for and reclaim control and rights over these migrant women bodies. Underpinning this assumption is the idea that that migrant women lack the necessary knowledge and confidence to speak on their own behalf.

The notion of embodied citizenship provides a useful starting point for our analysis because it highlights our embodied existence. It connects with the methodological approach of participatory theatre discussed earlier, particularly because embodied citizenship emphasises the social relations around movement, communication, touch and sensory materiality (Erel et al 2017a). Individuals are able to listen to the kinds of knowledge our body offers. This performative way of articulating their knowledge through theatre helps to place migrant women's subjectivity as political, providing a precondition for enacting citizenship (ibid). In policy terms the state empowers and also erodes citizenship. However, it is our bodies that determine the spaces we can or cannot enter; our gendered and racialized bodies can shed light on who has control (or lack thereof) of public space. Our bodies can similarly determine the type of public and social welfare resources individuals from different groups have access to and the ways they are allowed to access this (Lister 2003). This raises further questions about what shape and form bodies of 'full' or 'good' citizen subject are supposed to take. By understanding the women as embodied subjects of citizenship who draw on their kin-work to establish claims of rights, belonging and participation our analysis can disrupt and problematize normative understanding of citizenship models.

An alternative conception of migrant women associates them as being objects of political control (Lister 2008). This discourse bring to the fore questions concerning migrant women rights and responsibilities in raising 'good citizens' and through their parenting practices and family values, safeguarding cultural and social cohesion. (Erel 2013). According to Lonergan (2015: 124) since 2010 there has been a period of economic austerity that has resulted in a series of cuts to public and welfare spending. Also within this period, successive Coalition and Conservative Governments have had a vested interest in reproducing constructions of the 'good' versus 'bad' citizen. Migrant and racialized mothers are often positioned as the 'bad' citizen. They are regarded as 'undeserving' recipients of social citizenship, and disengaged with citizenship other than to draw on social, health and other public services. In contrast White, and particularly middle class, mothers are positioned as the 'good' citizen. They are regarded as deserving beneficiaries of social citizenship because they contribute to services and engage with citizenship by acting as 'full members' of society. Our analysis, challenges the positionality of migrant mothers as 'bad' citizens. Our findings highlight that migrant women's mothering constitutes engagement with citizenship practices. For instance these women are creating new ways of being citizens by bringing up children who feel that they belong to both British and the mothers' home countries (anonymized). In this sense, therefore, migrant mothers are performing 'acts of citizenship', which challenge hegemonic forms, subjectivities and habits of what it means to be a good citizen (Isin 2008). By taking seriously the ways in which migrant mothers destabilise normative understanding of the public-private boundary, we are able to develop more complex notions of how kin-work constitutes an important element of citizenship engagement.

The mothers in our study expressed awareness of the public anxiety and racial stereotyping concerning their kin-work. As mentioned earlier, public policy has fuelled anxiety about black and migrant families as producing 'feral youths' running wild on the streets; home grown jihadist terrorists, and encouraging the 'wrong type' of integration within ethnic communities that discourages full citizenship and integration into societal norms and values (Erel and Reynolds 2014). This depiction and characterisation of 'problem mothering' who through their deficit kin-work reproduce 'problem citizens' are sometimes explicitly racialized (eg irresponsible black lone-mothers producing rioting youths) but in most cases, they tend to be implicitly racialized (Lewis 2000 and 2004). There was recognition by some mothers that as racialized subjects they would not be seen as British nor would their contribution to British society, through their kin-work, be fully valued.. This created contradictory and conflicting meanings with being associated as British and whether their children should accept or reject claims of British citizenship.

Contradictions around claiming or rejecting a British ethnic label have been explored at length in various studies on migrant communities (c.f. Nandi et al 2015; Phillips 2015). However, at this juncture this feeling of ambivalence concerning ethnic identification must be understood within the broader structural context of racial exclusion, and experiences of racism and racial inequality experienced by migrant communities (Afshar 2012). Outlined below, the mothers describe their direct experience of being racially discriminated against as part of an everyday encounter.

Interviewer: Have you been racially discriminated here [in Britain]?

Judyta: Yes. Yes, many times. It happens to everyone [...] If they hear my English they treat me differently. It happened to me because I am from Eastern Europe. Because they see me as not even as second class citizen.[...] I came to work here, I pay my taxes, and make me feel (showed with a gesture, like she is noone). In services like the HMRC (Her Majesty Revenue and Customs) office they are so rude to me on the phone.

