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3 **Migrant mothers' creative interventions into racialized citizenship**
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6 **Abstract:**
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8 Racialized migrant mothers are often cast as marginal to theoretical
9 and political debates of citizenship, yet by taking seriously the
10 contributions to cultural and caring citizenship they make, we challenge
11 the racialized boundaries of citizenship. Drawing on theories of
12 enacting citizenship, i.e. challenging hegemonic narratives of who can
13 legitimately claim to contribute to citizenship, we explore migrant
14 women's mothering through participatory theatre methods. Through
15 analysis of participatory action research (PAR) with migrant mothers in
16 London, we emphasise the significance of embodied and affective
17 meanings for challenging racialized citizenship. The theatre methods
18 allow participants to develop collective subjugated knowledges
19 challenging racialized, gendered and classed stratifications of rights,
20 burdens and privileges of caring citizenship. This draws attention to the
21 important role of creativity of the self as an aspect of both cultural and
22 care work for understanding racialized migrant mothers' citizenship.
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43 **Keywords:**
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48 **Introduction**
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50 In January 2016, David Cameron, the former UK Prime Minister, declared, 'We won't
51 let women be second-class citizens. Forcing all migrants to learn English and ending
52 gender segregation will show we're serious about creating One Nation' (The Times
53 18.01.2016). His argument that a large proportion of female migrants, Muslim women
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3 in particular, lacked the English language skills to engage with British values and
4 culture, sparked heated debates, nationally and internationally. Cameron suggested
5 that these women's lack of English skills was a key factor enabling their children's
6 potential radicalization, disengagement from British life and involvement in terrorism.
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8 It is interesting to note how Cameron's analysis adopted the familiar dual trope of
9 Muslim women as on the one hand in need of protection by the British state against
10 their supposedly oppressive patriarchal communities. Yet on the other hand, in their
11 capacity as mothers, Muslim women were portrayed as a threat to social cohesion
12 and the security of the nation. Cameron's article slipped between portraying the
13 women as 'Muslim', South Asian and 'recent migrants', demonstrating how recent
14 discourses of new migration in the UK reproduce contemporary modes of
15 racialization by simultaneously targeting long settled migrant communities, asylum
16 seekers, Muslims, new migrants, and other minority ethnic groups as the 'enemies
17 within and without our borders' (Redclift, 2014: 579). Of course, Cameron's
18 statement has not gone uncontested. One criticism has been the conflation of settled
19 migrants with new migrants, in order to create a potent tool for questioning the ability
20 of migrant and racialized citizens to fully belong and participate in the nation
21 (Reynolds, Erel and Kaptani forthcoming). Another example of contestation was a
22 Twitter campaign by Muslim women photographing themselves with various
23 statements, contesting Cameron's construction of victimised Muslim women who are
24 outsiders to citizenship (#traditionalsubmissive, 2015). Significantly, this counter-
25 discourse underlined Muslim women's contribution to the nation through their paid
26 work as health or education workers or volunteers as well as other professional and
27 cultural skills. One pervasive element of these self-representations is an emphasis on
28 these women's ability to combine all of these citizenly contributions with being
29 mothers.
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3 This controversy is one instance of the contestations of migrant mothers' racialized
4 citizenship. By racialized citizenship we mean cultural and political processes of
5 constructing citizenship which deploy a social constructionist approach to 'race'. This
6 recognises racialization as a political project rooted in colonialism and imperialism
7 drawing on biological and cultural difference and hierarchies. Racial boundaries of
8 citizenship are performed through ideas, practices and institutions that 'have
9 consequences for those who are defined by them, in terms of choices, opportunities
10 and resources' (Kibria et al 2014:4). Racialized migrant mothers are often viewed as
11 transmitting traditional, ethnically specific values and cultural resources to their
12 children. This has prompted researchers and policy makers to debate the ways in
13 which migrant mothers' cultural orientation aids or hinders their children's integration
14 into the UK (Ganga 2007; Gedalof 2009; Henry 2007; Hinsliff 2002; Tsolidis 2001).
15 Yet, we suggest that another research question is more productive: to what extent do
16 the contributions migrant women make through their mothering practices reframe our
17 understandings of citizenship? Our approach does not aim to legitimize an
18 alternative 'mothering pathway' for migrants to be granted state recognition as useful
19 citizens. Instead, we suggest that an understanding of citizenship which takes
20 migrant mothers' practices as a starting point can critique the ways in which both
21 state and everyday cultures are producing racialized, limited notions of citizenship
22 and thereby distorting the representation of migrant mothers.
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46 Our analysis begins by looking at how migrant mothers are enacting citizenship (Isin,
47 2008), with a review of how migrant mothers' cultural and caring work can be framed
48 as a citizenship practice. By doing so, we challenge and rupture hegemonic
49 narratives of racialized citizenship. Drawing on this theoretical approach we show
50 how migrant mothers assert citizenship and fill it with social meaning. We also
51 explore participatory theatre methods' potential to highlight such acts of citizenship.
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3 We demonstrate through the use of participatory theatre methods how racialized and
4 gendered citizenship is embodied and enacted. A central argument in this is that
5 research needs to pay more attention to the interrelationship between cultural
6 citizenship, creativity of the self and care as a citizenship practice.