In the above example, Judyta, a migrant mother of Lithuanian background describes examples of encounters with racism. Judyta highlights that one of consequences of having a racialized (i.e Eastern European) identity is that she is ascribed a 'non-citizen' status. Judyta is denied full access to social citizenship despite contributing towards the UK economy through full labour market participation, like many other migrant mothers. Our data indicates that the mothers understood both the overt and the more 'covert', subtle forms of racial discrimination. Judyta's comment '*they are so rude to me on the phone*' reveals the way in which these racist encounters present as everyday racial acts of micro-aggression in the public domain. Rudeness and hostility, at the hands of members of the public (including other minority groups) and when dealing with health and social care professionals was an experience shared by many mothers in our study. The participants in this study expressed feeling routinely denied recognition as equal participants in their encounters with state and other institutions.

The study yielded rich insight into the way that interlocking structures of race, gender, alongside class, move the women's kin-work beyond dichotomized notions of the public (male) and private (female) sphere of the family, challenging

dichotomised gendered roles (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). In the scene entitled 'Where is my food', we explored this gendered dynamic. The theatre facilitator showed a scene developed in previous work with migrant families (<http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/migrant-mothers/participatory-theatre/>), which became the starting point for participants to intervene and change the course of events. The scene is set in the family home and focuses on an argument between the 'wife', who is attending English language classes, and her 'husband' who is challenging her continued attendance of these classes, arguing that she should be looking after the children and him instead. The 'husband' is demanding 'Where is my food?' and the participants take it in turn to step into the scene as the 'wife' to engage with various strategies – including being combative, cajoling, providing reasoned arguments – in order to convince their 'husband' that she should remain in the class. In this Forum Theatre scene, we tested out a range of strategies to bring about the desired outcome, for the 'husband' to agree to the 'wife' attending the English language classes. We were able to observe after each intervention what was happening between the 'husband' and 'wife'. This represented an example of embodied citizenship in action because the dialogue that emerged out of the scenes between the husband and 'wife' brought the migrant mothers into a dynamic communication process, whereby they are able, through performance movement, and improvisation, to create different solutions.

During this scene we also explored conflict and tensions within spousal relationships, arising from the experience of migration to a new country. The difficulties of adapting to a new language environment, navigating the challenges of bringing up children in an unfamiliar environment and also being confronted with difficult access to the

labour market, where many migrants face the devaluation of their skills and work experience from the home country, as well as racism, are all factors setting the context for this scene (Lonergan 2015). Migration requires an adjustment to new ways of doing things, and therefore the work of establishing a stable home life for themselves and their families constitutes one of the important ways in which migrant mothers enable their families and themselves to participate in wider society (Gedalof 2009).

The participants' interventions generated awareness of how the mothers' kin-work might challenge social constructions of work and family as separate spheres by equipping family members, in this scene, the 'husband', with the resources and skills (eg English language skills), to eventually improve the family's education and future career prospects. As a social intervention tool, forum theatre helped the mothers to stimulate their creativity and thinking in contesting the place between public/private and between the oppressed and the oppressor. In particular, this dialogue also generated valuable insight around migrant mothers constituted themselves as citizen subjects through their kin-work. It also legitimated knowledge of these mothers concerning the importance of paid work and unpaid domestic activities in contributing to the family household. Such an analysis is important because their subordinate location in society, at the juncture of their gender, racialized and migrant status, makes them especially vulnerable to their contribution to the family and economy not being recognised as important (Bassell and Akwugo 2017). This scene, we suggest, empowered the mothers by establishing a creative and equalising space for them to reflect on and negotiate patriarchal structures and power relationships that inform

their kin-work and likewise the relationship between kin-work; family and nation state (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

Kinwork and enacting citizenship through intergenerational relationships

Migrant mothers face the challenge of balancing their kin-work within the family alongside their desire to invest time and energy in themselves, in this case, through learning English. In the interventions in the forum theatre scene, participants rehearsed arguments and strategies for claiming this space and right to care for themselves vis-à-vis family members' demands to focus their care on their husbands and children. The challenges around parenting migrant children were an issue that greatly concerned the mothers. Other studies have also investigated this issue. For example, Ryan and Vacchelli's (2013), study explored the use of religious and cultural repertoire with Muslim mothers to parent in a new migratory environment. These repertoires entailed the migrant mothers utilising 'the strong religious values' of Islam to assert parental authority within their family and community spheres and to encourage their children to conform to parental expectations of religious norms. Yet they also utilised their religion as a cultural resource to negotiate cultural shifts needed to live in Western society, to mediate for their children the policing and surveillance of community members and also to challenge, what they saw as gender inequality that arose out of particular cultural practices.

Our study also similarly explored the use of cultural resources with migrant mothers in navigating parenting relationships. Through the participatory theatre scene

performed we are able to deepen analysis by demonstrating the migrant mothers embodied labour in constructing and negotiating the various layers and strategies of belonging. This aspect of the mothers' kin-work, which also operated at the public/private boundary, was explored through the mother-daughter relationship. The scene, introduced by the facilitator, showed the mother and daughter in a migrant community centre (<http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/migrant-mothers/participatory-theatre/>). It highlighted the issue of belonging to neighbourhood and community spaces. Through the scene we explored the various ways migrant mothers and their daughters encounter different relationships in their community setting. They may also view the community spaces differently as a result of inter-generational divisions.

Although the scene was introduced by the theatre facilitator, the participants quickly took ownership of the scene and developed it by giving it their own experiences and meanings. The scene decided on was as follows; the 'daughter' feels bored and wants to leave as quickly as possible. The 'mother' wanted the 'daughter' to take part in an event at the community centre and tries to persuade her to stay. However, both are confronted by criticism from other community members at the community centre. During the scene, the 'community members' comment on the daughters' clothes being 'too tight. They criticise her for not speaking 'our' language and for behaving in a 'rude' manner towards the 'mother'. The scene culminates in the reproach by the 'community members' that the daughter does not respect 'the culture' and that the mother failed to raise the 'daughter' properly. Our analysis suggests that underpinning this concern of the mother for her daughter to remain is the fear of moral judgement from community members. The dominant policy rhetoric of

surveillance, judgements around 'good mothering', is central to this narrative. However, rather than emanating from the state, in this instance, it is the ethnic community which articulates a normative vision of good mothering.

Whilst the 'mother' is aware of this cultural narrative of 'good mothering' she is at the same time in the scene demonstrating a protectiveness of her daughter from the critical community members. During the various interventions into this scene, various participants took the role of 'mother' to engage in differing strategies to try and persuade her 'daughter' to remain at the community centre. This included for example, bribery and incentives (eg the purchase of mobile phone credit or even a new mobile phone), establishing time boundaries for the daughter to remain at the centre – eg spend 1 hour maximum, explaining to the daughter why it matters to the mother to be part of the ethnic community. Other strategies included the 'mother' establishing relationships with the daughters' peers at the centre to motivate her to feel more at ease and therefore engage with her co-ethnics at the centre.

In theatre performance the use of props can provide a central focus to the dramatic constructions of narratives (Kaptani, 2011). During the mother-daughter scene the mobile phone was used as the main prop. It simultaneously acted as a form of protection, as a tool for bribery and site of negotiation. For instance, with regards to offering protection it was used as a 'prop' by the daughter to create a barrier against the criticism directed towards her. During scenes she would take out her phone and start speaking into it or texting, which effectively prevented her from talking to others whilst also providing a useful distraction. The mobile phone similarly acted as a tool for bribery. In this context, the mobile phone as a prop gets enacted in quite

an instrumental and strategic way: to entice daughter to remain at the community setting by incentivising her to get new phone or related apps. Finally the phone operated as a site of negotiation between the mother and daughter. It provided an important prop for 'the mother', acting as a way for her to engage with the daughter by entering her space, bringing mother and daughter together. The phone in this context provided a means through which private intimate and emotional kin-work are performed in public spaces. It provided a way for the mother and daughter to enter into dialogue and negotiation with each other.

During the forum theatre workshop sessions the migrant mothers reflected on the possibilities to positively intervene in scenes to change the course of action. They especially valued the way the theatre scene could be used as tool in their kin-work to foster inter-generational exchange and learning between the mothers and their children:

People give you different ideas: some gave choices to the teenager, others tried to calm them down and said 'Don't worry we'll sort it out', some gave money. I now got ideas about how to challenge [the children's behaviour]. When you have young children, somehow you don't understand it. Normally our people who come from back home and their children grew up here, it is different, but at least we find here how to challenge our children. (Natasza, Somali Muslim mother)

Inter-generational exchange and learning, as a form of kinwork, was regarded as a reciprocal process, with both mother and daughter learning from each other.