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18 ***Mothering and Racialized Citizenship***
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Citizenship involves contradictory processes encompassing inclusionary processes of redistribution of resources, as well as exclusionary processes of boundary making. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion are legally regulated through citizenship and naturalisation policies and immigration regimes. However, in everyday life, as well as in political and legal arenas, these criteria are subject to contestations (Turner 2008). While citizenship is often understood as mainly about formal rights and duties, here we explore its wider sociological meanings. Through the concept of 'enacting citizenship' (Isin 2008) which foregrounds transformative and creative acts of citizenship - rather than the status or habitus of existing citizenship practices - we focus our analysis on the potential of acts to rupture given definitions of the political community and narratives of citizenship.

Migrant women's citizenship practices are realized on multiple scales: from the intimate sphere of family and friends, to the local, the national, transnational and the supra-national (Erel 2011). In all of these sites migrant women are at once subject to regulations and take part in struggles over recognition, rights and entitlements. The nation-state continues to be an important actor in allowing migrant women's access to the territory and regulating legal, social and political rights (Lonergan 2015). Racialized migrant women, in particular, are often denied recognition as legitimate

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3 members of the society they live in. Their belonging to the nations of residence is
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5 seen as tenuous, and their social positioning as racialized, gendered 'Other' mean
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7 that they are cast as 'incompetent citizens' with inadequate cultural capital and
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9 relegated to low skilled, low paid jobs with minimum legal protection (Reynolds, Erel
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11 and Kaptani, forthcoming).

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13 While feminist debates regarding the ethics of care (e.g. Tronto 1995) acknowledge
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15 that unpaid care in the home should be seen as a citizenship practice, it is oftentimes
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17 undervalued, despite its constitutive contribution to social welfare. Migrant mothers
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19 who transgress national and racialized boundaries are symbolically positioned as
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21 potentially polluting the reproduction of the nation (Ahmed 2004; Lentin 2003; Tyler
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23 2010). Indeed, racialized migrant women, as bearers of a culture of origin, are often
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25 constructed in policy and public debates as hindering their children's integration
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27 (e.g. Henry 2007; Hinsliff 2002). Yet, empirical research shows that migrant women's
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29 mothering practices actively and sometimes creatively intertwine change and the
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31 transmission of tradition (Ganga 2007; Gedalof 2009; Tsolidis 2001). This is often
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33 part of migrant mothers' strategies to help their children's social and cultural mobility
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35 in the new country of residence (McLaren and Dyck 2004) while trying to help their
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37 children to develop strategies to cope with and address racism (Erel and Reynolds
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39 2014, Reynolds 2005). This involves culture work, that is migrant women engage
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41 with social and cultural practices of the country in which they live, as well as the
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43 countries they come from, to form and transform their own and their children's ethnic
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45 and cultural identifications. Another component is that they select specific cultural
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47 forms and resources to transmit to their children, re-constructing notions of family,
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49 sometimes across ethnic and transnational boundaries (Erel 2009, Erel 2011a,
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51 Reynolds and Zontini 2014). Furthermore, mothers' negotiate with their children and
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53 significant others about the meanings and ethnic and racialized inflections of these
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55 cultural practices (Erel 2009; Reynolds, Erel and Kaptani forthcoming). This culture
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3 work is not simply a reconstitution of ethnically specific cultural resources in a new
4 context. Instead, migrant mothers engage in negotiations over the meanings of
5 specific cultural forms, and they create new cultural forms for doing intergenerational
6 and care work (cf. Kofman and Raghuram 2015). In a context where the cultural
7 practices of racialized mothers are devalued, their mothering and care work that
8 enables them to resist racism gains a political dimension of an act of citizenship (Hill-
9 Collins 1990; Kershaw 2010). On one hand, this culture work of mothering is political
10 as it challenges racist institutions and practices, on the other hand, it is part of
11 racialized migrant women's rights claims of cultural citizenship involving 'a right to full
12 cultural participation and undistorted representation' (Pakulski 1997, 83). While
13 culture is often equated to ethnic identity, it is important to go beyond such
14 reductionism and conceptualise cultural citizenship as anchored in a recognition of
15 the potential creativity of the self, an example of this is our participatory theatre work
16 with a group of migrant mothers.
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40 **Creative Methods for Enacting Citizenship**

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42 This article draws from our project using participatory theatre methods with a group
43 of twenty migrant mothers , which took place in London, U.K over a period of seven
44 months (February-August 2014). We began with a series of eight weekly three hour-
45 long theatre workshops, using techniques of Playback (Fox, 1994) and Forum
46 Theatre, as part of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1976). The sessions of
47 'Playback' theatre on which we focus here, involved the participants sharing their
48 stories, which are then acted out by professional actors. According to Kaptani and
49 Yuval-Davis 2008, the performance taking place in the theatre allows participants to
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3 see themselves and their interactions with others in a way that creates more reflexive
4 distance than is possible in everyday life. Playback requires a relationship of trust
5 and reciprocity of sharing experiences. It produces meaning by building a triangular
6 conversation between actors, individual tellers and the group of participants.