Reflecting on her own mothering experience, Judyta, reflects how her daughter has encouraged her to be more tolerant and accepting of other people's cultures and multi-cultural values. But it was her participation in the workshops which allowed her to reflect and gain further understanding of ethnic and cultural differences

[My daughter] is so accepting and now I am accepting of all cultures. And maybe from being [at the workshops], I know things from other cultures and their behaviour or how Muslims are behaving or how anyone is behaving. That's why I became more accepting and I understand them and it's great.

The scene prompted the mothers to reflect on the way their children did not always understand the struggles and hardships they as mothers go through as low status migrants to provide for their family. At the same time the interventions empowered the mothers to make sense of generational and cultural tensions, whilst also valuing the importance of their own economic contribution in sustaining these inter-generational relationships.

The scene brings into sharp focus the way in which these mothers are reframing notions of citizenship. The mothers' contribution to the cultural production of their children denotes a citizenship practice (Erel 2011). Within this context then, the 'kin-work' that goes into cultural production is regarded as an investment in their children's and family's future. Firstly, the mothers are providing a counter-narrative to normative and hegemonic constructions of citizenship where migrant mothers are typically portrayed as endangering the social cohesion of citizenry and their perceived unwillingness to integrate or understand other cultures. The above

quotation reflecting on mothers' experiences during the workshops challenges such a viewpoint. The mothers are engaging with social cohesion by learning about and embracing other migrant and minority ethnic cultures, and then sharing this with other family members. Secondly, the mothers' interaction and participation with other women from differing ethnic and racial backgrounds also encourages them to rework understandings of their own cultural and ethnic heritage. This can result in mothers contesting homogenised and dominant notions of ethnic identity, as suggested by Erel's (2013) earlier work on the relationship between practices of mothering and questions of reproduction of citizenship.

Similarly, the kin-work that goes into sustaining intergenerational relationship is an important element of the cultural production and reproduction of citizenship (Erel et al 2018). During the mother-daughter scene, the participants reflected on how the differing parenting skills performed here could be used to build relationships with their children, particularly as they progressed through teenage years into adulthood. What was very apparent in their constructions of motherhood was the enduring nature of the mother-child bond, in ways that did not exist when describing other intimate relationships, as highlighted by Gamila, a South Asian Muslim mother below:

The children never finish but [spousal] relationships if they are broken they can finish, but with the children can never finish that's why I want to work on the relationship with children. You will always be a mother.

This scene in the community centre also highlighted that the migrant mothers' relationships with other members of the ethnic community cannot be assumed to be supportive. On the contrary, migrant mothers can be called upon to conform to ethnically specific ideals of good mothering. Migrant mothers can at times feel caught between their children's desires and the normative demands of 'good mothering' in specific ethnic community settings. The interventions the participants practiced in the scenes were also designed to improve communication and understanding with their children as well as mediating between their children and other community members. This finding is in contrast with public views of migrant mothers as strongly invested in bringing up their children as part of an ethnic community, while ignoring their children's desire to be part of wider British society (Rhamji 2007).

Conclusion

This paper explores how migrant mothering kin-work challenges private/ public boundaries, giving rise to new conceptions and practices of citizenship. The mothers' kin-work enables them to enact a form of citizenship that takes into account the mothers' social, cultural and economic contribution to British society. It disrupts the dominant narratives and the moral of public debates that emphasise and decide what it means to be a 'good citizen' and who is included or excluded from this category.

The significance of the embodied aspect of citizenship became particularly clear in the ways in which they had to balance conflicting desires and demands of kin-work. The concept of kin-work is central in highlighting how migrant mothers' work of

caring for their families enables them to engage with wider society, e.g. through education and work. Yet, contrary to hegemonic presentations of migrant mothers' embodied citizenship as fixed to the role of victim, the study showed how they engaged with a range of strategies of challenging their oppression along gender, racialized and classed power relations. The study found that migrant women's work of creating a form of belonging within the family and the community is an aspect of creating new understandings of citizenship beyond ethnic boundaries.

Participatory action research approaches of participatory theatre are integral to understanding how migrant mothers negotiate and contest motherhood; also citizenship discourses. Utilising Boal's techniques of forum theatre in the workshops captured the complex and nuanced ways in which these women embody citizenship through their kin-work in the public as well as private domain. We also developed further insight into the more practical day-to-day examples of kin-work that represented acts of embodied citizenship in their everyday lives. By sharing their experiences to make claims, we revealed these mothers situated position as claims making subjects, who are enacting citizenship.