7 Narratives of individual tellers often relate to each other, elaborating on a particular
8 theme, perhaps refining particular themes, perhaps showcasing alternative or
9 contradicting experiences (ibid). In terms of forum theatre, the framework and set of
10 techniques is based on the principles of collective empowerment and emancipation.
11 Boal termed the participating audience member *spect-actor*, for they are not merely
12 spectators or actors but practicing elements of both roles simultaneously. In a series
13 of workshops participants construct dramatic scenes of their choice and then show
14 them to the other participants, who intervene by taking the place of the protagonist
15 and suggesting better strategies for changing the course of action. When participants
16 intervene in the scene to change the course of action, forum theatre becomes not
17 only a critical site of negotiation, but a site of active citizenship, collective mobilisation
18 and empowerment by migrant women experiencing marginalisation and inequalities
19 in UK society. In particular, in our study participatory theatre created a collective
20 space allowing for the creativity of self, challenging narrow representations of migrant
21 mothers (Erel, Reynolds and Kaptani, forthcoming). In this sense then the workshops
22 constituted acts of cultural citizenship where mothers claimed a 'right to full cultural
23 participation and undistorted representation (Pakulski 1997: 83).
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49 A snowballing technique was employed to recruit our participants through the
50 networks of a health organization, and included mothers from diverse ethnic and
51 racial backgrounds, including Polish, Congolese, Somali, Turkish, Kurdish,
52 Lithuanian mothers. The participants were not a pre-existing group, though some
53 knew each other previously. The theatre workshops therefore presented the mothers
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3 with the opportunity to meet others from different ethnic backgrounds and with a
4 range of migration experiences. Indeed, the participants' migration trajectories
5 included family migrants, refugees and labour migrants. As researchers, we were
6 also positioned within the social realities of racialized citizenship. The research team
7 all hold higher educational degrees and are employed by universities, which
8 positioned us as advantaged in social class and educational terms. However, we also
9 shared some experiences and characteristics with the research participants. We are
10 all mothers of young children, two of us are migrants (European migrants from both
11 Greece and Turkish from Germany) and do not hold British citizenship. The third
12 member of the research team is second generation Black-British, the offspring of
13 Caribbean migrant parents. We have experienced racialization and positioning as
14 migrant Other in varying degrees and contexts and these differentiated personal
15 experiences were useful in some instances, such as providing interpreting skills
16 during the workshops and establishing rapport. Yet, we suggest that it was not simply
17 our social location, but also our political values (Yuval-Davis 2011) and a broadly
18 conceived research question 'What is it like to be a migrant mother in London' which
19 allowed the theatre workshops to function not simply as another incitement to migrant
20 women to prove their 'usefulness' to British society, but to explore their own desires
21 for social transformation.

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Scenes from the workshops and the performance at the end of project conference
can be accessed on the project website
(<http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/migrant-mothers/participatory-theatre/>). The
theatre workshops were followed up by individual interviews to probe the
methodological process and substantive issues that arose during the workshops.
Data from all of these methods are analysed in later sections of the article.

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3 It is important to highlight here the connections between methodology and theory. As
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5 noted above, the project draws on theories of enacting citizenship to explore how
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7 migrant mothers challenge hegemonic narratives of who counts as legitimately
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9 belonging to the nation. These theories have been used to look at migrants' struggles
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11 to claim rights and constitute themselves as political subjects, through unexpected
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13 public political acts (e.g. Nyers 2008). By bringing in a methodology that embraces
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15 principles of participatory action research (PAR), the project further elaborates these
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17 theories on the basis of the principles of producing shared knowledge with the
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19 participants; valuing all voices; producing and exchanging new knowledge which is
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21 interventionist. In this sense, the project sought to 'develop purposeful knowledge
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23 leading to social change' (O'Neill and Webster 2005; also Erel, Reynolds and Kaptani
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25 forthcoming). The participatory theatre methods address the question of how migrant
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27 mothers make rights claims and how they rupture ideas of who can constitute a
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29 legitimate citizen.