Participatory theatre - specifically forum and playback - operated as successful intervention tool with the mothers because it enabled them to look upon everyday life, raise awareness of collective and shared experiences of common social problems in order to offer a space to rehearse alternative courses of action. It legitimated the knowledge of these mothers, recognising and valuing the importance of their reproductive labour and contributions to the family household and British economy. Such an analysis is important because their subordinate location in

society, at the juncture of their gender, racialized and migrant status, makes them especially vulnerable in British society, where their contribution to the family and economy is not always recognised or valued within mainstream public and policy debates.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ronit Meranda, the film maker on the project; the women that participated in the project and the anonymous referees for their valuable insights and comments on earlier drafts of the article

References:

Afshar, H, 2012 'Secularism, Racism and the Contemporary Politics of Belonging: Muslim Women in the UK' in *Secularism, Racism and the Politics of Belonging*, 33, 3, 165-179

Alber, E and Drotbohm, D, 2016 *Anthropological Perspectives on Care: Work, Kinship, and the Life-Course*, Springer

Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N., 1992, *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle*, London and New York: Routledge.

Aspinall, P and Chinoyua, M, 2016, (eds). *The African Diaspora Population in Britain: Migrant Identities and Experiences*, Springer

Bacchi, C and Beasley, C, 2002, *Citizen Bodies: Is Embodied Citizenship a Contradiction in Terms?* *Critical Social Policy*, 22, 2, 324–52

Boal, A, 1979, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, London: Pluto

Baldassar, L and Merla, L, 2013, *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life*, London: Routledge

Casey Review 2016, A review into opportunity and integration
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration> [last accessed 1 June 2017]

Di Leonardo, M, 1984, *The varieties of ethnic experience: kinship, class and gender among California Italian-Americans*, Cornell University Press

Di Leonardo, M, 1992, *The female world of Christmas and Holidays*
<http://www.anthropology.northwestern.edu/documents/people/TheFemaleWorldofCards.pdf>

Diehl, C, Koenig, M and Ruckdeschel, M, 2009, *Religiosity and Gender Equality: Comparing Natives and Muslim Migrants in Germany*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32, 2, 278–301

Dominelli, L, 2006, *Women and Community Action*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Dossa, P and Coe, C, 2016, *Transnational Aging and Reconfigurations of Kin Work*, Rutgers University Press

Doucet, A, 2009, *Gender Equality and Gender Differences: Parenting, Habitus, and Embodiment (The 2008 Porter Lecture)* <http://www.andreadoucet.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Gender-Equality-and-Gender-Differences.pdf>

Duncombe, J and Marsden, D, 1993, 'Love and Intimacy: The gender division of emotions and emotion work', *Sociology*, 27, 2, 221-241

Dustin and Phillips, 2008, *Whose agenda Is It? Abuses of women and abuses of 'culture' in Britain*, *Ethnicities*, 8, 3, 405-424

Erel, U,; 2013, 'Kurdish migrant mothers in London enacting Citizenship', *Citizenship Studies*, 17 (8): 970-984.

Erel U. 2011. "Reframing migrant mothers as citizens" *Citizenship Studies* 15 (6-7): 695-709

Erel, U. and Reynolds T., 2014, *Black Feminist Theory for Participatory Theatre with Migrant Mothers*, *Feminist Review Special Issue on Black British Feminism*, issue 108 pp 106-111

Erel, U., Reynolds, T. and Kaptani, E., 2018, *Migrant mothers' creative interventions into racialized citizenship*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41 (1): 55-72

Erel, U.; Reynolds, T. and Kaptani, E., 2017a, Participatory theatre for transformative social research, *Qualitative Research* 17.3: 302-312

Erel, U; O'Neill, M; Reynolds, T. and Kaptani, E, 2017b, Crisis upon Crisis: Migrant Families with No Recourse to Public Funds, *Discover Society*, Issue 44

<https://discoversociety.org/2017/05/02/crisis-upon-crisis-migrant-families-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds/> [last accessed 26 January 2018]

Gedalof, I, 2009, Birth, Belonging and Migrant Mothers: Narratives of Reproduction in Feminist Migration Studies, *Feminist Review*, 93, 81– 100

Hill-Collins, P, 1990, *Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Boston: Unwin Hyman

Hill Collins, P, 1994, Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood, in . E. Nakano Glenn, G. Chang, and L. Forcey (eds.) *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*, New York: Routledge, 45-65

Isin, E, 2008, Theorizing Acts of Citizenship, in E.F. Isin and G. M. Nielsen (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship*, London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 15–43.