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34 Working with a participatory theatre researcher/ arts therapist, we encouraged the
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36 migrant mothers to perform with their bodies and voices particular scenes which are
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38 meaningful in their experience of caring and cultural citizenship. The theatre
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40 processes of sharing, being allowed to 'mess about' through communication beyond
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42 writing and speaking starkly contrasted the practice of this research with the
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44 institutional practices of exclusion. The participants' everyday experiences of their
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46 gendered, racialised bodies entering institutions and public spaces where they were
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48 ignored or 'not welcomed' were thematized. The creative ways in which the
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50 participants used participatory theatre constituted an enactment of citizenship: they
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52 were ready to improvise, and find 'solutions'; their bodies were active and not 'docile
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54 or dependent' (as mainstream discourses portray them) bridging among different
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56 conflictual parties, and making rights claims. Drawing on Boal's principles of the
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3 theatre of the oppressed, we understand these performative enactments not only as
4 an artistic expression of their experiences but also as 'rehearsals' for enacting
5 change in the social world. In this sense, the methodology aims to grasp the problem
6 that migrant mothers' caring and cultural work is often conceptualized as private,
7 individualised and not political because it engages with mundane, repetitive everyday
8 activities. Yet, we argue that making the meanings, conflicts and acts of resistance
9 inherent in these mothering practices visible and an object of collective reflection and
10 knowledge, in itself constitutes an act of citizenship and speaks to contemporary
11 methodological concerns of engaging social life by connecting artistic, lay and
12 sociological ways of knowing (Puwar and Sharma 2012). The value of creative
13 methods and the collaboration with a theatre practitioner lies in the way that artistic
14 'representations of migrants' lived experiences can be transformative, providing
15 recognition, voice, ... such 'border crossings' can enrich our theoretical work' (O'Neill
16 and Hubbard 2010:48). The theatre methods allowed us to engage migrant mothers
17 in the production of knowledge on their own practices of mothering, reframing these
18 as activist interventions into citizenship and validating their own experiences, as well
19 as challenging the denigration of their caring and cultural citizenship, as will be
20 elaborated below. Through their performance and engagement with forum theatre, it
21 importantly allowed the migrant mothers to enter into a dialogue with other
22 academics and practitioners about their lived experiences (see also Erel, Reynolds
23 and Kaptani forthcoming). The mothers were all working class, often reliant on social
24 welfare benefits. Almost all lacked recognized educational qualifications and often
25 had limited English language competences. This meant that in their encounters with
26 educational and health professionals, they were often positioned as passive objects
27 of knowledge. By training them in theatre skills and facilitating the development of
28 reflexive, shared knowledges as a group, these mothers were enabled to bring their
29 views and experiences into a more equal dialogue with academics and practitioners
30 (see next section). This performative way of articulating their knowledge through
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3 theatre helped to place their subjectivity as political. This provided a meaningful
4 challenge to other public narratives of migrant mothers as 'outsiders', both oppressed
5 and potentially a threat to social cohesion. In particular, these methods have helped
6 to challenge the assertion that fluency in English is a necessary precondition for
7 migrant women's social participation and belonging, as expounded by Cameron in
8 the opening section of the article. Indeed, by using methods beyond language, we
9 are able to explore how migrant mothers are claiming and practicing belonging in the
10 everyday cultures they co-create, and despite hostile institutional climate. By using
11 images, gestures and physical performances, participants showed their creative skills
12 of enacting everyday practices of caring and culture work. The improvisation required
13 them to adapt to fast changing scenes, so they came up with new ideas and
14 enactments to create coherent meanings in each scene. The theatre methods
15 allowed the migrant mothers to build a community and articulate to each other their
16 subjugated knowledges, and it is their embodied practices of care, both in the home
17 and beyond as well as their embodied labour which constructs forms of belonging
18 and function as a basis for rights claiming. These processes question the assumption
19 that English language should normatively function as a precondition for claiming and
20 enacting citizenship. In the following section we present some of our findings.

Subjects of citizenship: developing shared knowledges

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45 The theatre workshops were an occasion for collective storytelling and interventions
46 and sociality, which is particularly significant as migrant mothers often suffer from
47 social isolation. The workshops opened up the possibility for the mothers to
48 experience themselves as active agents creatively involved in research, which is
49 enjoyable. This counteracts the prevalent representation of migrants as either
50 constituting a problem or having problems.
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3 The participants spoke of appreciating the performance based methods because
4 they were able to take the role of 'director', allowing them to become involved
5 differently in the research process, instead of only verbalizing their experiences to a
6 researcher during an interview (Kaptani and Yuval-Davis 2009). In this project, many
7 of the participants did not have the linguistic or cultural capital to fluently articulate
8 their experiences in English. Many did not have command of the correct grammar or
9 vocabulary. Their lack of fluency put them in a position whereby it was difficult for
10 them to claim narrative authority through the spoken word. Indeed, as Mandy, one of
11 the few fluent English speakers remarked when reflecting on a theatre scene where a
12 migrant mother was unable to access health services due to her lack of English
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26 the women become 'just stuck for words ... like things were caging in
27 and she was stuck- trapped... sometimes you know, this happens
28 when you can't fight back in the same language and you become
29 paralysed'.
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37 The important role of language in constructing or restricting women's authority to
38 voice their stories, experiences and knowledges became very evident when a small
39 group of participants joined a research seminar where we showed clips of the theatre
40 scenes. While they appreciated the opportunity to be part of the seminar, they were
41 reluctant to speak up and did not themselves raise topics for discussion. However, as
42 part of the discussion, one of the participants, Melek, articulated her dissatisfaction of
43 the usual format of meetings and research projects, which was based only around
44 'talk, talk, talk' and did not give any room for 'action'. Furthermore, for many migrants,
45 including our participants, the situation of being interviewed itself is associated with
46 specific situations under the disciplining gaze of a professional, who had the power to
47 make far reaching decisions over their lives. Thus, interview situations were often
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3 associated with the migration process, in particular for those who had sought asylum,
4 interactions with job centre or social security staff, assessment procedures and job
5 interviews (Kaptani and Yuval-Davis 2008). This is one further way in which the
6 centrality accorded to English language fluency as a precondition for full citizenship
7 needs to be questioned. Rather than viewing English language as a competence
8 enabling full participation as citizens, in these instances, assessments of migrants'
9 English language skills become a vehicle for surveillance and exclusion from
10 participation. In light of this, performative research methods, which involved the body
11 and gave participants situational authority over their own stories and expressions
12 were an important aspect of enabling them to claim representation of their own
13 experiences and lives.
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28 These participatory theatre methods shed light on how the migrant mothers' identities
29 and positionalities are constructed as performative acts (Kaptani and Yuval Davis
30 2008).The performance creates a liminal .space where everyday norms are
31 suspended, the familiar is de-familiarized and multiple realities can emerge, allowing
32 research participants to re-appropriate their narratives (Kaptani 2011). Participatory
33 theatre has a transformative potential as performances offer a multiplicity of meaning
34 and interpretation they contribute to the emergence of new ways of seeing and doing
35 things. Aida reflecting on the workshops, suggested that her lack of confidence in her
36 English meant she was initially hesitant to share her experience.
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47 Still I try to do my best and I don't even mind to share my story with
48 other communities because I feel like, because I [had been] suffering
49 in silence. That day, when I start[ed] talking [...] I feel like I can talk
50 [...] above my silence, sharing ideas with other people so I feel like
51 free- [...] relieved . But I [had] suffer[ed] in silence for so many years, I
52 never share[d] my story with other people- not even my people, my
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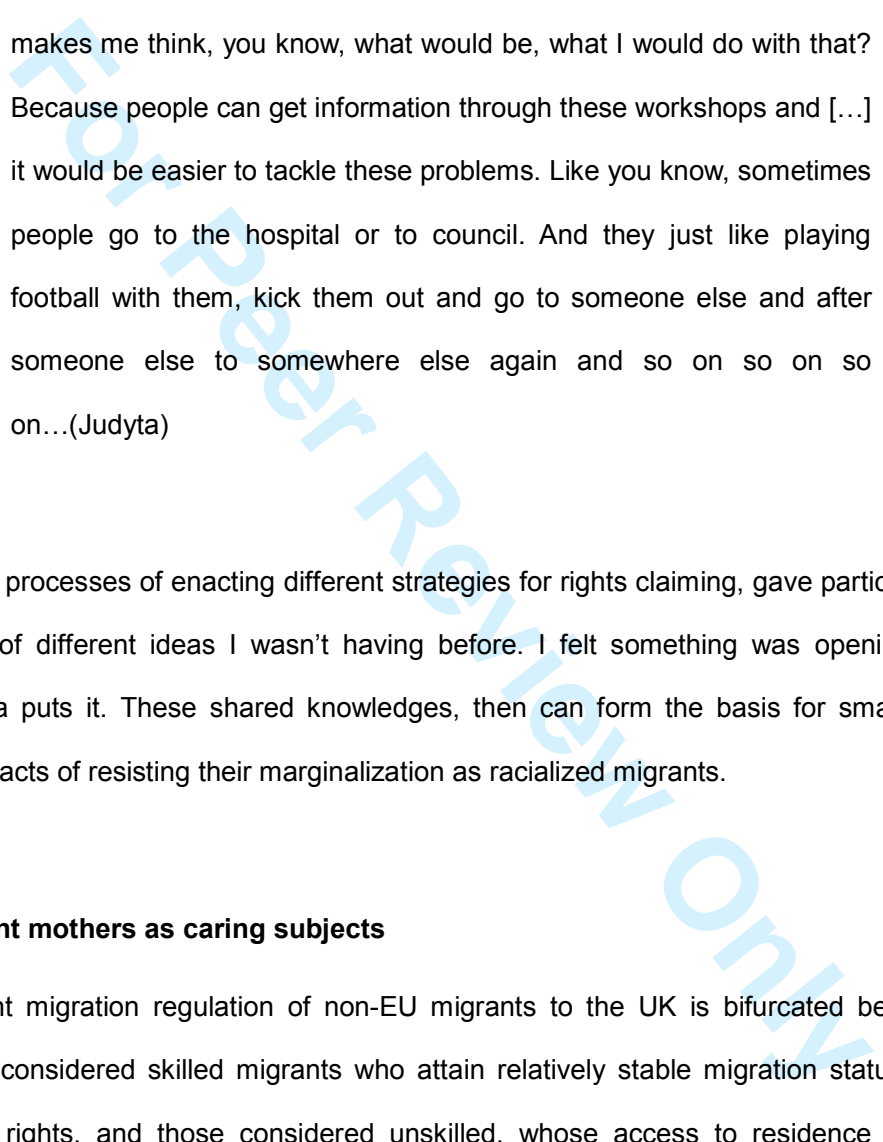
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3 close parents- that day was my first ever to share my story with other
4 different set of people. I feel so happy. I don't mind because [...] if I
5 talk my story, someone suffer[ing] in silence like me, they might
6 decide to share their story with others, as well. They might [gain]
7 confidence
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16 Working together over a period of two months, the participants got to know each
17 other, and developed shared knowledges. The participatory theatre was an
18 opportunity to share experiences with other mothers to develop solutions. For
19 example, the women chose scenes, where they were denied access to services, be it
20 at the doctor's surgery, at the job centre or in the hospital. The participatory theatre
21 scenes around the topic of accessing services were found to be helpful as rehearsing
22 how to assert their rights to enact citizenship. As Aida reflects:
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31 [I] said 'stop that' [...] because the way [the receptionist denying the
32 patient access to the doctor] was speaking [...] was completely wrong.
33 Then [...] I said to myself 'I have to do something- why [am] I [just]
34 sit[ting] here?' because I feel myself confident and then I have to say
35 'do this one - this is not right'. And I have to [claim] my right. If it's not
36 right, I have to [claim] my right
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46 We saw the women using theatre exercises to challenge the surgery receptionist or
47 the job centre officer as they were putting into practice policies denying them access
48 to services. Even where racialized migrant women are entitled to access services, in
49 practice they are often unable to claim these rights and substantiate their citizenship
50 as they lack the power, linguistic and cultural capital to contest the behaviour of
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3 gatekeepers (cf. Lonergan 2015). The theatre scenes encouraged them to come on
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5 the 'stage' one after another to try out different tactics to claim their rights.
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8 It was wonderful. Like put yourself in the situation, what happened,
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10 because it's not everyone, you know, have the same experience. And
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12 for example if I haven't got experience in their particular situation, it
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14 makes me think, you know, what would be, what I would do with that?
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16 Because people can get information through these workshops and [...] 
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18 it would be easier to tackle these problems. Like you know, sometimes
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20 people go to the hospital or to council. And they just like playing
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22 football with them, kick them out and go to someone else and after
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24 someone else to somewhere else again and so on so on so
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26 on...(Judyta)
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31 These processes of enacting different strategies for rights claiming, gave participants
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33 'a lot of different ideas I wasn't having before. I felt something was opening' as
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35 Gamila puts it. These shared knowledges, then can form the basis for small and
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37 larger acts of resisting their marginalization as racialized migrants.
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42 **Migrant mothers as caring subjects**

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44 Current migration regulation of non-EU migrants to the UK is bifurcated between
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46 those considered skilled migrants who attain relatively stable migration status and
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48 social rights, and those considered unskilled, whose access to residence rights,
49
50 social citizenship and family rights is limited (Piper 2008). Those who are considered
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52 unskilled migrants, find employment particularly in jobs that involve care for the
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54 elderly, sick and children, domestic work, sex work (Kofman and Raghuram 2015).
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56 These jobs - both in formal and informal labour markets - are increasingly becoming
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3 the domain of migrants, particularly migrant women. Through this type of paid work,
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5 migrant women become pivotal for the social reproduction of their countries of
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7 residence, 'maintaining and reproducing people, specifically the labouring population,
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9 and their labour power on a daily and generational basis' (Bezanson and Luxton
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11 2006:3). Despite their central social function, these jobs are underpaid and require
12
13 long working hours. In addition many of the migrants in these jobs are undocumented
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15 or have insecure migration status. Furthermore, the informal nature of much of this
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17 employment, especially in private households, means that even where migrants have
18
19 a right to reside and work in the UK, they may not be able to access work-related
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21 benefits or prove their labour market participation for the purposes of gaining a
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23 secure residence status.
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28 While the unequal distribution of social and emotional costs of social reproduction
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30 has been highlighted for transnational families, in the context of migrant mothers with
31
32 co-resident children, racialized, classed hierarchies also lead to unequal
33
34 opportunities for migrant mothers' performing caring citizenship. One of the mothers,
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36 Judyta, migrated from Lithuania to London in 2004. This migration was motivated by
37
38 her desire to flee her husband's domestic violence against herself and her son, as
39
40 well as a wider culture of sexism, which exposed her to sexual harassment in the
41
42 workplace and saw her struggling to find employment after the birth of her son.
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44 Initially she arrived by herself to try and find accommodation and employment, and
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46 after three months brought her son to join her. She remembers this initial period as
47
48 'horrible'. As a recent migrant she managed to access only informal jobs in
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50 restaurants, with low pay and long hours. As she worked twelve to fourteen hours a
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52 day, she was not able to give her son and older daughter the time and attention she
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54 would have liked to. This for her was epitomized in the situation where she was not
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56 able to accompany and help settle her son at school in London. Her son arrived
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3 without speaking any English and was scared to go to school by himself. Judyta
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5 came forward in the Playback session and shared her story:
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8 What most hurt me, and to this day I remember this story, on his second day,
9
10 he was bending his knee and kissing my hands, asked me "Please, please, I
11
12 don't want to go to school! Please, please, mum!" he said. And I had to say
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14 "Sorry, I have to go to work, because [at] this time I was working really, really
15
16 hard (...) this one really hurts me a lot.
17

18 The facilitator and Judyta decided to ask the actors to play back the moment of
19
20 separation. The four actors each embodied and acted out Judyta's feelings: one
21
22 actor reluctantly pushed her son to go to school, while another expressed her wish to
23
24 calm and reassure her son, wishing she could go with him on this difficult first day. A
25
26 third actor was torn in a different direction, feeling pressured by economic necessity,
27
28 he kept repeating 'I have to go to work, I have to go to work', while the fourth actor
29
30 bent down to be eye level with the son and, showing the pain she was feeling,
31
32 expressed her wish that it could be another way. Finally asking her son, and implicitly
33
34 her own self, to trust that things would work out
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36 (<http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/migrant-mothers/participatory-theatre/> see
37
38 'First Days in London' clip).
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43 This intense emotional moment was played out in front of Judyta and the group as an
44
45 exemplary moment of mothering in migration. The actors' performance gave shape to
46
47 Judyta's amorphous feelings of having to fulfil both roles of economic provider and
48
49 emotional care giver, under very precarious conditions and with no state or personal
50
51 support system in place as a new migrant. This experience, while common to many
52
53 migrant mothers, is at once highly personal and rarely shared. By bringing this
54
55 experience to the group, Judyta challenged the privatisation of the emotional costs of
56
57 establishing economic security for a migrant family. She participated in what
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3 Baraitser (2009) conceptualises as mothers 'making things public', that is bringing to
4 a shared, public space her experience of mothering. Drawing attention to and making
5 public the effects of migration regimes in creating and heightening racialized and
6 classed privileges of care, Judyta's story creatively challenges the invisibility of
7 migrant mothers' subjectivity and thus constitutes an intervention into cultural
8 citizenship. By sharing her experience with the group, she creatively contributed to
9 new stories, subjectivities and conflicts to become part of a public narrative repertoire
10 formulating a new conscience of racialized injustices of care. While the inner conflicts
11 of mothers participating in paid work have become a part of Western narrative
12 repertoires, these narratives often focus on normative forms of femininity marked by
13 class and educational privileges, often implicitly constructed as a white national. On
14 the other hand, contemporary public culture is saturated with the expectation that
15 especially poor and migrant subjects need to prove their ability to economically
16 provide for their families, in order to qualify as respectable citizens (Erel, 2011b,
17 Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). The Playback of Judyta's story, by articulating a subjectivity
18 and the affective dimensions of her class specific racialized citizenship, claims
19 emotional and cultural recognition for migrant women's experiences and conflicts
20 around mothering, in this sense enacting cultural citizenship. We suggest that the
21 creativity of the self Judyta enacts by expressing her experiences and conflicts of
22 care, mothering and work becomes an act of cultural citizenship. This is because she
23 is articulating her experience as an injustice over the classed and racialized
24 distribution of the right and resources to care.
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56 **Caring and reproductive work: A day in my life**
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3 When the theatre facilitator asked what everyday life was like as a migrant mother in
4 London. Zarin, a refugee from Somalia responded, (with the help of her friends'
5 translation into English),
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9 'I get up at six o'clock, after that I have a shower. I have breakfast.
10 After that I go to work. After that I come back home, I clean my house'.
11
12 At this point, Zarin laughs and her friend interjects that 'at home, Zarin
13 cannot relax, because she has so many responsibilities'. Zarin's day is
14 filled with 'hard work, hard work'. Her paid work is in childcare. In the
15 evenings, not only does she continue her reproductive work in her
16 own home by cleaning and cooking, she also looks after her
17 grandchildren while her daughter attends college. Despite all this hard
18 work, Zarin smiles, seeing this perhaps as her best way of coping with
19 the never-ending work of reproduction.
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30 The actors played back this scene by showing the physical contortions of engaging in
31 caring and reproductive work: their bodies were bent under the weight of cleaning,
32 looking after others, while they had to stretch their arms out and jump to reach far in
33 the hope of catching a tiny bit of 'time for myself'. The bodies burdened by this caring
34 and reproductive work, were by the end of the day slumped, drained and empty.
35 Zarin's gesture, to laugh and smile as a way of coping with this overwork was shown
36 by the actors' final gesture: abruptly changing their exhausted facial expressions,
37 they jump and symbolically push up the edge of their mouths into a smile. The smile,
38 as a way of coping is as much an outcome of willpower and effort as it is a gesture of
39 defiance.
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53 The never-ending labour of reproduction has given way to notions of feminine,
54 circular time, often contrasted with linear time in which a normative, male subject
55 unencumbered by caring responsibilities, develops agency, while the repetitiveness
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3 of women's domestic and care work has been seen as impeding agency. Yet, such
4 an approach actively misrecognizes the important function of creating stable, liveable
5 lives that this reproductive work entails (Felski, 2000). Women's close association
6 with, and responsibilities for childbearing and rearing, as well as reproductive labour
7 through cleaning, cooking, caring for others, have been important factors in denying
8 them full citizenship. These tasks of social reproduction have at once been
9 considered women's responsibility and contribution to citizenship, while at the same
10 time binding women to the domain of the private, which has traditionally been
11 conceptualised as the opposite of the public domain of citizenly engagement
12 (Pateman, 1992; Lister, 2003).
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26 Thus, homemaking and migrant women's reproductive work are contradictory: at
27 once riven with the tension of privileges and oppressions, yet also potentially
28 allowing for women's creative interventions into these very power relations. So, while
29 feminist authors on one hand emphasise the gendered power relations involved in
30 making a home, it is also important to acknowledge that care and reproductive work
31 can entail moments of resistance and creativity (Gedalof 2009). This has been
32 emphasised in particular with relation to racialized working class women's efforts to
33 care for their families (Erel 2009, Hill Collins 1991, hooks 1991, Reynolds 2003). The
34 playback scene reflecting Zarin's story, underlines the emotional costs of gendered,
35 classed and racialized power relations inscribed in immigration regimes.
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50 Zarin's experience shows the multi-layered and complex ways in which her caring
51 work is constitutive of the social. Through her paid work in childcare, she enables the
52 parents of the children she is working for to participate in paid employment, often
53 seen as the key responsibility of neoliberal citizens. In her unpaid caring work, by
54 cleaning and caring for her own family, she enables their reproduction. When she
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3 cares for her grandchildren in the evenings, she enables her adult daughter to
4 participate in further education, in an attempt to further her skills, qualifications and
5 choices in the labour market. So, Zarin's invisible caring and reproductive labour is
6 not only part of her own citizenship practices as contributing economically to the
7 society she lives in, it is also a constitutive factor for enabling the economic
8 contribution of others: the parents of the children she cares for and her daughter.
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18 The analysis of these two Playback scenes highlights the usefulness of participatory
19 theatre methods for attending to the embodied and emotional aspects of migrant
20 women's lives. Judyta's story showed a unique and particularly dramatic moment in
21 her migration experience, crystallizing the challenges for migrant women who are
22 incorporated in the labour market in low skill, low pay jobs, often informally, requiring
23 long hours. This, in turn does not leave her with the time and energy to care for her
24 own family. Indeed, 'time to care' (Knijn and Kremer 1997) then becomes not a right
25 for all, but a privilege for those with secure citizenship status and stable incomes.
26 Zarin's story relates not to the extraordinary, but recounts the place of care and
27 reproduction as contextualized with gendered, racialized and classed power relations
28 in everyday life. In contrast to Judyta's story, it highlights how care for others,
29 whether in paid work or unpaid care in the familial sphere, leaves no time to care for
30 herself. It is in this sense that it reminds us of the importance not only of time to care,
31 but also 'a right not to care' (Finch quoted in Tronto 2012, 33), which is stratified
32 according gender, class, race and citizenship status. Taken together, both Playback
33 scenes underline the complex ways in which migrant mothers' care is at once an
34 aspect of their citizenship contribution, and at the same time representative of their
35 status as racialized and gendered citizens who cannot claim the right to choose the
36 time to care or refuse the incitement to care for others. In this way, both Playback
37 scenes draw our attention to different situations of unjust distribution of resources,
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3 opportunities and choices of care.
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8 Methodologically, this shows how the narratives produced by Playback Theatre
9 highlight some important generative themes. In this case it is the way in which a right
10 to choose to care for one's family members, and also the resources to care for
11 oneself are not accessible to many working class racialized migrant mothers who are
12 incorporated into low paid sectors of the labour market, often in reproductive
13 spheres. The narratives in Playback are personal as the narrator talks about her own
14 experiences, taking her lived life as a starting point to develop knowledge. Yet,
15 Playback theatre creates a space where these personal, individual experiences can
16 cross over into a shared, collective embodied conversation. As an individual teller
17 shares her experiences with the group and the actors, they create a public which is
18 supportive of their voices being heard (Plummer 2001). This public, in turn helps the
19 teller to make sense of her experiences. In particular, the actors' embodiment and
20 performance of the story allows the teller to validate her own experiences and
21 encourages participants to make meaning of their lived experiences. It is in this
22 context that forms of collective 'subjugated knowledges' (Foucault 1980, 81) can
23 emerge which challenge hegemonic narratives of rights and citizenship. These
24 narratives are part of a creative intervention into citizenship, disrupting migrant
25 mothers' distorted representation and in this sense is an enactment of their cultural
26 citizenship.
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52 **Conclusion**
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3 Racialized migrant mothers in the UK are constructed in contemporary political and
4 public debate as marginal, they are expected to prove their ability to belong by
5 conforming to neoliberal ideals of the good citizen, involving especially their ability to
6 contribute through paid work and to integrate themselves and their children into
7 'British values'. They are seen, in David Cameron's words as in need of being
8 'forced' into citizenship (The Times, 18.01.2016). It is against this backdrop that we
9 argue for a recognition of migrant mothers as challenging hegemonic notions of good
10 citizenship. We argue that they enact citizenship through their cultural work and their
11 caring work, both within their families and in wider society. This has been shown in
12 particular through our research project mobilising participatory theatre methods to
13 enable their creative interventions into citizenship. Participatory creative methods are
14 particularly apt to allow migrant mothers to express the complex dilemmas of
15 racialized, classed and gendered power relations as articulated in the right to choose
16 to care for family and also care for themselves. We highlight the emotional costs of
17 migrant women's relegation to low paid jobs in the reproductive sector and the
18 repercussions this has for their constitution as caring and cultural subjects. Drawing
19 on the theoretical and methodological resources of enacting citizenship, brings to the
20 fore racialized migrant mothers' potential to contest, through their creative
21 participation in research, these injustices and contribute to the creation of alternative
22 subjugated knowledges. These subjugated knowledges may not easily translate into
23 verbal discourse, therefore we suggest the visual and the performative movements
24 as moments of enactment are an important area for further study that can enhance
25 researchers and participants' ability to challenge racialized hierarchies of citizenship.
26 We argue that the concept of cultural citizenship, with its emphasis on the political
27 and contested nature of cultural identities and practices, should be brought into
28 dialogue with care as a citizenship practice. Embodied experiences and conflicts of
29 care can be expressed through creative methods. These creative methods have a
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3 potential to highlight the injustices of rights, burdens, and privileges of care, and the
4 ways in which this group of women challenges racialized boundaries of citizenship.
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