Kaptani, Erene (2011). "Embodied Methods and Acts of Power", Workshop Presentation at Open University, 23 June 2011

Kershaw, P, 2010, Caregiving for Identity is Political: Implications for Citizenship Theory, *Citizenship Studies*, 14, 4, 395-410.

Kofman, E and Raghuram, P. 2015. *Gendered Migrations and Global Social Reproduction*. London: Palgrave

Kofman, E, 2013, Gendered Labour Migrations in Europe and Emblematic Migratory Figures, *Journal Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39, 4, 579-600

Lewis, G, 2004, *Citizenship: personal lives and social policy*, Bristol, The Policy Press in Association with the Open University

Lewis, G, 2000, 'Race', Gender, Social Welfare: Encounters in a postcolonial society Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lister, R, 2003, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
London: Zed Books, 15-43

Lister, R, 2008, Inclusive Citizenship: Realising the Potential, in E. F. Isin, P. Nyers and B. S. Turner (eds.) *Citizenship between Past and Future*, London, Routledge: 48-60

Lonergan, G, 2015, Migrant women and social reproduction under austerity, *feminist review*, 109, 124–145

Lutz, H, 2016, (ed.) *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, New York: Routledge

Marshall, TH, 1953, *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays*. Cambridge University Press,

Mirza, H, and Reay, D, 2000, 'Spaces and Places of Educational Desire; Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement', *Sociology*, 34, 3, 521-544

Nandi, A and Platt, L, 2015, 'Patterns of minority and majority identification in a multicultural society' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38 (15). 2615-2634. ISSN 0141-9870

O'Neill, M. and Hubbard, P. 2010, 'Walking, Sensing, Belonging: Ethno-mimesis as Performative Praxis', *Visual Studies* 25, 1, 46-58

O'Neill, M, Woods, P and Webster, M, 2004, 'New Arrivals, Participatory Action Research, Imagined Communities and Social Justice', *Journal of Social Justice* 32,1, 75-89.

O'Neill, M, 2017, 'Walking, well-being and community: racialized mothers building cultural citizenship using participatory arts and participatory action research', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* published online 7 June 2017

Pateman, C, 1992, *Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood*

Phillips, T. 2015 'It is time to ditch the term Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)', *Guardian*, 22 May <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/22/black-asian-minority-ethnic-bame-bme-trevor-phillips-racial-minorities>

Phizacklea, A and Wolkowitz, C, 1995, *Homeworking Women: Gender, Racism and Class at Work*, London: Sage

Povinelli, E, 2006, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy and Carnality*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Ramji, H, 2007, 'Dynamics of Religion and Gender Among Young British Muslims', *Sociology* 41:6, 1171–1189.

Reynolds, T. and Umut, E., 2016, 'Migrant Mothers: creative interventions into citizenship', *Open Democracy*, 22 January 2016.

Reynolds, T., 2005. *Caribbean Mothering: Identity and Childrearing in the UK*, London: Tufnell Press

Reynolds, T.' 2003. 'Black to the Community: Black Community Parenting in Britain', *Journal of Community, Work and Family*, (6) 1: 29-41.

Reynolds, T and Zontini, E, 2014 'Transnational Families: Migrant Youths 'Doing' Families across Proximities and Distances', *Families and Relationships Families Relationships and Societies*, 3(2) 251-268

Ryan, L and Vacchelli, E, 2013, 'Mothering Through Islam': Narratives of Religious Identity in London, *Religion and Gender*, 3, 1, 90-107

Stack, C, 1981, *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in the Black Community*, NY: Basic Books

Stack, C and Burton, L, 1994, 'Kinscripts: Reflections on family, generation and culture' in E. Nakano Glenn, G. Chang, and L. Forcey (eds.), *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*, New York: Routledge

Sudbury, J, 1998, *Other Kinds of Dreams: Black Women's Organisations and the Politics of Transformation*. London, Routledge

Walby, S, 1994, 'Is Citizenship Gendered?' *Sociology* 28, 2, 379-395

Warin, P, 2012, 'Non-demand for social rights: A new challenge for social action in France', *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* 20, 1, 41-53

Wheatley, D, 2016, 'Employee satisfaction and use of flexible working arrangements', *Work Employment & Society*, published online before print, 25 April 2016

Yuval-Davis, N, 2011, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*, London: Sage

Zontini, E , 2004, 'Immigrant women in Barcelona', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30, 6, 1113-1144

ⁱ For details of a related and follow on project, '*Participatory Arts and Social Action Research*', with Professor Maggie O'Neill, University of York, and funded by the ESRC and National Centre for Research Methods, please visit the following website <http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar>