CITIZENSHIP, GENDER AND DIVERSITY

LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe

Citizenship, Care and Choice

Edited by Ana Cristina Santos

OPEN ACCESS

palgrave
macmillan

Citizenship, Gender and Diversity

Series Editors
Sevil Sümer
Norwegian University of Science and
Technology (NTNU)
Trondheim, Norway

Nicky Le Feuvre
LACCUS - ISS
Lausanne University
Lausanne, Switzerland

Line Nyhagen
Department of Social Sciences
Loughborough University
LOUGHBOROUGH, UK

This series publishes groundbreaking work on a broad range of topics relating to citizenship, gender and diversity. It promotes a feminist definition of citizenship, encompassing issues of equal rights, recognition and belonging in various socio-economic, cultural and political arenas. We welcome submissions from scholars around the globe, working on these topics from a range of theoretical and empirical perspectives, particularly with an international, cross-national, or comparative focus. Rooted in the former EU-project FEMCIT: Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe, this well-established series promotes an intersectional and multidimensional approach to studies of gendered citizenship and diverse claims of contemporary women's movements.

Ana Cristina Santos
Editor

LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe

Citizenship, Care and Choice

palgrave
macmillan

Editor
Ana Cristina Santos
Centre for Social Studies
University of Coimbra (CES-UC)
Coimbra, Portugal

ISSN 2947-8081 ISSN 2947-809X (electronic)
ISBN 978-3-031-13507-1 ISBN 978-3-031-13508-8 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8

Cover illustration: © miakievy / GettyImages

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

Every book is a journey. The journey that resulted in this book included times of calm waters and others of rough seas and involved a variety of skilled sailors, my accomplices, colleagues and dearest friends, who I wish to acknowledge, even if I already know I will inevitably fail in this endeavour. But what could be queerer than embracing the very same failure that sustains us?

It is with Jack Halberstam's praise of failure in mind that I will proceed by thanking, first and foremost, the team of researchers, my colleagues Ana Lúcia Santos, Beatrice Gusmano, Luciana Moreira, Mafalda Esteves, Pablo Pérez Navarro and Tatiana Motterle, for being dedicated, engaging and unique. We proceeded at different paces, as life took many turns after we started the INTIMATE project in 2014. We were in this together from the beginning, believing in the urgency of occupying this space of critical thinking around citizenship, care and choice from the queer-feminist perspective of engaged academics interested in Southern Europe. It was such a great privilege to work with and learn from each of you.

Most heartfelt thanks to Hélia Santos and Mafalda Esteves, brilliant project managers who I am lucky to count as friends. Mafalda went above and beyond in all of the support required for this book to see the light of day whilst remaining a most reliable rock when difficulties emerged—your great professionalism, warm generosity and pragmatic wisdom will stay with me forever.

The INTIMATE project from which the book results received funding from the European Research Council at a point when this was still a rare accomplishment in Portuguese academia. This funding was awarded under

the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ ERC Grant Agreement "INTIMATE – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe" [338452]. I am deeply grateful for that recognition which made possible what had just been distant dreams in the past.

One of these dreams recently enacted was the creation of the Sexualities Research Group at the Centre for Social Studies (GPS CES-UC), which in 2022 gathered over 20 researchers and PhD students focused on the study of sexuality and gender diversity. Another dream come true was the Monsters Summer School, successfully organized for the first time in 2018 and postponed in 2020 due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19. GPS and the Monsters Summer School are perfect examples of why I take pride in having the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, as my academic home. I am truly grateful to CES-UC for offering the rich intellectual environment in which to develop cutting-edge ideas that are still miles away from the priorities of mainstream entrepreneurial universities and policies. In CES-UC I found not only a group of bright students, distinguished colleagues and good friends but also a remarkable dedication from staff. A special word of gigantic gratitude to Acácio Machado, Inês Lima and Maria José Carvalho from the CES North | South Library; to Alexandra Pereira, Ana Caldeira, Inês Costa and Pedro Dias da Silva from the Events Support Office; to Pedro Abreu, Alberto Pereira and André Queda from the IT Office; to António Casca and Isabel Fernandes from the Financial Office; to Ana Sofia Veloso and Joaquim Veríssimo from the Publications Office; and to Hélia Santos and João Neto from the Research Support Office.

Over the years, my work also benefited hugely from the generous intellectual and political engagement from colleagues, some of whom participated in the International Advisory Group of the INTIMATE research project. For their vital contributions and lasting inspiration in academia and beyond, I thank in particular Alice Azevedo, Ana Luísa Amaral, Andrew King, António Fernando Cascais, Brigitte Vasallo, Chiara Bertone, Christian Klesse, Daniel Cardoso, Eduarda Ferreira, Elia AG Arfini, Gracia Trujillo, Isabel Crowhurst, Jack Halberstam, Jacqui Gabb, João Manuel de Oliveira, Judit Takács, Liana Borghi, Lucas Platero, Lynne Segal, Róisín Ryan-Flood, Sasha Roseneil, Tone Hellesund, Ulrika Dahl, Yvette Taylor and Zowie Davy. In late 2021 we received the terrible news of Liana's passing. Her absence can only be relieved by the beauty of her

mind and the strength of her words in the multiple conversations Liana shared with those of us who were lucky to meet her.

Some work came into this process at particularly crucial moments in time. The anonymous and incredibly fascinating interviewees in Portugal, Spain and Italy, who shared their life stories with us and without whom the research and this book would not have been possible. The authors who went this extra mile and put their minds and bodies into the writing of these chapters. Gustavo Elpes who prepared this manuscript with great efficiency, assisting with the final editing and bibliographic work whilst at the same time taking pleasure in the readings. Dave Tucker who led all of the work regarding translation and proofreading, juggling between multiple writing styles and themes with competence, enthusiasm and curiosity. The editorial support from Palgrave was fundamental, and I appreciated the patience and kindness of Nina Guttapalle and Bernadette Deelen-Mans. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful scientific exchanges with colleagues Maria Amelia Viteri and Diego Sempol, during invited stays at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Ecuador) and the Universidad de la Republica (Montevideo, Uruguay), respectively, as well as the role of PhD students who offered as volunteers in the INTIMATE conferences and related events, providing invaluable assistance with the logistics.

According to the biographic narrative interpretive method (BNIM), which many of the authors in this book have used in the INTIMATE country-based studies, the last thing that is mentioned in any interview is necessarily one of the most significant. These acknowledgements will end with an unavoidably short mention of the most skilled sailors I have met, who are my deepest core and with whom life is brighter and full of promise: my parents Angela and Joaquim (rocks), my daughter Simone (wonder), my partner Mara (ocean) and my friends (joy). You know who you are, my handful of stardust.

Praise for *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*

"Ana Cristina Santos has edited a splendid volume assembling chapters based on the work of the INTIMATE project. The result is a superb and comprehensive resource on citizenship, care and choice, providing insights into topics ranging from the recognition of bisexual citizenship to the maturing of monstrous citizenship, and from insurgent parenting practices to queer transfeminist materialism, which I wholeheartedly recommend to scholars and others interested in LGBTQ+ intimacies in Southern Europe and elsewhere."

—Judit Takács, Research Professor, *Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Budapest, Hungary*

"This is a timely and cutting-edge contribution to a distinct European tradition of queer studies and a critical intersectional interrogation of queer livability and resistance under neoliberal austerity in Southern Europe. Grounded in qualitative research, this must-read collection advances social theory, offering fresh perspectives on citizenship, choice and care as crucial dimensions of intimacy. Highlighting the challenges and promises of complex entanglement of power and affect, it also boldly dares to imagine queer intimate futurities otherwise."

—Ulrika Dahl, *Professor in Gender Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden*

"This is a truly outstanding collection of innovative and critical essays that explore pressing issues in contemporary intimacies in Southern Europe. The volume attests to the creativity and courage of queer and trans* lives in the region, foregrounding the significance of intimacy, friendship, and care networks beyond legally recognised or biologically defined structures of kinship."

—Christian Klesse, author of *The Spectre of Promiscuity*

"A fascinating edited collection that adds much needed empirical, conceptual and theoretical work on the relationships between care, intimacy, choice and LGBTQ+ people. The collection highlights how LGBTQ+ people's experiences can provide insights into the ways national gender and sexual regimes are negotiated, reproduced and contested in everyday life. This is a great addition for academics and students that explore issues of gender, sexuality, citizenship and intimacy."

—Carl Bonner-Thompson, *Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Brighton, UK*

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Elia A. G. Arfini is a junior assistant professor with the Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Milan, where he teaches sociology of culture, and is a founding member of CRAAAZI—Transfeminist Autonomous Research Centre and Archive "Alessandro Zjino" (Bologna). His research focuses on gender studies and queer theories, with particular attention to trans experiences, and on consumer cultures in the food sector. His publications include articles in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Lambda Nordica*, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Journal of Gender Studies*, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, *Studi Culturali* and *Transgender Studies Quarterly*.

Chiara Bertone is Associate Professor of Sociology of Culture at the University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy, where she teaches sociology of the family and gender studies. Her main interests lie in gender, sexuality and family change. She has worked on sexual citizenship, non-heterosexual experiences and family relations, heterosexuality and masculinity, medicalizing and healthist frames on sexuality. She is a former coordinator of the ESA Sexuality Research Network. Among her publications, she is author of the volume *Le omosessualità* (2009) and co-editor of *Queerying Families of Origin* (2014) and *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities* (2020).

Zowie Davy is Associate Professor of LGBTQ Research at the Centre for LGBTQ Research, De Montfort University. Zowie's work centres on medicolegal constructions of gender and sexuality in healthcare. Her research spans (trans) gender studies including critical approaches to gender

dysphoria and parents' experiences whilst supporting their trans children at school and with physicians. Zowie has published numerous books and articles about transgender embodiment, and her book *Recognizing Transsexuals* won the Philip Abrams Memorial Prize in 2012. Zowie's most recent book is *Sex/Gender and Self-Determination: Policy Developments in Law, Health and Pedagogical Contexts.*

João Manuel de Oliveira is an associate visiting professor and integrated researcher at ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. With a PhD in Social Psychology, João's research and publications encompass feminist theory, queer theory, gender studies, heteronorm and homonormativity.

Mafalda Esteves is a junior researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC) where she has been working on critical approaches to gender and sexualities. With an MA in Psychosocial Intervention and Research (University of Barcelona), she is now developing a PhD thesis on "Invisible Sexualities: Intimate Citizenship and Psychosocial Wellbeing Regarding Bisexuality in Portugal" (ISCTE-IUL). Her research interests include critical approaches to social psychology, LGBTQIA+ activism, participatory approaches to childhood and sexual health in non-heterosexual women. Since early 2021 she has also been responsible for hosting the bi-monthly meetings of the Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group at ILGA-Portugal.

Beatrice Gusmano is a sociologist who deals with LGBTQA intimacies, consent, friendship, the ethics of care, qualitative methodologies and the deconstruction of romantic love within a feminist frame. Her latest research dealt with the rights and claims of domestic workers' movements in an intersectional perspective.

Luciana Moreira is a PhD student in Human Rights in Contemporary Societies at Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC). She is graduated in Portuguese Studies and holds post-graduation degrees in Postcolonialisms (Camões Institute/University of Bologna) and Literary and Cultural Studies (Faculty of Humanities of the University of Coimbra). Between 2014 and 2019, she was a research fellow in the project "INTIMATE – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe", funded by the European Research Council. Her main research interests are cultural studies, queer theories, gender, feminist studies, human rights and postcolonial studies.

Tatiana Motterle holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Padova (Italy). She worked as a research assistant in the European-funded project "Citizens in Diversity". She then worked as a post-doc researcher in the project "INTIMATE – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe" (2014–2019), funded by the European Research Council and based at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) in Coimbra (Portugal). In the last years, she worked as a project manager in the project "Não é Não" for UMAR, a feminist Portuguese NGO, and she has been collaborating with Italian universities.

Pablo Pérez Navarro holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of La Laguna (Spain), with a thesis about performativity in Judith Butler's work. He is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC) and a visiting professor of Queer and LGBTI Studies—Gender and Sexualities at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG—Brazil). His publications and research interests are focused on coalitional politics of gender and sexual dissidence, queer bioethics and the biopolitics of public order. Between 2022 and 2025, he is leading the research project "[TRIALOGUES]—Emergent Biopolitics of Kinship, Gender and Reproduction" (H2020-MSCA-IF-2019, n. 894643), funded by the European Commission and developed at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and at CES-UC.

Ana Cristina Santos is a sociologist and Principal Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC). She coordinated several national and international research projects on LGBTQI+, dissident embodiment and intimate citizenship, including two European Research Council awards. Most recently she is leading research about LGBTQI+ issues across the life course, with a focus on ageing. At CES-UC she is co-Director of the PhD Programme Human Rights in Contemporary Societies and Chair of the Democracy, Justice and Human Rights Thematic Line. In 2021, she was elected member of the Executive Committee of the European Sociological Association. Her most recent books are *The SAGE Handbook of Global Sexualities* (2020, co-ed) and *The Tenacity of the Couple-Norm* (2020, co-authored).

Ana Lúcia Santos holds a degree in Philosophy, as well as an MA and a PhD degree in Feminist Studies from the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Coimbra. Her PhD dissertation was focused on gender policies (trans and intersex) in sports. She is a junior researcher at Centre for

Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), since 2012, where she worked on research projects related to disability, LGBTQI+ intimate citizenship and life course inequalities. Her research interests focus on feminist studies, queer theory, crip theory and posthumanism.

CHAPTER 1

Citizenship, Care and Choice: LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe—An Introduction

Ana Cristina Santos

This book is about intimacies as an overarching frame encompassing personal attachments and relational well-being and including all sorts of bonds that are meaningful to humans. In 1998, Lauren Berlant edited a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* dedicated to intimacy. In the introduction to the volume, Berlant eloquently directs the reader towards a set of expectations around intimate bonds, noting how intimacy "involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way (…) set within zones of familiarity and comfort: friendship, the couple, and the family form, animated by expressive and emancipating kinds of love" (1998, p. 281). In the same piece, Berlant also explores another fact about intimacy: "the unavoidable troubles, the distractions and disruptions that make things turn out in unpredicted scenarios" (1998, p. 281). In this book, familiarity and comfort is as present as trouble and disruption, but the common

A. C. Santos (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal
e-mail: cristina@ces.uc.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_1

thread will remain the focus on meaningful, intimate relations involving LGBTQ+ people in rapidly changing sociopolitical and legal contexts. This focus is informed both theoretically and politically. Let me start with the theory.

In sociology, intimacy has been defined as "the quality of close connection between people and the process of building this quality. Although there may be no universal definition, intimate relationships are a type of personal relationships that are subjectively experienced and may also be socially recognized as close" (Jamieson, 2011, p. 1). Lynn Jamieson proceeds to explain that "[i]ntimacy as a concept complements rather than supplants terms which seek to categorise types of personal relationships such as family, friends and kin and overlaps with other concepts seeking to capture the quality of relationships and the processes that bind people together, like love" (Jamieson, 2011, p. 2). Despite this and other honourable exceptions that take into account the significant sociocultural transformations affecting intimacy in recent decades, the canon of sociological literature about practices of intimacy has remained focused on the heterosexual, monogamous and reproductive couple (Roseneil et al., 2020). The persistent dismissal of intimate bonds that escape cisheteronormative confinements inspired the decision to bring together a number of scholars working on LGBTQ+ intimacies—particularly on partnering, parenting and friendship—with a particular interest in issues of citizenship, care and choice.

The starting point for this book was INTIMATE,[1] a large research project funded by the European Research Council which I coordinated between 2014 and 2019 at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra. INTIMATE explored the lived experiences and sociopolitical contexts of LGBTQ+ people, with a particular interest in Southern Europe and, more specifically, in Portugal, Spain and Italy. The choice of countries can be partially explained by the existing sociological and social policy literature that constructs Southern Europe as a geopolitical context in which the particularities of welfare regimes and "gender regimes" (Walby, 2001) highlight distinctive features in relation to other European countries (Ferrera, 2005; Trifiletti, 1999). Southern Europe has often been presented as patriarchal, catholic, conservative and familistic (Ferrera,

[1] Funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement "INTIMATE—Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe" [338452].

2005; Flaquer, 2000), which reinforces a homogenizing image of these countries. Also in the sphere of care and public services, Southern European countries are described as having a strong "welfare society" (Sousa Santos, 1993) in contrast with the low provision of the welfare state, a feature stemming from their semi-peripheral position within the world-system.

Regardless of certain similarities, this somewhat generalized image of Southern European countries risks reproducing a stereotype, without properly interrogating it. In fact, sociological literature about this region often disregards important differences between countries, running the risk of contributing to a homogenous, albeit precarious imagination of "the other". Conscious of these risks, INTIMATE comparatively explored the common as well as the distinctive features of Italy, Portugal and Spain regarding LGBTQ+ intimacies.

When preparing the application to submit to the European Research Council, I was convinced that Southern European countries offered valuable, though historically overlooked, knowledge regarding intimate citizenship. To further develop this argument, I considered the different historical, legal and political context of LGBTQ+ rights in each country, and, together with a team of five researchers, we conducted in-depth fieldwork on both micro (biographical) and macro (socio-legal) levels, focusing on three main types of intimate bonds: partnering, parenting and friendship. Partnering, parenting and friendship were selected as analytical dimensions for the study because of their significance in the construction of intimate biographies across a range of identities, backgrounds and geographic locations. I argued that partnering, parenting and friendship constitute three different, although potentially interlinked, angles, from which the idea of a "pure relationship" (Giddens, 1992) that characterizes contemporary personal relationships can be tested. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive but present reciprocal possibilities and implications, intersecting with local and supranational cultural, legal and social policy frameworks. Taking partnering, parenting and friendship as our point of departure, I intended to ask: how do intimate biographies of LGBTQ+ people in Southern Europe shed light on different national gender regimes? How do existing laws and policies in each country play out in terms of the opportunities and constraints affecting LGBTQ+ relationships? How can politics and practices of intimacy in everyday life contribute to new ways of conceiving fair and comprehensive laws and policies, as well as inclusive cultural representations of sexual diversity? What lessons

can be drawn from Southern European countries in terms of achieving formal equality? Needless to say, many of these questions remain unanswered, but they retain their precious value as ongoing driving forces for scholarly work and political practice.

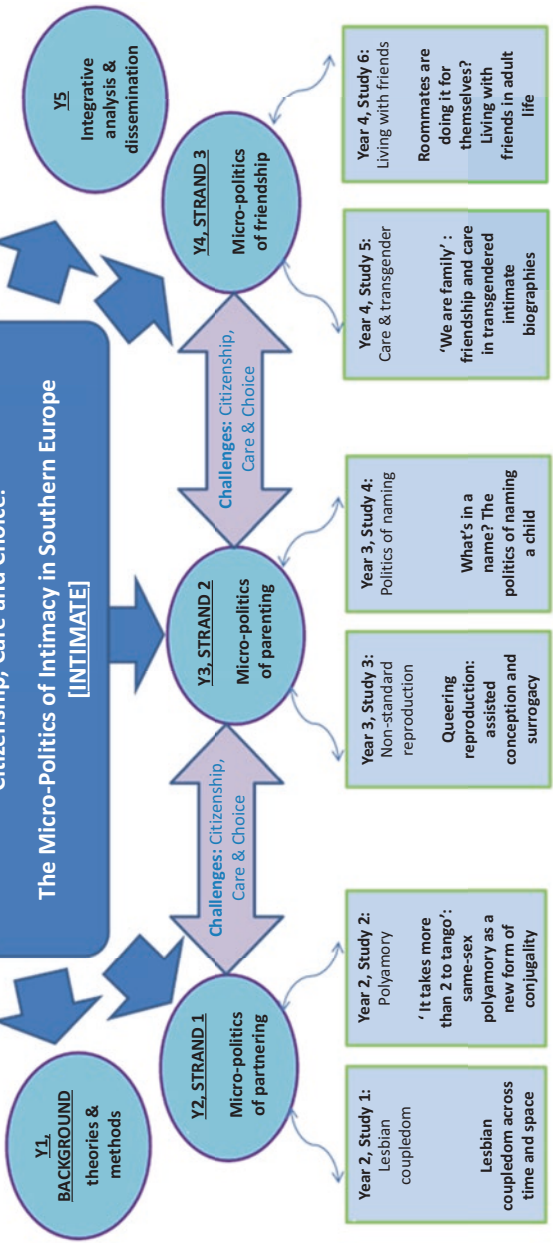
Overall, the INTIMATE research team conducted over 90 biographic narrative interviews and developed six cross-national, qualitative case studies focusing on topics as diverse as lesbian coupledom, consensual non-monogamies, surrogacy and assisted reproduction, naming a child, cohabiting with friends and trans networks of care. The following scheme summarizes the research design:

Stemming from the findings of INTIMATE, three major international conferences gathering hundreds of delegates from across the globe were organized: "Queering Partnering", "Queering Parenting" and "Queering Friendship", in 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively. The book draws on some of the work presented during those conferences and brings together the team of researchers but also colleagues who generously agreed to become consultants in our International Advisory Group.

INTIMATE was submitted for funding in 2012, almost a decade ago. This book benefits from the passing of time, enabling a socio-historical overview of the most important transformations in the realm of citizenship, care and choice in the light of intimate citizenship. When the study started, in 2014, the situation of LGBTQ+ intimate relationships ranged from full legal recognition in Spain to a total absence of rights in Italy, with Portugal positioned between these two poles. At the time of arrival, in 2022, some sociocultural, legal and political features have changed, whilst others remain apparently impenetrable.

Academic knowledge has also advanced during this time. Our theoretical framework has evolved, and empirical studies have offered fundamental material to move beyond the theoretical dispute between intimate and sexual citizenship (Plummer, 2003; Richardson, 2018), in order to advance productive ways in which these and other perspectives on citizenship can—and should—contribute to the politics and practices of intimacy in everyday life. And this is where the politically informed decision to focus on LGBTQ+ intimacies becomes central.

The book evolves around the interlinked notions and practices of citizenship, care and choice. These are, in my view, constitutive elements of doing intimacy, that is, the daily management of becoming, being or remaining intimate with others. Going back to Ken Plummer, when a few years ago we were invited speakers at the same event, I was struck by his


Citizenship, Care and Choice:
The Micro-Politics of Intimacy in Southern Europe
[INTIMATE]
Y1, BACKGROUND theories & methods
Y2, STRAND 1 Micro-politics of partnering
Y3, STRAND 2 Micro-politics of parenting
Y4, STRAND 3 Micro-politics of friendship
Y5 Integrative analysis & dissemination
Challenges: Citizenship, Care & Choice
Challenges: Citizenship, Care & Choice
Year 2, Study 1: Lesbian coupledom
Lesbian coupledom across time and space
Year 2, Study 2: Polyamory
'It takes more than 2 to tango': same-sex polyamory as a new form of conjugality
Year 3, Study 3: Non-standard reproduction
Queering reproduction: assisted conception and surrogacy
Year 3, Study 4: Politics of naming
What's in a name? The politics of naming a child
Year 4, Study 5: Care & transgender
'We are family': friendship and care in transgendered intimate biographies
Year 4, Study 6: Living with friends
Roommates are doing it for themselves? Living with friends in adult life

confession that he was actually never interested in law and that intimate citizenship was never about juridical texts because "rights on their own are not enough" (Plummer, 2018). In a recent book co-authored with Sasha Roseneil, Isabel Crowhurst, Tone Hellesund and Mariya Stoilova, *The Tenacity of the Couple-Norm*, we suggested "expanding the study of intimate citizenship beyond the formal, the legal and the rational, to encompass the affective realm of love, attachment, desire and belonging" (Roseneil et al., 2020, p. 19). My vision for this book draws heavily on that call.

Bringing our embodied experience to the centre of our analytical concerns remains an important political step that prevents difference from becoming portrayed as atomized exceptions, isolated accidents and residual collateral damage. In other words, as we have learned from feminist disability studies, it is never about someone's inability to fit in—it is always about the context's inability to undo the constraining boundaries with which it operates on a political, legal and sociocultural level.

Outline of the Book

Overall, the book is guided by the fundamental sociological question of how change takes place and, concomitantly, how the practices and expectations of individuals in the sphere of intimacy are adjusted to and/or shaped by the existing legal and social policy framework. Despite the geographical focus on Southern Europe, the book engages with reference literature mostly produced in the UK and the US and further considers significant developments in other parts of the world. More specifically, connections have been made with Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries, especially Brazil, due to language proximity and other historical reciprocal influences in LGBTQ+ culture and experiences.

The book argues for the importance of considering LGBTQ+ intimacies in Southern Europe as a gateway to three intersecting themes that will guide the different chapters in the book: citizenship, care and choice. Each of these themes has inspired a section of the book with its own set of concerns. Rather than self-contained categories, the themes are to be seen as intersecting one another as well as in dialogue with cut-across issues regarding partnering, parenting and friendship. In each section, attentive readers will notice a balance between more empirically based chapters and chapters which are mostly theoretically driven. In the end, hopefully, the 11 chapters in the book will contribute to rethinking and remaking

citizenship, care and choice through the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Southern Europe.

Section I: Citizenship Matters

The women's movement and other movements for sexual equality have been at the forefront of symbolic battles that have finally advanced the notion that the personal is indeed political (Giddens, 1992). Through the demands of social movements as well as supranational institutions, national states are increasingly expected to recognize rights that counter discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Cooper, 1994; Santos, 2012; Stychin, 2001; Stychin & Herman, 2000). Gradually the notion of citizenship is being pushed and stretched to include demands that had been previously left out (Plummer, 2003; Roseneil, 2010). Post-structuralist contributions to citizenship theory—namely, Young's (1990) notion of group differentiated citizenship and Kymlica's (1995) notion of multicultural citizenship—have advanced the understanding of citizenship as highly contingent, fragmented and dynamic. Today it is argued that citizenship can be understood both as "an academic and political concept and as lived experience" (Lister et al., 2007, p. 1). In such a context, it seems important to consider the mutual implications of intimacy and citizenship, exploring the extent to which issues of partnering, parenting and friendship are important aspects of being/becoming recognized as citizens. Given this challenge, the aim in this section is to move beyond the theoretical dispute between intimate and sexual citizenship (Plummer, 2003; Richardson, 2018), in order to advance reciprocal ways in which these and other perspectives on citizenship can—and should—contribute to the politics and practices of intimacy in everyday life. Therefore, this first section is focused on citizenship, namely, political practices of undoing and remaking that resist normative ways of being an intimate citizen.

The potential of queer as an action toolkit for surviving oppression in Spain, Portugal and Brazil is the main focus of João Manuel de Oliveira's contribution which places collective strategies of resistance in the public space at the centre of the analysis. Mafalda Esteves draws on the recent history of bisexual activism in Portugal to examine how relational recognition and related demands have remained excluded from the experiences of self-identified bisexual citizens. Pablo Pérez Navarro's chapter investigates ways in which friendship can offer important political and conceptual inputs to ongoing discussions about relationality and public order with a

particular focus on Spain and Portugal. Finally, in the last chapter of this section, I suggest that the nonconforming body can become a site for rethinking citizenship from the perspective of monstrosity as an embodied epistemology.

Section II: Care Matters

Care can mean "to watch over, look after or assist in practical ways as well as to feel attachment and fondness" (Jamieson, 1998, p. 10). Care emerged as a topic for theoretical concern in the late 1970s (Land, 1978), and in the 1980s feminist literature started to draw attention to the emotional costs of care provision (Glendinning, 1989). Since then, feminist literature has successfully established that care is indeed gendered, to the extent that women are often expected to be the main providers (Finch & Groves, 1983; Lister et al., 2007; Portugal, 1998). A more recent aspect in the study of care is the focus on vulnerability (Koivunen et al., 2018; Vaittinen, 2015) and on inter-dependence (Fine & Glendinning, 2005) as a fundamentally politicized concepts, which are relevant for theory, politics and policies around care.

In Southern European countries, the importance of a strong "welfare society" that compensates for the shortcomings of state provision has been identified (Sousa Santos, 1993), but little has been said about the cis-heteronormative underpinnings of care provision in Southern Europe and elsewhere. Nevertheless, against the backdrop of heteronormative law and social policy (Carabine, 2004), there is a range of care practices which are particularly crucial in a context of economic crisis, when the welfare state fails to provide adequate support. A significant example, yet understudied in the context of southern European countries despite relevant and recent exceptions (Pieri, 2020; Pieri & Brilhante, 2022; Santos, 2020), is the role of friends as well as non-standard families and informal networks in providing care when formal provision reveals to be insufficient or inadequate.

This section puts care practices and health at the centre of the analysis, by looking at care practices experienced by those who live outside the heterosexual, nuclear family unit in Southern Europe. The aim in this section is twofold. On one hand, it consists of *studying care practices that mainstream sociological theory and social policy overlooks*, and, on the other hand, it examines the *social impact of framing policies around care without taking into account non-heteronormative care practices* and their significance in the politics and practices of intimacy in everyday life.

The first two chapters in this section draw on experiences of caring for others, suggesting new ways of increasing safety and well-being through counter-practices of partnering, parenting and caring. Drawing on empirically based studies conducted in the Italian context, Tatiana Motterle investigates daily practices of support, within and around the law, focusing in particular on the experiences of lesbian couples, trans* people and gay fathers through surrogacy. Luciana Moreira's chapter draws on biographical accounts of lesbian and bisexual mothers and of trans people whose parents were part of their care networks, to explore how alternative globalization and subaltern cosmopolitanism have been used in parenting practices in Spain. Chiara Bertone's chapter takes biomedical power as a powerful symbolic toolkit influencing both the frame and success of demands around the recognition of same-sex families. The last chapter in this section, by Beatrice Gusmano, investigates care from the point of view of relational networks of emotional and material support that are particularly significant in contexts of increasing precariousness.

Section III: Choice Matters

This last section of the book sits at the intersection of intimacy and choice, by gathering contributions that consider the centrality of friends who (we choose to) become part of our most intimate circle of trust.

LGBTQ+ people have been identified as pioneers in creating a new model for relationships that is less anchored in conventions and roles than in pleasure and self-determination (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Castells, 1997; Giddens, 1992; Roseneil, 2005, 2010). Giddens' notion of a "pure relationship" (Giddens, 1992) captures this idea, rendering modern intimacy freer from constraining, and perhaps meaningless, obligations. This is how the notion of "families of choice" (Weeks et al., 2001) came to make such an important contribution to gender and sexuality studies. Informed by this line of thought, in this research we want to *assess the ways in which everyday practices of friendship contribute to the debate on choice and self-determination as a fundamental human right.*

The chapters included in this final section place friendship at the centre of intimate choices that have an impact on the self and others. Ana Lúcia Santos takes her study about cohabiting with friends in adult life in Portugal as her point of departure to suggest a connection between intimacy, cohabitation and what she suggests framing as the "heterotopic citizenship" when precariousness and lack of formal recognition of queer

bonds are features cohabitants share. In her chapter, Zowie Davy investigates a central topic regarding friendship and choice that is still absent from research in Southern European countries—the role of friends who proactively choose to provide valuable peer-support to gender-diverse children in the school context. Finally, combining a genealogical perspective on Italian feminisms and social movement analysis, Elia A.G. Arfini reflects on the emergence and current state of queer transfeminist movements in Italy, highlighting their contribution to the theorization of post-traditional intimacies and materialist analysis of gender (as) labour.

References

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). Individualization. Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences. .

Berlant, L. (1998). Intimacy: A Special Issue. *Critical Inquiry, 24*(2) Intimacy (Winter, 1998). https://www.jstor.org/stable/i257793, 281–288.

Carabine, J. (Ed.). (2004). *Sexualities: Personal lives and social policy.* Open University Press.

Castells, M. (1997). *The power of identity.* Blackwell.

Cooper, D. (1994). *Sexing the city.* Rivers Oram.

Ferrera, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Welfare state reform in Southern Europe: Fighting poverty and social exclusion in Italy, Spain*. Routledge.

Finch, J., & Groves, D. (Eds.). (1983). *A labour of love: Women, work and caring.* Routledge.

Fine, M., & Glendinning, C. (2005). Dependence, independence or interdependence? Revisiting the concepts of 'care' and 'dependency'. *Ageing & Society, 25*(4), 601–621.

Flaquer, L. (2000). *Las políticas familiares en una perspectiva comparada.* Fundación La Caixa.

Giddens, A. (1992). *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love & eroticism in modern societies.* Polity Press.

Glendinning, C. (1989). The costs of informal care: Looking inside the household. Her Majesty's Stationery Office:

Jamieson, L. (1998). *Intimacy: Personal relationships in modern societies.* Polity Press.

Jamieson, L. (2011). Intimacy as a concept: Explaining social change in the context of globalisation or another form of ethnocentricism? *Sociological Research Online, 16*(4), 151–163.

Koivunen, A., Kyrölä, K., & Ryberg, I. (2018). Vulnerability as a political language. In A. Koivunen, K. Kyrölä, & I. Ryberg (Eds.), *The power of vulnerabil-*

ity: Mobilising affect in feminist, queer and anti-racist media cultures (pp. 1–26). Manchester University Press.

Kymlica, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights.* Clarendon Press.

Land, H. (1978). Who cares for the family? *Journal of Social Policy, 3*(7), 357–384.

Lister, R., Williams, F., Antonnen, A., Bussemaker, M., Gerhard, U., Heinen, J., Johansson, S., Leira, A., Siim, B., Tobio, C., & Gavanas, A. (2007). *Gendering citizenship in Western Europe: New challenges for citizenship research in a cross-national context.* The Policy Press.

Pieri, M. (2020). Multiple estrangements in the twilight zone: Chronic illness and queerness in Southern Europe. In Z. Davy, A. C. Santos, C. Bertone, R. Thoreson, & S. Wieringa (Eds.), *Handbook of global sexualities* (pp. 386–403). SAGE.

Pieri, M., & Brilhante, J. (2022). "The Light at the End of the Tunnel": Experiences of LGBTQ+ Adults in Portuguese Healthcare. *Healthcare, 10*(1), 146.

Plummer, K. (2003). *Intimate citizenship: Private decisions and public dialogues.* University of Washington Press.

Plummer, K. (2018, April 26). *Re-imagining intimate citizenship in a troubled world* [Keynote]. Conference the political in the personal: Families and sexualities in times of social change in Europe. Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL), Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

Portugal, S. (1998). Women, childcare and social networks. In V. Ferreira, T. Tavares, & S. Portugal (Eds.), *Shifting bonds, shifting bounds. Women, mobility and citizenship in Europe* (pp. 345–355). Celta.

Richardson, D. (2018). *Sexuality and citizenship.* Polity.

Roseneil, S. (2005). Living and loving beyond the boundaries of the heteronorm: Personal relationships in the 21st century. In L. McKie & S. Cunningham-Burley (Eds.), *Families in society: Boundaries and relationships* (pp. 241–257). The Policy Press.

Roseneil, S. (2010). Intimate citizenship: A pragmatic, yet radical, proposal for a politics of personal life. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 17*(1), 77–82.

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2020). *The tenacity of the couple-norm: Intimate citizenship regimes in a changing Europe.* UCL Press.

Santos, A. C. (2012). The politics of sexuality in Portugal: Confronting tradition, enacting change. In S. Hines & Y. Taylor (Eds.), *Sexualities: Reflections and futures* (pp. 168–185). Palgrave-Macmillan.

Santos, A. C. (2020). From villain to hero: Trans men and non-binary persons as care providers in Southern Europe. *International Journal of Care and Caring, 5*(2), 319–333.

Sousa Santos, B. (1993). O Estado, as relações salariais e o bem-estar social na semi-periferia: o caso português. In B. de Sousa Santos (Ed.), *Portugal: um retrato singular* (pp. 17–56). Edições Afrontamento.

Stychin, C. F. (2001). Sexual citizenship in the European Union. *Citizenship Studies, 5*(3), 285–301.

Stychin, C. F., & Herman, D. (Eds.). (2000). *Sexuality in the legal arena*. The Athlone Press.

Trifiletti, R. (1999). Southern European welfare regimes and the worsening position of women. *Journal of European Social Policy, 9*(1), 49–64.

Vaittinen, T. (2015). The power of the vulnerable body. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 17*(1), 100–118.

Walby, S. (2001). *From gendered welfare state to gender regimes: National Differences, convergence or re-structuring?* [Paper presentation]. Gender and Society Group, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden.

Weeks, J., Heaphy, B., & Donovan, C. (2001). *Same sex intimacies: Families of choice and other life experiments*. Routledge.

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.

PART I

Citizenship Matters

CHAPTER 2

Uprisings: A Meditation on Feminist Strategies for Enacting the Common

João Manuel de Oliveira

Ruins and Risings

In her poem "And Still I Rise", Maya Angelou (1978) shows how racialized subjects who are subject to all sorts of obstacles, hatred and racism nonetheless kept poetically and politically rising—and, I would add, uprising. I propose to analyse uprisings not only as the factual and organized gathering of people under a specific objective but also as a broader and more contextualized sensibility to what is common. I am tackling uprisings in the context of considering citizenship also as a form of exclusion of Others from the *polis*. Intimacy as part of the political, as feminists before us have so emphatically declared, is a very important part of what is excluded and banished and in fact disappears from view. Thus, a sociology of haunting (Gordon, 1997) is much needed as it provokes us to think about the silenced, the repressed, and the non-visible that still produce effects: those that are hidden from the public eye, racialized Others, women and queers/trans and the ones that rise in Angelou's poem.

J. M. de Oliveira (✉)
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
e-mail: joao.oliveira@iscte-iul.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_2

Therefore, I will take some examples of uprisings, referring to assemblies, changes in traditional forms of political representation and protest marches.

This meditation on a very ample idea of uprisings does not report a specific research nor does it try to create any theory of its own regarding these issues. Actually in this text, I am trying to make sense of politics in action, namely, at the level of feminist activism and organizing. The text is organized as a reflection as part of the political/feminist practices I describe and to some extent have participated in. Like Donna Haraway (1997, p. 24) I refuse the position of the modest witness:

> (…) one of the founding virtues of what we call modernity. This is the virtue that guarantees that the modest witness is the legitimate and authorized ventriloquist for the object world, adding nothing from his mere opinions, from his biasing embodiment. And so he is endowed with the remarkable power to establish the facts. He bears witness: he is objective; he guarantees the clarity and purity of objects. His subjectivity is his objectivity. His narratives have a magical power — they lose all trace of their history as stories, as products of partisan projects, as contestable representations, or as constructed documents in their potent capacity to define the facts.

This specific reflection is actually based on a subject position opposed to the modest witness. Rather, this reflection is much more anchored on my experience as a militant in Left Bloc, as a participant in "Orgullo Crítico" and an enthusiastic observer of the "#elenão" movement in Brazil. Therefore, I analyse them as practices that are not external to me. To understand such effects, my participation outside of a position of mere observer was important, even to access the political grammars being used and their effects. In addition, Brazil was included as way of understanding the dynamics between global and local points of observation, making a reference to other Portuguese-speaking countries, not only Southern Europe, and showing how common and shared some of the issues raised here are.

In the case of Left Bloc, I am a member of that party and had the opportunity to participate in the construction of this party, especially concerning politics of gender and intersectionality. As for "#elenão", I am currently a visiting professor in Brazil and had an opportunity to bear witness to the efforts developed by this multitude in the presidential election in 2018. In the case of Madrid's Critical Pride, I started to participate in this event in 2015. Therefore, my point of departure here is not

participant observation or ethnography but rather my own political engagement with these different ways of producing and making feminist/queer/trans politics. In this text, I revisit some events I witnessed and participated in, and I will therefore try to produce an engaged reading of these movements. This text is more of a practice of reading (Spivak, 2014), instead of proposing conclusions based on empirical observations.

In this chapter, examples coming from political practices are offered in order to show some of the possibilities of resistance that tackle relevant issues for intimate and sexual citizenship. These include the right to protest and to organize and mobilize others in matters that concern sexual rights but also, in a broader sense, the right to live in a democracy, the right to have a public sphere and the right to be represented and to represent. The performative right to appear is exercised in uprisings and other forms of gathering in the streets or other public spaces (Butler, 2015a). The right to appear affirms and situates the body in the centre of political claims for economic, social, juridical and political viability of such bodies (Pérez Navarro, 2017).

My aim in this chapter is to analyse the shape, conditions of possibility and effects of feminist uprisings within a context of neoliberal politics, austerity measures and contempt for rights. In pursuing such concerns, we consider both a global setting for this topic (using Brazil as an example of resistance) and a local context—Portugal and Spain. These uprisings have occurred around the globe claiming for democracy, social justice, equality and freedom of expression. Starting with a general cycle of protest that was initiated by the Arab Spring, these marches and gatherings have also occurred in Southern Europe in 2011 and subsequent years (Pérez Navarro, 2014).

Part of the European strategy to tackle the so-called Euro debt crisis was the implementation of a neoliberal programme of austerity measures (Bibow, 2012). The immediate result was lower wages and increased unemployment (Castro Caldas, 2012) among youngsters who were encouraged to immigrate. These measures were backed by states with the stronger economic positions (Armingeon & Cranmer, 2018). Education, arts, research and health were the areas which were most subject to cuts. Unemployment funds, pensions and other forms of social support and care were mitigated and in fact lowered. The neoliberal rationality that organizes these policies and the politics behind them generates an ever-reducing version of the state (Brown, 2015). This reaction to the crisis in

fact greatly contributed to the erosion of public policies of social protection, typical of neoliberal rationalities.

To further complicate these matters, in several countries (the United States, Brazil and Hungary, among others), political articulations have given way to right and far-right politics that are fuelled by hatred against social movements, immigrants and racialized populations (Brown, 2019). In Southern Europe, the creation and increasing political impact of extreme right parties and movements is changing the political landscape. In fact a mixture of hard-right populism and neoliberal policies has created an environment-based White male supremacy. This antidemocratic turn includes fundamentalist Christian values, extremely conservative views on gender and nationalism and racism (Brown, 2019). I give here a quick example. In his usually vitriolic tweets, Donald Trump (Suspended account, 2019), president of the United States, declared:

> So interesting to see "Progressive" Democrat Congresswomen, who originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere in the world (if they even have a functioning government at all), now loudly (…) and viciously telling the people of the United States, the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth, how our government is to be run. Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came. Then come back and show us how (…) it is done. These places need your help badly, you can't leave fast enough. I'm sure that Nancy Pelosi would be very happy to quickly work out free travel arrangements!

Despite the violent tone of this tweet, the radical way in which American exceptionalism (Puar, 2007) is being aggressively put forward needs to be understood as central in this imperialist discourse. Note the intersections of race, gender and geographical origin of the targets of this form of xenophobic hate speech: Trump is addressing congresswomen of colour and targeting them as outsiders (despite their US citizenship). These outsiders are positioned as people that should be sent away, to a far and distant home elsewhere outside the United States that does not count as home, even if one is an American citizen. Racialization and racism speak louder than citizenship in these tweets. An imperialist view of the United States as primus inter pares, first among equals, making them "the greatest and most powerful" people on earth—US exceptionalism—is positioned vis-à-vis "totally broken and crime infested places from which they came".

These countries are described as corrupt countries, a widely used marker for lack of "civilization" and development. In a sense, this "Make America Great" statement is built upon a colonial understanding of the world, using racialization as its political grammar. These far-right patronizing offensives target members of congress that are women of colour, with non-European/US origins, and show the need to organize intersectionally, across differences in order to establish alliances to fight back. This trope of corruption is not far from Frantz Fanon's (2004) description of the colonized as represented by the colonizer in the famous chapter "Concerning Violence":

> The "native" is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. He *[sic]* is, dare we say it, the enemy of values. In other words, absolute evil. A corrosive element, destroying everything within his reach, a corrupting element, distorting everything which involves aesthetics or morals, an agent of malevolent powers, an unconscious and in curable instrument of blind forces. (p. 6)

This continuity of underdevelopment and corruption, in fact coloniality in Quijano's (2000) sense, is actually much used by the far right to characterize the political situation before they arrive in power or to attack democratic forces, which they inevitably construe as corrupt. This can be seen in the case of Brazil with the attacks on the Workers' Party (PT—*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) and on former President Lula (Davis & Straubhaar, 2020).

The theme of corruption is also used by politicians such as Trump to refer to other countries and to adversaries. The adversaries are described antagonistically as political enemies—rather than adversarial confrontation, that is, democratic agonism, to use Chantal Mouffe's (2005) terms. This is a display of animosity and, in fact, of severe confrontation with the Other who is viewed as someone who should be punished, or even physically eliminated. See, for example, Trump's call for the arrest of presidential candidate Hilary Clinton (BBC News, 2016) or an even more extreme version of this, when then candidate Bolsonaro declared in a political rally that members of the Workers' Party in the state of Acre should be shot by a firing squad (Ribeiro, 2018). I tackle these examples together because some of their rationales are in fact being used globally to articulate far-right government projects.

For Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), these depictions show not only a decay in Western democracies but for some the possibility of direct risks for the

continuity of democracies: the death of democracy. Wendy Brown (2015) made a very strong case on how neoliberalism is eroding liberal democracies, in fact making the state redundant with austerity politics and the dismantling of public services through privatization. The economization of the political and the idea of governance replace the political rationality with a market lexicon. These are very effective ways of replacing democracy, an expensive and time-consuming practice. Therefore, sovereignty and the *demos* are being replaced by management, making the rule of the common increasingly impossible. The racist rhetoric of White male supremacy and centrality of the angry White male as a political figure are very important for the populist hard right, as described by Brown (2019). In this dystopic ethos, the perceived loss of privileges generates a political nihilism where apocalypse seems to be preferable to losing this supremacy, even if this radical destruction of the common destroys everyone, a sort of a "Capitalocene" (Moore, 2015) horror story.

A similar remark was introduced by Silvia Federici (2004) when analysing the primitive accumulation of capital, which happens at all times in capitalism and is based on the separation of the producer from the means of production. This entailed a process of privatizing the common, of an enclosing force that through economic crises, wars and expropriation was able to produce the right-less working force, dependant on salary. These moves of enclosing the communal are ways of producing and constituting precaritization:

> Usually induced and reproduced by governmental and economic institutions, this process acclimatizes populations over time to insecurity and hopelessness; it is structured into the institutions of temporary labor and decimated social services and the general attrition of the active remnants of social democracy in favor of entrepreneurial modalities supported by fierce ideologies of individual responsibility and the obligation to maximize one's own market value as the ultimate aim in life. (Butler, 2015a, p. 15)

Precaritization could be a synonym for neoliberalism. This process of changing from a logic of common rights to a logic of an extreme mode of individualism where there are no protections and responses in fact creates a society based on precarity, which

> (…) designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than

> others, and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death (. …) Populations that are differentially exposed suffer heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and vulnerability to violence without adequate protection or redress. (Butler, 2015a, p. 33)

This unequal distribution of vulnerability exposes our sociality and interdependency: social relations either prevent or reinforce such precarious lives. Neoliberal rationality is exploiting precarity and trying to turn it into a problem of individuals: individuals that lack merit and achievements in order to resist such precarity. This in fact induces the population not only to develop a sense of increased expendability as Judith Butler (2015a) points out but to live inside a certain panoptic of self-vigilance and control (Foucault, 1977) in biopolitical terms. Neoliberalism seems to get rid of democracy and some of its guarantees, as it continues its long march (Hall, 2011). But how can these politics be counteracted? The task of this chapter is to point out some possibilities of resistance.

I am thinking with Lynne Segal's (2017) notion of radical happiness as moments of collective struggle where social relations and bonds are reaffirmed, by acting in concert. This joy of the common, of the collective, is crucial as an antidote to neoliberal reason. Ideological formations of individualism and meritocracy, alongside the sacred importance of commodification, can be very demanding and psychologically impossible to tackle with the norm of compulsory happiness (Ahmed, 2010) within this neoliberal political formation. Taking into account that the infrastructure and social conditions for thriving are being threatened by neoliberalism, Segal (2017) makes a case for the importance of collective movements to claim such common ground, even in psychic terms. This means that the struggle itself is a way in which these bodies in alliance (Butler, 2015a), taking to the streets, in fact expand and express a collective joy.

This undoubtedly resonates with the Spinozist idea of affect as an effect of a bodies on other bodies, an ethics of pressure as Butler (2015b) describes it, expanding or diminishing potency. Such joy in Spinoza's philosophy is an affect that increases the conatus, "each thing, as far as it lies in itself, strives to persevere in its being" (Spinoza, 1994, p. 159). Conatus is expanded or diminished by the contacts with others, showing how central interdependency and sociality can be for the subject. A radical notion of interdependency (Care Collective, 2020) can be used against the neoliberal self-contained individual (Sampson, 1988).

Brazil, *Ele Não*

#elenao ["ele não", not him] was a hashtag used in the context of the presidential election campaign to form a platform against Bolsonaro, then a candidate of the far right. The Facebook page *Women United against Bolsonaro* that started that hashtag at the end of August 2018 reached more than 3 million members. Its goal was to create a women's front against the candidate (Carranca, 2018). Jair Bolsonaro is known for his racist, sexist and homophobic declarations, including a statement that took him to court, claiming that a woman MP Maria do Rosário from the Workers' Party was too ugly to be raped by him. He was declared guilty and forced to publicly apologize and pay damages to MP Maria do Rosário (Galvani, 2019). Other political declarations that Bolsonaro made throughout his career included very sexist views and very opposed to women's rights. Therefore, it was not surprising that groups of women would organize a movement showing their indignation against this candidate.

The context where "#elenao" occurs is a very polarized presidential election campaign, with anti-left (especially anti-Workers' Party) hatred being explored by the media and by the hard-right Bolsonaro campaign. This exploration of "anti-petismo" [anti-Workers' Party, PT] had started during the cycle of protests of 2013 that were initially against the rise in the price of tickets for collective transports (Delcourt, 2016). Fully explored by a right that could not access government democratically through elections, with four successive presidential mandates by the Workers' Party, an *anti-petismo* feeling entered the political arena. As congress and the senate are highly divided and divisive given the sheer number of parties in Congress in Brazil (30), any government has to negotiate with several parties in order to pass laws. The senate follows suit with 21 parties.

The trope of corruption was present through operation "Car Wash", a very mediatic corruption investigation, led by the Federal Police of Brazil and initially by Judge Sérgio Moro, then Minister of Justice in Bolsonaro's government. This operation started with money laundering, then bribery and corruption involving billions of dollars around Petrobras, the Brazilian oil company. Part of this investigation used plea bargains to get the information with convicts or suspects (Souza, 2017).

This police investigation led to charges being pressed and later the incarceration of former President Lula. However, Lula was a candidate in

the 2019 elections and, according to polls, possibly the candidate with the most votes. His defence attorneys accused the prosecutors and the judge of not having enough evidence of such crimes and of political persecution. This claim is based on the idea of lawfare, using the judicial system to impact the other powers (Carvalho & Fonseca, 2019). The whole operation has a certain resonance with the Italian operation "Mani Pulite" and the mediatization of the whole process. President Dilma Rousseff was the target of an impeachment process opened by former allies, and Vice President Michel Temer replaced her, in what she claimed to be an act of treason. A long campaign against her presidency had already started in 2013 and reached its peaked when Congress agreed to investigate her for account manipulation to hide the deficit. President Rousseff was tried and found guilty of the charges and impeached in 2016[1] (Nunes & Melo, 2017). Temer's presidency was an opportunity to put several laws into practice that were not in the electoral programme of Rousseff-Temer's ticket, opening the social democratic legacy of PT to neoliberalism. During the elections in 2018, Bolsonaro quickly became a favourite. Winning the first round, he was positioned as the possible winner of the second round with candidate Fernando Haddad (PT).

Months before, in 2018, the execution of Marielle Franco in Rio de Janeiro at the hands of organized crime galvanized the attention of the world and of social movements in Brazil. "Elenão" was an attempt to unite women (and allies) against this specific sexist, racist and homophobic candidate (Slattery & Stargardter, 2018). Based on this track record, they started online and were able to gather millions of women protesting against the candidate all over Brazil. This call for women against Bolsonaro was a surprising outcome in a campaign marked by incidents, strong polarization and fake news. Considered to be the biggest demonstration of women in the history of Brazil (Rossi et al., 2018), this demonstration united women and other groups against a candidate that used a logic of attacking women, queers and trans, Blacks and indigenous people to get votes. This repudiation was very important to show a way of organizing in an electoral period that was not based only on political parties. As it was seen to be effective, this action was emulated by the supporters of Bolsonaro using an "elesim" copycat movement. Usage, however, is of capital importance in this type of action using a very ample idea of women as a marker of resistance against the very conservative declarations and

[1] See Jornal Nacional (2016).

politics of Bolsonaro. I like to think that there is a feminist logic in this very wide use of the idea of women: organizing through differences, finding a common threat and creating action that unites all these groups fighting together under the figure of women.

Media coverage was very detrimental to this action, hiding the real numbers of people protesting, due to the alignment of most media against the Workers' Party candidate. This anti-Workers' Party discourse ("antipetismo") was determinant in understanding these elections and intoxicated public opinion. But the most relevant fact was that this movement was able to restore some sense of agency in elections whose result seemed inevitable, some perspective of a possible change in the outcome. In fact Bolsonaro did not win the first round and was elected in the second round with 55% of the votes, which was not a landslide win as expected. But this was the biggest, most massive demonstration against his views led by women and feminists and other social movements in Brazil. This possibility of organizing a political campaign against a candidate whose views are detrimental to human rights and of sustaining a social uprising against such views seems to be a very useful way of contesting dominant values. In addition, it provided the political space for opposition to the hard right.

Madrid, *Orgullo Crítico*

"Orgullo Crítico" [Critical Pride] is a yearly demonstration/march that is alternative and critical of the official LGBT pride, "Orgullo Madrid". Each year members of political movements, groups and collectives gather in area of Lavapies, Madrid, and start a march that takes them through the most emblematic gay neighbourhood in Madrid, Chueca. This march is, however, very distinct from the LGBT pride march in Madrid, with sponsors, advertising and commercial appeal. A queer liberalism in David Eng's (2010) terms, it shows a possibility of social mobility for some gays and lesbians economically through consumption and legally through the concession of rights and legal protections. However, these are only possible for some groups, in terms of class and race.

Racialized groups are often outside these possibilities of social ascension. In gatherings such as "Orgullo Crítico", the common ground between anti-racist, migrants, queers, trans*, feminists, sudaca–Latin Americans, "okupas", polyamory and other groups is most often anti-capitalist activism and an idea of a coalitional march against several forms of oppression that are interconnected. "Orgullo Crítico" (https://

orgullocritico.wordpress.com/2017/04/24/historia) has a story of different names and collectives associated with it, but this is marked by a strong preoccupation with migrants and racism and a dissatisfaction with the way in which "Orgullo Madrid" was representing the LGBT population. The critique of these neoliberal forms of homonormativity (Duggan, 2003; Lasio et al., 2019; Oliveira et al., 2013) based a depoliticization through consumption and commodification of identities in order to be assimilated was present from its beginnings in 2008.

During the years 2015–2017, I participated in Critical Pride, interviewed/talked to some of the people who organized and marched in the event and tried to make sense of the political practice they were putting forth. Closely connected with the *15-M* movement (Pérez Navarro, 2014) operating since 2011, it even got called "Orgullo Indignado" during a period, showing its allegiance with the cycle of protest occurring in Southern Europe. Using 15-M methodologies, they resort to assemblies in order to take decisions and make the event happen. This gathering was instrumental in showing other forms of resistance that tackle queer and trans* oppression that do not need to be complicit with capitalism or neoliberalism. "Orgullo es protesta" [Pride is protest] is one of their mottos and an important political slogan that denounces pride which is commercial and that lacks political consciousness of looking at how that oppression is integrated into the wider picture of geopolitics and global markets. Linking LGBT pride to a concern over wider politics that nonetheless affect queers and trans* in their multiple assemblages of belongings and disidentifications, class, race, migrant status, relationship status and so on seems to be a very effective way of tackling all of these issues together. This idea of pride as a coalition is promising as it enlarges strict identity politics into a much wider and encompassing form of claiming common ground. Such forms of coalitional politics tackling economic injustice, state violence and ecological catastrophe seem very promising in creation of the common as everyone will be affected in one way or another.

Left Bloc, Portugal

This movement of citizens organized as a political party (https://www.bloco.org/o-bloco/estatutos.htm) was founded in 1999 as a platform combining three political parties: Partido Socialista Revolucionário [Socialist Revolutionary Party], Trotskyist oriented; the União Democrática Popular [Popular Democratic Union], Marxist Leninist; and Política XXI

[Politics 21], ranging from Marxists to social democrats. These parties were reorganized later as political collectives and their principles are expressed within the tendencies inside Left Bloc. So from the start, Left Bloc was based on the idea of a coalition of the several different lefts in Portugal. From its foundational manifesto, "Começar de Novo" [Starting Over] (de Esquerda, n.d.):

> The (Left) Bloc will take on the great tradition of popular struggle in the country and will learn from other experiences and challenges; renewing the legacy of socialism and including the convergent contributions of diverse citizens, forces and movements, that through the years have been committed to a search for alternatives to capitalism. It is from here that we want to construct a popular, plural, combative and influent Left, able to reconstruct hope.

This manifesto shows the type of a broad coalitional platform that was being created, bringing together diverse political ideologies on the left and feminists, anti-racists, anti-capitalists, environmentalists, LGBT and queers, trade unionists and activists against poverty, among others.

José Soeiro (2019), a Left Bloc MP, analyses the idea of what it means to be a party in a socialist framework. He argues that in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, a (communist) party means a group of people thinking in a common way, a party in a conflict; that is they are the working class in a dynamics of class struggle. With social democratic parties, the modern shape of political parties starts to take shape. Coming out of a union (like the Labour Party in the UK), or out of ruptures in other parties and recompositions, parties were different from social movements and from other collectives. However, parties such as Left Bloc could be seen as platforms that combine several dimensions: party, social movement and collective. These platforms aim at politics of representation in the state while acknowledging and acting upon the different political subjects. Therefore they work with party politics and with social movements activism, such as trade union and feminist, anti-racist, ecological, queer and trans movements.

At the same time, Left Bloc was trying to get political representation and started with two parliamentary seats (1999–2004). In the last legislative elections in 2015, Left Bloc had a result of 550,892 votes and a

parliamentary representation of 19 members of parliament (MP).[2] Fundamental to that result was a systematic refusal of austerity measures and of the neoliberal logic of the sanctions imposed on Portugal by the Troika. Alongside the Communist Party, Left Bloc decided to support the second most voted party, the Socialist Party, to overthrow the neoliberal right Social Democratic Party. It was the decision of both Left Bloc and the Communist Party that allowed political change. The agreement that Left Bloc made with the Socialists implied a refusal to continue austerity policies that attacked working classes.

From 2014 onwards, Left Bloc has had a female coordinator, Catarina Martins. That is just a part of gender equality policies in this party. Equal lists of members of parliament, a very visible EuroMP, Marisa Matias, later the candidate for the presidency who garnered 10% of the votes, alongside very affluent MPs like Mariana Mortágua in male-dominated areas like economy and finances, they were very visible in terms of media attention. Starting with a renovation of leading figures in Left Bloc, all male, women are now the most visible faces in the party. This is not only related to Portugal's effort to introduce gender equality policies but related to an explicit concern with feminism and gender equality in terms of political representation. This was instrumental in bringing forward as action what most radical left parties use as discourse on principles, but nonetheless continue with mostly male representatives. This issue of representation seems almost to be a matter of representative democracy, but I would argue that this is a most relevant step in order to bring more women and feminist activists to the political scene, thus enhancing political participation not only as male privilege but a way of democratizing democracy (Santos, 1998).

As feminist activist Andrea Peniche (2019), in a magazine of Left Bloc, puts it: gender equality is the minimum condition for democracy, and anti-capitalist feminism is the political commitment that can actually shape and produce social change. This engagement in feminism is based on the idea that Left Bloc is a platform of social movements not only a political party. The party includes feminism as one of its political commitments, and usually feminist concerns are present in Left Bloc's publications, projects of law and media discourse. Left Bloc offers training in anti-capitalist feminism, anti-racism, ecology, class struggles and social transformation as a whole, not only focusing on single-issue policies such as narrowing it

[2] The party kept the same number of seats in the 2019 Parliamentary elections.

down to class struggle, as other forces on the left usually do. Left Bloc is an interesting case of a party that does not abdicate from using social movement tactics, strategies and activism while keeping and trying to increase its political representation in the state. In this case, it is not a specific uprising but an effort to create spaces where these actions are possible, even if this means finding a place in representative democracy and then creating several forms of uprising. On the other hand, this political space is continuously pollenated by the claims and efforts from social movements, informing and acting upon political and legislative production. In a sense, being in a radical left political party is itself a form of uprising in these times.

The Common

In this chapter, some uprisings have been presented as feminist ways of organizing and rethinking the political (Mouffe, 2005) and the common through collective actions. Along with Lynne Segal (2017), I claim that these actions of promoting a different sharing of the common also impact on a sense of collective joy, in Spinoza's sense, a way of enhancing the conatus, affecting other bodies and making pressure on them to thrive. These concerns seem to be of vital importance in the bleak scenario of the Capitalocene (Moore, 2015), with the added pressure of the resentment politics of White male supremacy (Brown, 2019). In fact, thinking about other possibilities, rebuilding and re-enacting movements that counteract the nihilist politics of the hard right are fundamental to resist in order to create alliances for caring and interdependency (Care Collective, 2020) and to produce political change that reverts this scenario.

Referring to "Orgullo Critico", the effects of presenting these open and assembleary forms of thinking and collective work lead to an alternative queer and trans* pride which is capable of encompassing the differences within these groups and their allies. I am interested in showing how these political loci offer a "training of imagination that can change our epistemological performance" (Spivak, 2014, p. 4). Following Spivak's reasoning, in a time where borders continue to occupy such an important space in political imagination, the belief in a borderless world with unconditional hospitality is utopic and revolutionary, but nonetheless, engagement with it offers horizons of possibility for social change. In a sense, the idea of broad coalitions, with left parties and social movements, of gatherings of people that are questioning the effects of neoliberalism and their

damaging practices, is akin to this idea of a borderless world, finding commonalities between different struggles, joining forces to fight for an infrastructure and social networks that support everyone: a sense of and for the common.

This way of creating common ground for political struggle seems to be very promising to impact on the effects of fragmentation of identity politics. The reason why such political projects thrive is precisely because they tend to go beyond the fragments (Rowbotham et al., 2013) of single-issue policies and try to tackle several interconnected issues in their complexity. The issue with anti-capitalist feminism can be a good example by linking the structuring effects of capitalism and commodification with a structural gender inequality in order to exploit women as the basis for workforce reproduction. This sort of critique is only possible when political and social movements are able to discuss and generate what I call hyphenated knowledges (de Oliveira, 2014), meaning bodies of knowledge/praxis coming from different sources and backgrounds, able to come together to create hybrid forms such as queer feminism and anti-capitalist feminism. The constitution of these knowledges as a political practice is only viable in an ecology of knowledge that does not seek single-issue policies focused only on one axis of oppression but rather engages in complex political solutions aimed at the several constituencies, in an increasingly intersectional world. Also in terms of participatory forms of citizenship, these struggles for the common create moments of integration and of possibility of coming together, appearing together as bodies in alliance (Butler, 2015a), claiming the conditions that allow such bodies to thrive and resisting the precaritization that neoliberal rationality imposes as vulnerability.

The example focused on the "#elenão" movement brought to the fore the possibility of deconstructing a political campaign of a far-right candidate with a response from social movements and citizens. Such a response articulated in the digital social networks leads to a reaction against bigotry, sexism, racism and homo-/transphobia. This is another way of constructing a common ground, that of addressing our concerns of being governed by a far-right racist, sexist and homo- and transphobic president. These women, and women were the political subject being nominated for this process, organized the biggest demonstrations led by civil society and social movements in recent years in Brazil against a presidential candidate supported by the media and the religious conservatives. Nonetheless, he got elected, but the idea of "ele não" [not him] is still very much used in

the opposition to the conservative far-right policies he is implementing—a resonance of a political struggle finding echo as political opposition. In addition, the memory of Marielle Franco and the homages to her worldwide have been having multiple effects in raising consciousness for this political moment in Brazil. The inclusion of the Brazilian case here is intended to mark how women can be turned into political figures that oppose the angry White male figure and its supremacy and symbolize resistance and the struggle for the common, against the hard-right focus on property and privatization of public goods.

In the case of Left Bloc, the idea of a political force that can make temporary agreements in order to take back power from neoliberal right seems very relevant and able to give to the radical left a space to influence public policies that help overcome the effects of neoliberalism. However, as Catarina Príncipe (2019) writes, this support of centre-left parties is sometimes accompanied by the impossibility of totally erasing austerity policies due to commitments with the European Union. The "geringonça" [contraption], as this unanticipated parliamentary coalition became known, also seemed successful by complying with EU rules while maintaining some of the marks of austerity as a legacy of the previous government agreement with the Troika. Politically, nonetheless, that strategy had at least a mitigating effect for the population that was severely affected by the austerity politics of the right. And that was attained by the "geringonça". The renewal of the party with these women in positions of visibility also seems important in feminist terms, as it opens and enlarges the scope of possibilities for women in politics. If we are to dispute a common ground against capitalism and privatization, we need to dispute hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), and to that end, a politics of protest is very useful but not enough. Therefore, disputing political power, having seats in Parliament and affecting public policies are also important.

This idea of the common, of public spaces and goods, which is inevitably disappearing within neoliberal political economies, seems a powerful antidote to the privatization of the public in times of a hard-right cycle. This reclaiming of the common and of the collective can be an interesting point for thinking about intimate and sexual rights in a way that is not linked with individual rights as liberal feminism often does, but more as social and societal rights based on economic justice, democracy for all and the fight against discrimination, not only to safeguard the target populations but also as a public good. As we can learn for "Orgullo Crítico", this idea of a collective that is not focused on only one form of oppression but

rather as a matrix of several oppressions seems to be a prolific way of keeping and enlarging this common ground.

References

Ahmed, S. (2010). *The promise of happiness*. Duke University Press.

Angelou, M. (1978). *And still I rise*. Random House.

Armingeon, K., & Cranmer, S. (2018). Position-taking in the Euro crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy, 25*(4), 546–556.

BBC News. (2016, November 22). Trump to Clinton: 'You'd be in jail' for emails. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-38067815/trump-to-clinton-you-d-be-in-jail-for-emails

Bibow, J. (2012). *The Euro debt crisis and Germany's Euro trilemma*. Levy Economics Institute, Working Papers Series. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2060325

Bloco de Esquerda (n.d.). *Ante projecto de declaração Começar De novo*. https://www.bloco.org/media/comecardenovo.pdf

Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Zone Books.

Brown, W. (2019). *In the ruins of neoliberalism*. Columbia University Press.

Butler, J. (2015a). *Notes towards a performative theory of assembly*. Harvard University Press.

Butler, J. (2015b). The desire to live: Spinoza's ethics under pressure. In Judith Butler (ed) Senses of the subject (pp. 63–89). Fordham University Press.

Care Collective. (2020). *The care manifesto: Politics of interdependency*. Verso.

Carranca, A. (2018, November 2). The women-led opposition to Brazil's far-right leader. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/11/brazil-women-bolsonaro-haddad-election/574792/

Carvalho, C. A., & Fonseca, M. G. C. (2019). Violência em acontecimentos políticos: jornalismo e lawfare no caso Lula. *Galáxia (São Paulo), 1*, 100–112. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-25542019441720

Castro Caldas, J. (2012). *The consequences of austerity policies in Portugal*. International Policy Analysis, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09311.pdf

Davis, S., & Straubhaar, J. D. (2020). Producing Antipetismo: Media activism and the rise of the radical, nationalist right in contemporary Brazil. *International Communication Gazette, 82*, 100–182.

Delcourt, L. (2016). Um tea party tropical: a ascensão de uma "nova direita" no Brasil. *Lutas Sociais, 20*(36), 126–139.

Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality: Neoliberalism, cultural politics and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press.

Eng, D. (2010). *The feeling of kinship: Queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy*. Duke University Press.
Fanon, F. (2004). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.
Federici, S. (2004). *Caliban and the witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. Autonomedia.
Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Random House.
Galvani, G. (2019, June 13). Jair Bolsonaro pede desculpas publicamente a Maria do Rosário. *Carta Capital*. https://www.cartacapital.com.br/carta-capital/jair-bolsonaro-pede-desculpas-publicamente-a-maria-do-rosario/
Gordon, A. (1997). *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. Minnesota University Press.
Hall, S. (2011). The neoliberal revolution. *Soundings, 48*, 9–27.
Haraway, D. (1997). *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan© Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. Routledge.
Jornal Nacional. (2016, May 12). Veja a trajetória do processo de impeachment contra Dilma Rousseff. Globo.com. *Jornal Nacional*. http://g1.globo.com/jornal-nacional/noticia/2016/05/veja-trajetoria-do-processo-de-impeachment-contra-dilma-rousseff.html
Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2001). *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. Verso.
Lasio, D., Serri, F., Ibbam, I., & Oliveira, J. M. (2019). Hegemony and heteronormativity: Homonormative discourses of LGBTQ activists about lesbian and gay parenting. *Journal of Homosexuality, 66*, 1058–1081.
Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How democracies die*. Broadway books.
Moore, J. (2015). *Capitalism in the web of life: Ecology and the accumulation of capital*. Verso.
Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. Verso.
Nunes, F., & Melo, C. R. (2017). Impeachment, Political Crisis and Democracy in Brazil. *Revista de Ciencia Política, 37*, 281–304. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-090x2017000200281
Oliveira, J. M. (2014). Hyphenations: The other lives of feminist and queer concepts. *Lambda Nordica, 2014*(1), 38–59.
Oliveira, J. M., Costa, C. G., & Nogueira, C. (2013). The workings of homonormativity: Discourses of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people on discrimination and public display of affections in Portugal. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*, 1475–1493.
Peniche, A. (2019). De que lado estamos? Feminismo para o século XXI. *Revista Esquerda, 1*, 11–15.
Pérez Navarro, P. (2014). Queer politics of space in 15M. *Lambda Nordica, 2014*(2), 83–114.
Pérez Navarro, P. (2017). Rosa Parks con Judith Butler: performatividad individual y acción colectiva. *Isegoría. Revista de Filosofía Moral y Política, 56*, 187–204.

Princípe, C. (2019). What the left should do in Portugal? *Jacobin*. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/10/portugal-elections-geringonca-socialist-party

Puar, J. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology, 15*(2), 215–232.

Ribeiro, J. (2018, September 4). "Vamos fuzilar a petralhada", diz Bolsonaro em Campanha no acre. *Exame*. https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/vamos-fuzilar-a-petralhada-diz-bolsonaro-em-campanha-no-acre/

Rossi, A., Carneiro, J. D., & Gragnani, J. (2018, September 30). #EleNão: A manifestação histórica liderada por mulheres no Brasil vista por quatro ângulos. *BBC News Brasil*. https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-45700013

Rowbotham, S., Wainwright, H., & Segal, L. (2013). *Beyond the fragments: Feminism and the making of socialism*. Merlin Press.

Sampson, E. E. (1988). The debate on individualism: Indigenous psychologies of the individual and their role in personal and societal functioning. *American Psychologist, 43*, 15–22.

Santos, B. S. (1998). *Reinventar a Democracia*. Gradiva.

Segal, L. (2017). *Radical happiness: Moments of collective joy*. Verso.

Slattery G., & Stargardter, G. (2018, September 29). *Brazilian women lead nationwide protests against far-right candidate*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-election-protest-idUSKCN1M90E5

Soeiro, J. (2019). Ainda precisamos de partidos? E porque gostam tanto os socialistas de falar em movimentos? In C. Príncipe & J. Mineiro (Eds.), *ABC do Socialismo* (pp. 151–160). Parsifal.

Souza, J. (2017). *A elite do atraso*. Leya.

Spinoza, B. (1994). *A Spinoza reader: The ethics and other works* (E. Curley, Ed., Trans.). Princeton University Press.

Spivak, G. C. (2014). *Readings*. Seagull.

Suspended Account. (2019, July 14). *Tweet (up to the first 20 words) as the title* [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1150381394234941448

CHAPTER 3

Bisexual Citizenship in Portugal

Mafalda Esteves

The pattern of recent decades, in so-called Western societies, has been one of the major advances in legislation on matters of sexual and reproductive equality and rights. As Liguori and Lamas (2003) mention, these advances demonstrate that issues of "acceptance" or "non-acceptance" are not related to an intrinsic essence based on biological differences between people, but rather on historically, culturally and politically attributed values. The canons of sex and gender established by the dominant patriarchal system have tended to consider some practices and expressions of sex/gender problematic because they do not conform to dichotomies such as nature-culture, sex-gender and man-woman, which, in turn, are deeply related to each other (Bornstein, 1994; Butler, 1999; Haraway, 1988). These sets of prescriptions, therefore, support social processes of regulation and control of subjects and their bodies (Butler, 1999; Miskolci, 2009).

In the particular case of processes of intelligibility of sexual and gender diversity, these dichotomies undergo social reinforcement by means of cultural, legal and institutional mechanisms (Bergstrand & Sinski, 2010; Emens, 2004), marked by heteronormativity (Warner, 1993),

M. Esteves (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal
e-mail: mafaldaesteves@ces.uc.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_3

mononormativity (Pieper & Bauer, 2005) and the orientation of desire guided by monosexist principles (Caldwell, 2010). The upshot is that the life experience of those located outside the set of prescriptions constituting the social processes of regulation and control of bodies, as is the case of bisexuality,[1] is typically subject to prejudice and discrimination (Callis, 2013; Klesse, 2011). In this process, complex frameworks constituted by hegemonic beliefs, values, ideologies or languages create and sustain a discourse of truth that defines anything lying beyond this border as transgression or deviation (Santos, 2013).

References to processes of marginalization which arise from heterosexism appear in the literature in the first two decades of the twenty-first century (Herek et al., 1991; Yost & Thomas, 2012). There is, however, less emphasis on processes of discrimination marked by compulsory monosexuality,[2] which is especially problematic in terms of bisexuality (Prell & Træen, 2018).

Recent studies (FRA, 2020; ILGA Europe, 2021) have shown that bisexuality has a high rate of incidence of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and the greater the openness regarding sexual orientation, the higher the risk of aggression and assault, which may be of a physical or sexual nature. On the other hand, the number of reports of episodes of discrimination for reasons of sexual orientation is low in the bisexual population, which implies that these experiences have become invisible (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020; Monro, 2015). When compared to the rest of the population, bisexual men are less open about revealing their sexual orientation, quoting fear of threat, harassment or aggression (FRA, 2020). According to the same study, almost half the bisexual women surveyed report having been the target of harassment because of their sexual orientation, meaning that they are less willing to reveal their sexual orientation when compared to lesbian women and gay men.

As regards sexual rights in the area of conjugality and parenthood in particular, these are guaranteed in many European countries, despite the worrying setbacks we have witnessed recently (Bálint & Sándor, 2020; Mulak, 2020). Despite the progressive European legal framework and,

[1] A term used to describe people who are sexually attracted to men, women and people of different genders and/or identify as bisexual and/or engage sexually with men, women and people of different genders and/or identify with broader or more inclusive terms such as "sexually fluid" and "sexually flexible" (Fahs, 2009).

[2] This is at the base of biases arising from the binomial homosexuality–heterosexuality (Barker & Langdridge, 2010).

more specifically, the fact that Portugal is ranked the fourth most advanced country in terms of sexual and gender equality and diversity in Europe (Pacheco, 2021), bisexuality continues to be relegated to a subordinate position in Southern Europe (Nogueira & Oliveira, 2010). Furthermore, the so-called couple-norm (Roseneil et al., 2020) socially institutionalizes not only monogamy but also the idea of a fixed, monolithic sexual identity based on a mandatory regime of monosexuality (Caldwell, 2010). As such, it produces and reproduces exclusion that ostracizes those who do not fit this principle and other normativities that affect how gender, sex and desire orientation are conceived (Esterberg, 2002; James, 1996).

Research on intimate citizenship, particularly in relation to bi+ identities,[3] calls on different disciplines of the social sciences, such as social psychology, to go into greater detail in their analysis of the role of institutions in the way sexual/intimate citizenship is formulated, enacted and lived (Andreouli, 2019). A critical approach to social psychology allows us to conceive of sexual citizens not as a status but as the "practices of everyday life of invoking one's rights and making rights claims that position oneself and others as (legitimate) political subjects but which may also exclude others from political life" (Andreouli, 2019, p. 7).

In this chapter, I set out to explore how people who identify as bisexual construct and express intimate citizenship within the Portuguese context. Emerging from an ongoing PhD research in social psychology,[4] my starting point is empirical analysis centred on the challenges and constraints which are faced by bisexual activism and which help to think about the constitution of bisexual citizenship in Portugal.

In the next section, I present the debate around bisexual citizenship, taking intimate citizenship (Plummer, 2003) as a useful analytical concept in uncovering the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality and monosexuality which are present in the daily lives of bisexual people. This will also be the key concept in considering the relationship between the

[3] A designation which I have adopted, which always implies a plural and heterogeneous form in definition and practice, in line with contemporary debates on bisexuality (Maliepaard & Baumgarten, 2020; Galupo et al., 2014).

[4] With the thesis project "Invisible sexualities: Intimate citizenship and psychosocial well-being in bisexuality" under the Doctoral Programme in Psychology (ISCTE-IUL) from the European research project "INTIMATE—Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe", funded by the European Research Council (2014–2019) and undertaken at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra.

state and civil society with bisexuality in the Portuguese context, as part of the discussion on a model for citizenship applied to bisexuality.

I then present the empirical section in which I explore aspects of sexual and intimate citizenship with the voices of Portuguese bisexual activism. It will also be in this section that I approach some dimensions of analysis of bisexual citizenship that allow an extension of the relationship between the individual and collective levels.

Finally, the closing section presents issues that require attention if a solid project of bisexual (intimate) citizenship is to be constituted in Portugal and which implies redefining grammars and action repertoires of LGBTQI+ activism.

From Intimate to Bisexual Citizenship

In this context, changes in the way of living, individuality and interpersonal relationships of intimacy have undergone important transformations. My starting point, therefore, is the concept of intimate citizenship formulated by Plummer (2003) to think about bisexuality in theoretical terms. In this sense, intimate citizenship is the lens through which I will analyse how bisexual people dispute and construct the right to freely experience their intimacy, considering their various intersections (i.e. gender, gender identity and age) (Monro, 2015). Following that, I will examine the implications of visibility (or lack of it) in public terms and end by presenting the components for a proposal for bisexual citizenship.

Traditional conceptions of citizenship which are centred on political belonging have been expanded over time due to geopolitical and sociocultural changes brought about by globalization. This is the case of deterritorialization, the decrease in the autonomy of member states, policies for diversity and the existence of social identity movements (Cooper, 1993). Movements for sexual and gender equality and diversity played an important role in introducing transformations in what has been designated as the couple, family and intimacy, breaking with the constant pressure of cis/heteronormativity (Warner, 1993). These transformations in the sphere of intimacy have enabled the development of ways to overcome the conventional model of family and conjugality (Roseneil et al., 2020).

A different concept of citizenship can also be applied, with implications for the way we understand inequality. If we take the concept of citizenship as performative, this is related to the act of laying claim to rights and not so much as a condition of participation (Isin, 2019). In other words, one

is constituted as a political subject more by one's acts as a citizen than by one's status (Andreouli, 2019, p. 2).

The emergence and consolidation of the theoretical field of sexual citizenship has provided an interdisciplinary lens that can focus on theorizing about access to rights (guaranteed or denied) for different social groups based on their sexuality. This is particularly the case regarding sexual expression and identity (Kaplan, 1997; Richardson, 2000) and in relating these rights to sexual and bodily responsibilities, with an emphasis also on cultural, political and legal aspects (Hearn et al., 2011, p. 7). Furthermore, this theoretical field considers sexual citizenship as a concept which should be applied to refer to sexual rights (guaranteed or rejected) and to the way we are "entitled to express ourselves sexually" (Richardson, 2000, 2018).

The concept of intimate citizenship has gradually replaced the concept of sexual citizenship, given its broader scope (Plummer, 2003; Roseneil, 2013). This is an approach that is related to the "decisions people have to make about controlling (or not) their body, feelings and relationships; access (or lack of it) to representations, relationships, public spheres, etc.; and with social choices (or not) about identities, gender experiences and erotic experiences" (Plummer, 2003, p. 27). For Plummer, therefore, it does not imply "a model, a pattern, a form", and intimate citizenship becomes a concept that "integrates a vast set of stories and public discourses about how to live one's personal life in a postmodern world, where we have to deal with an increasing number of options and difficulties about how to build our intimacy" (2003, p. 26). Therefore, aspects related to control, access and choice in relation to what he calls "zones of intimacy" inform and significantly affect one's personal life.

Although there are differences (in emphasis, design and terminology), the approaches to intimate citizenship aim to overcome the limitations of perspectives focused exclusively on issues related to sexual orientation. The aim is also to inform about the heterocissexism that characterizes the concept of traditional citizenship and results from the institutionalization of male, heterosexual, cisnormative privileges (Evans, 1993; Hines, 2009; Richardson, 2000). The ongoing debates thus allow us to ponder who is included in citizenship and who lies outside its boundaries; it shows that the resulting choices and problems, which are apparently personal and private, have very significant public and political implications (Yip, 2008).

Evans (1993) explored the notion of bisexual citizenship for the first time and highlighted self-nomination for free sexual expression, relating it to a set of rights, namely, the rights of sexual expression and consumption

and the importance of taking on responsibility and obligations. This debate thus highlights the way in which the exercise of citizenship is interconnected with the language that arises in issues of private life and intimacy. This author also highlights tensions between private and personal aspects and more universal or public contexts. This association between private decisions and public dialogue has emerged within debates in different disciplines and continues to do so (Barker, 2007, 2012; Suess, 2015).

It is crucial that the regime of intimate citizenship to be implemented includes the state and civil society and that it supports personal choices and agency in intimate relationships, such as respect and recognition of the dynamic and changing character of relationships over time. As argued by Roseneil et al. (2020), if there is room for transformation, the persistence and centrality of the couple-norm will be attenuated, with greater freedom and proximity to the full exercise of intimate citizenship.

Contemporary analyses of sexual and intimate citizenship (Richardson, 2018; Roseneil et al., 2020) continue to pay scant attention to bisexual citizenship, some exceptions notwithstanding (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020; Monro, 2015). Gay and lesbian sexualities have become visible and legally recognized and have been complemented by growing public acceptance, and transgender issues have also gradually been protected with policies of equality (Davy, 2011; Hines & Sanger, 2010). Yet bisexuality continues to be viewed with ambivalence, misunderstanding and prejudice (Barker et al., 2012; Flanders, 2016; Maliepaard, 2015).

Proposed bisexual citizenship based on intimate citizenship draws us towards broader theoretical debates, such as that around the dichotomy between the public sphere and private sphere, in which the possibility of a plural, democratic and public intimate life is created (Monro, 2005). Therefore, an exploration of bisexual intimacies and deconstruction of the notion of the private as a social category are fundamental elements when aiming for a more democratized and emancipatory mapping of intimate life. The obstacles to achieving bisexual citizenship for this group of the population have not been sufficiently explored (Monro, 2015). Indeed, the specificities surrounding bisexual intimacies have been either ignored or simply assimilated into the lesbian and gay categories (Rust, 2000), suggesting the existence of negative attitudes towards bisexuality (Rust, 1995). As the normative sexual and gender order forms the basic assumption for a dichotomous conceptualization of sexual orientation (Fox, 1995; Rust, 2000), it means that the experience of bisexuality is defined in relation to gay and lesbian experiences and is not perceived as a valid,

stable and socially and culturally differentiated sexual identity (Flanders, 2016). The existence of an epistemic and political project to erase bisexuality has been alluded to by several authors (Breetveld, 2020; Yoshino, 2000) and is transversal, with different nuances, to academia (Monro et al., 2017; Petford, 2003), gay and lesbian communities (Gurevich et al., 2007; Weiss, 2003) and conventional media (Hayfield, 2020; Barker et al., 2008). Hence, disruptive processes of current sociopolitical structures and personal processes such as coming out are compromised (McLean, 2007). Furthermore, the bisexual population receives less family support and support from peers and friendship networks when compared to lesbian and gay populations (Jorm et al., 2002). It is not surprising, therefore, that it generates increased levels of psychological stress, taking into account biphobia (Jorm et al., 2002), and the dual discrimination that it faces, applied by both the heterosexual population and the lesbian and gay population (Jorm et al., 2002). Recent studies show that cisgender people who identify as bisexual women and men have lower levels of self-acceptance when compared to gay men or lesbian women (FRA, 2020; ILGA Europe, 2021). Shame, embarrassment and difficulty in assuming one's sexual orientation are the reasons most frequently mentioned by the respondents to explain why cases of physical and/or sexual violence are not reported. This is why the debate on the intimate citizenship of bisexual people is crucial.

Bisexuality makes it possible to develop discursive practices that contravene the private notion of intimacy and tools to redesign intimacy as a public discourse and practice, in addition to its private structures. Thus Monro's (2015) formulation of bisexual citizenship is important in recognizing the notion of public intimacy in policies for the rights of "sexual minorities", for human rights and for the legitimization of "radical" identities such as sexual identities non-heteronormative and non-binary such as BDSM, bisexual and transgender. The author proposes a reform of the model of intimate citizenship which includes aspects related to sexual fluidity and multiplicity. This, on the one hand, allows it to be normalized and, on the other, enables the rigidity of identification with heterosexuality to be questioned. Thus, one of the characteristics of thinking about a model of bisexual citizenship seems to be the observation of overlaps with other populations outside the heteronormative spectrum and with mainstream citizenship (Monro, 2015, pp. 136–146) and specific issues that bisexual people face, affirming a position on differentiated citizenship (Maliepaard, 2017).

One of the possible departure points for the path to this formulation could be to reclaim previous works on sexual citizenship and monosexual identities. Into these could be incorporated different elements for a proposal of bisexual citizenship that considers relevant aspects in the case of bisexual identities, such as the notion of mutable sexuality, fluid desire and multiple relations (Monro & Richardson, 2012). Thus, the application of the feminist theory of citizenship, trans theory and citizenship studies can enrich the theorization of bisexual citizenship given the presence of gender diversity in this population group (Monro, 2015, p. 152). Characteristics of the author's proposal are accepting sexual desire as multiple and fluid, recognizing bisexual identity and validating polyamorous relationships, thus favouring the queerization of the normative model of sexuality by questioning the identification with heterosexuality as the norm and, consequently, biphobic attitudes and behaviours (Monro, 2015, pp. 152–153).

Coming out of the closet as a bisexual continues to be a difficult task (FRA, 2020), and there is a continuing need to design specific policies for bisexuality (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020). Exploring the way in which political struggles around bisexuality are perceived, negotiated and/or contested can help the debate on bisexual citizenship continue (Eadie, 1993) and allows us to think about the possibilities of overcoming difficulties arising from biphobia and obligatory monosexuality.

In the next section, we will look closely at the experiences of bisexuality in terms of organizing and collectively mobilizing to build a bisexual policy. More specifically, I will focus on the discourses produced by bisexual activists in the Portuguese context and examine perceptions of bisexual activism, as well as the role of LGBTQI+ activism in ensuring care and promoting well-being. I will thus ponder how bisexual citizenship is constructed, negotiated or contested, not just at the level of citizenship regimes themselves (Andreouli, 2019), by examining the micro-contexts in which bisexual citizenship is "performed" (Isin, 2017) and discursively constituted as well as the ideological resources anchored to these constructions of citizenship.

Bisexuality Through the Lens of Bisexual Activism: Notes from an Empirical Study

This chapter is the result of a study, the aim of which was to understand how bisexual citizenship is negotiated and built in daily life in the Portuguese context.

In terms of the socio-historical context, the authoritarian, autocratic, nationalist and corporatist state political regime that prevailed in Portugal for a large part of the twentieth century should be borne in mind. The so-called Estado Novo (1933–1974) created conditions to affirm a morality and a set of values based on the Judeo-Christian religion, and it conditioned the way in which Portuguese society looks at issues related to intimacy and sexuality (Cascais, 2020; Santos, 2018).

Despite these constraints, a significant increase has been observed in the capacity of the LGBTQI+ movement to mobilize and implement Portuguese policies and legislation based on issues of sexual citizenship (Cascais, 2006, 2020; Ferreira, 2015; Santos, 2013).

In 1996, two large organizations in the LGBTQI+ political sphere emerged in Portugal: *Associação ILGA Portugal—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Intervention* and *Clube Safo*, the first organization for lesbian rights in the country. With regard to the organization of a bisexual community, two collectives appeared for the first time in 2010—*Ponto Bi* and *Associação B Visibilidades*, representing the beginning of public visibility for this population, although their existence was fleeting. Later, in 2013, a collective exclusively concerned with answering the issues faced by people who identify as bisexual was created, *Actibistas—the collective for bisexual visibility*. It had a strong online presence and has participated in events and demonstrations of LGBTQI+ Pride in recent years and continues to do so. Since then, groups with varying degrees of institutionalization have emerged throughout Portugal, or bisexuality activists who are part of other groups, revealing the intersectionality that surrounds bisexuality.

In methodological terms, the study on which this chapter is based was oriented around a qualitative approach and focused on the discourses and perceptions of eight bisexual activists/bisexuality. Their focus is situated on the perceptions around their perceptions of the constitution of bisexual activism, from the negotiation of the position of bisexual activism in LGBTQI+ activism to the role of the state in guaranteeing bisexual citizenship. To this end, individual semi-structured interviews were carried

out in the cities of Lisbon and Porto, with occasional use of digital media. Those interviewed were aged between 23 and 59 years of age and had a history of LGBTQI+ activism, being involved at the time of the interview or earlier in different groups, associations or support networks for LGBTI people, located in the cities of Lisbon, Porto and Braga. The selection of participants encompassed diversity in terms of age, gender, gender identity and geographic location.

The information was then analysed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), in which data were grouped into three macro-themes related to the sociological literature on intimate citizenship and bisexuality studies: internal perceptions of bisexual activism, perceptions about the relationship with LGBTQI+ activism and perceptions about the relationship with the dominant culture and with state/laws.

Internal Perceptions of Bisexual Activism

According to the literature (Bowes-Catton, 2007; Maliepaard, 2018; Van Lisdonk & Keuzenkamp, 2017), the creation of a bisexual policy is defined according to collective organization around legislative, political and social demands. The quote below shows the difficulty of a cohesive bisexual community existing in the Portuguese context.

> It is necessary to understand what you do with the few people you have, with the limited availability, with the few people that you have who are politically active, with the limited availability (…), it is difficult to know where to start. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Lisbon)

Without the development of a specific policy that flags and resists the obstacles that bisexual people face, it will be difficult to guarantee bisexual citizenship (Monro, 2015). The low number of bisexual activists has a collective effect in consolidating the political agenda of this activism and in the lack of public visibility of the issues that affect bisexual people. These effects are felt at the individual level, in everyday life, since the presence of people who publicly present themselves as bisexual is still limited.

> The perception I have is… [laughs] It's not. It's not, because I almost don't see activism being done. In Portugal there are, like, two collectives. Two collectives if that many, but they have been sleeping, so at least I don't see

> much work being done (. …) In terms of individual people, um, well, I don't see much being done either (…). (Trans male, 25–29 years old, Porto)

The fragile situation of bisexual activism exacerbates the need to develop a specific agenda which is differentiated from the LGBTQI+ population as a whole. If we look at the urgent challenges facing bisexual activism, the interviews point to the recognition of the existence of biphobia in LGBTQI+ spheres/groups.

The experiences of non-acceptance of the demands of bisexual activism are many and different in nature, leading to the appearance of spheres that I term "spheres of resistance". They are biphobia-free groups/spheres where it is possible to organize actions that respond to the needs of those who identify with the bisexual cause. In parallel, bisexual activism supports other struggles linked to feminism and gender diversity, seeking collective and intersectional responses to individual urgencies.

Despite the fleeting and now defunct existence of "biphobia-free spheres", the interviews reveal the importance of awareness raising for bisexuality to be more visible. Participating in events, establishing networks between collectives and using props (badges, stickers) and/or symbols (flags) represent an act of resistance to what has been called epistemic and political injustice (Breetveld, 2020; Yoshino, 2000), lending visibility to these bodies and experiences. This resistance not only recognizes bisexual identity but occupies a political terrain with bisexual voices that publicly contribute to the dismantling of heterocisnormativity and compulsory monosexuality (Ault, 1996). As regards the actions carried out, they include the nomination of bisexuality in LGBTQI+ spheres and groups and the organization of activities that raise awareness and clarify specific issues such as bi+ identities and experiences in the public sphere.[5] Thus, in a kind of unique everyday activism, bisexual activists become agents of awareness and education.

As for the development of visibility in LGBTQI+ communities, there is evidence of a process of coming out which is distinct from so-called monosexual identities, presenting themselves as "non-heterosexual" and "non-homosexual". For these reasons, this indicates for me that the idea of a

[5] The presence of *Bandeirão Bi* in the 19th LGBTI+ Pride March in Lisbon, 2018, and the 13th LGBT+ Pride March in Porto, in 2018, or the gathering entitled "bisexuality" organized in Porto by the Blergh collective, in 2017.

bisexual political project is in the "pre-project" phase in the Portuguese context.

The diversity of experiences that are associated with bisexuality makes it difficult to establish a notion of stability and internal coherence which characterize dominant perceptions about sexual orientation, highlighting the monosexist assumptions underlying normative conceptions of sexual orientation (Caldwell, 2010). The quote below illustrates the relevance of raising awareness of the fluidity and non-binarity of the orientation of desire that goes hand in hand with these identities and for the deconstruction of normative conceptions of sexuality.

> What I started to do in the association [generic LGBTI+ association to which he previously belonged], of always making the letter B visible, it's something I bring and that I do whenever I can. Whenever I'm in an LGBT sphere, I either bring the letter B, or I bring a badge, or I say, actively say I'm bi. Get out of the sphere and make sure that people know that a bi person is there, that it is something that exists, and that it is there. (Cis male, 30–34 years old, Braga)

Negative attitudes and direct and indirect discrimination towards bisexuality are the greatest concerns voiced in the discourse of the people interviewed.

> There is little love for bisexuals (. …) What comes to me is that these people are the unloved… poorly understood, on both sides. In fact, heterosexual people had various questions regarding bisexuality and I would say that LG people would have many more. (Non-binary person, 42 years old, Lisbon)

From the data collected, it can be ascertained that fostering recognition and identification with bisexuality contributes to breaking away from the public/private binomial and helps build a bisexual movement. It would be difficult to ensure active participation in matters of sexual policy in any other way. Placing bisexuality in the public sphere is thus fundamental in constructing a policy to combat discrimination against people who identify as bisexual.

Perceptions of the Relationship Between Bisexual Activism and LGBTQI+ Activism

The relationship between bisexual activism and LGBTQI+ communities has not been tension-free. Analysis of the interviews reveals that the LGBTQI+ struggles have tended to treat bisexuality as a secondary issue and that there is a perception of a certain instrumentalization of bisexuality in carrying out of the movement's broader agendas, which seems to be in line with previous theoretical reflections (Van Lisdonk & Keuzenkamp, 2017). The following quote shows the lack of inclusion of bisexual issues in the movement's political agenda:

> I think it's super cynical, we've had all the letters together for years: LGBT; but sometimes I think we only count as a statistic; when it comes to embracing our scene no one ever asks us; we don't even appear in the manifestos. Nobody asks us "What do you need? What are your needs? What are your struggles?"; I feel that no one ever asks us this; we have to come out and sign everyone's manifestos, but for us… (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

Spheres of LGBTQI+ activism carry the marks of contradictions in terms of care, revealing that there is also violence directed at bi+ identities. Confusion with heterosexuality and denying the existence and legitimacy of a bisexual identity seems to exist in these spheres. The interviews suggest that the gay and lesbian population tends to view the bisexual group as allies, thus depriving them of legitimacy and questioning their membership. The discrediting of bisexual identities within LGBTQI+ activism thus opens the debate over who constitutes the "true" LGBTQI+ community, which gives an essentialist idea of the community itself, as well as of who has the power to define it.

The context of LGBTI+ activism is revealed as a field of dispute, where episodes of biphobia reveal different types of biphobic violence present in everyday life, with echoes in interpersonal relationships, particularly in relationships of friendship:

> (…) and the jokes were so constant that I no longer felt comfortable there; (…) it was what led me to distance myself from these people, but on the one hand that's a good aspect, because I didn't feel, I couldn't fully be myself around those people, you know? Feeling that you could only say things up to a certain point, but that if you were talking about the other spectrum,

> nobody valued it; it was an unpleasant feeling in your group of friends. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

There are also micro-aggressions expressed in the form of jokes or condescension from LG activists, questioning the legitimacy of attending LGBTQI+ spheres.

Perception of the Relationship with the State and Society

The interviews reveal an advanced legislative context in terms of equality and rights of the LGBTI+ population; it is considered to be positive, especially regarding conjugality and parenthood. However, gaps can be identified in terms of specific measures to answer the needs of the bisexual population and to combat invisibility, thus countering the assimilation of bisexuality into the lesbian and gay categories, and these end up reproducing themselves:

> LGBT people, not bi people? [laughs] (…) the question, in fact, is that the measures, the improvements that we've seen in recent years in Portugal end up benefiting people too, although they don't talk about bi people, and they couldn't care less about them when they make laws, because they basically don't know they exist, or deny that they exist. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Lisbon)

The absence of public policies that answer the needs of bisexuality suggests a lack of commitment from the state in deconstructing prejudice and creating measures that break with the normative frameworks on which the notions of sexuality and gender are based. This lack of protection (political and legal) has implications, particularly at the institutional level.

There is an urgent need to transmit the demands produced by bisexual activism into the realm of the social. The absence of public policies that respond to the problems of the bisexual population reveals the monosexist assumptions that characterize the conception of sexual rights and the status of intimate citizenship in Portugal:

> (…) if you don't say it, it's not a possibility, either you're a lesbian or you're straight. And in my opinion, that's also a form of invisibility, and it might seem like nitpicking, maybe, perhaps, I've had debates like "ahh but is this

> really that important?" For me it is, because I think the needs, or rather the issues that bisexual people struggle with are different, you know? Invisibility annoys me. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

The state must therefore adopt a broad perspective of sexual and gender diversity, welcoming aspects such as relational and sexual fluidity and multiplicity, which inform decision-making in this matter in all spheres of public intervention. An example of this missing commitment is in the area of education for diversity, as one interviewee pointed out:

> (…) if we can now marry whoever… all these prohibitions in the law were falling down, and if in fact there is nothing wrong with liking women or men or women/or men, or people—whatever combination you want—then why not… a truly massive commitment to children's education. (Non-binary person, 40–45 years old, Lisbon)

Final Thoughts: Protesting from the Sidelines

Taking perceptions of bisexual activism as my starting point, the aim in this chapter was to explore bisexual collective organization in Portugal and what challenges it faces today, as well as the implications for guaranteeing bisexual citizenship. Setting out from a political conception of identity, I tried to understand the components that characterize the bisexual activism and dynamics that are generated with the LGBTQI+ community, as well as the role of the state in guaranteeing full bisexual citizenship.

This study allowed elements to be identified that provide an outline for future paths for the LGBTQI+ movement in Portugal. Situating bisexual activism at an early stage and considering its heterogeneity, the discourses obtained seem to reveal that the normative system of gender and sex is present in the way political priorities are established and the relevance of a legitimate and "quasi-ethnic" sexual identity to the detriment of others who are equally centred on self-identification and self-determination (Bowes-Catton, 2007). This tension coexists with a queer agenda that resists dichotomous conceptions of sexuality and that presents bisexuality more as an attraction, regardless of gender[6] (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020).

[6] The definition preferred by the majority of participants.

The attempt to overcome the idea that identity and sexual orientation are rigid, fixed and immutable social categories throughout life is present in some of the discourse. This idea of a multiple, permeable bisexuality which is in transit and fluid challenges the normative frameworks that shape the way we look at issues of sexual and gender diversity. Being sensitive and open to listen to bisexual calls can be the first step in committing to bisexual citizenship and in reflecting on the LGBTQI+ movement in Portugal.

The interviews reveal that LGBTQI+ spheres are places of (re)production of biphobic violence, exposing the paradox in which these spheres are found and inviting people to reflect on the role which these communities play in guaranteeing the intimate citizenship of people who identify as bisexual. The resistance encountered in the context of LGBTQI+ activism ends up perpetuating regimes of invisibility, condemning bisexual people to silence and returning them to the private domain, in a kind of place with which no one wants to be associated. This erasure of bisexuality is paradoxical as it appears to be the largest population in the LGBTQI+ spectrum (Big Eye Agency, 2021). Fighting monosexism and biphobia within LGBTQI+ communities, specifically with the lesbian and gay community, and deconstructing essentialist views about non-heteronormative sexual identities and who can "inhabit" these spheres, is fundamental for recognizing experiences and guarantee of intimate citizenship.

A view of diversity that recognizes the differences and intersectionality of these identities and/or experiences makes the differences more visible and gives a voice to being different (Ghorashi & Ponzoni, 2014; Richardson & Monro, 2012). Hence, Portuguese bisexual activism today has a difficult task of survival—if it is not able to organize itself politically, it runs a serious risk of being a dispersed group with no ability to influence new public policies (Maliepaard, 2018), particularly regarding the recognition of the demands of bisexual activists.

Since the experiences of bisexual people are marked by intersectionality (e.g. gender, gender identity, relational orientation), finding alliances with other groups that share experiences of both exclusion and transgression of normativity can be a useful strategy to show paths which have not been traversed. Retrieving the formulation proposed by Richardson (2000), despite the advanced legal framework in Portugal, sexual rights directed at aspects of identity and relations are not completely guaranteed. This therefore compromises the status of citizenship, as it seems to be related to how others view us and recognize us and how, on the other hand, we exercise

the right to be citizens (Richardson, 2000). It should also be remembered that, if the ability to establish a political agenda around bisexuality is precarious and is not translated into demands and collective organization, the concept of citizenship as a performative act formulated by Isin (2019) seems to be compromised. The state should thus involve itself in the fight against the restriction of bisexual citizenship and the fight against inequality and the marginalization of identities, sexual and gender expressions and relational orientations. This needs to be done outside a normative framework which results from limiting assumptions. In this way, the state can participate in guaranteeing bisexual citizenship.

As the interviews show, bisexual activism is struggling to see its demands attended to both within and outside LGBTQ+ communities in Portugal. In this desideratum, measures are recommended that allow for fluidity and multiple relations, perhaps in coordination with mainstream citizenship, diluting the normative weight of heterosexuality and mandatory monosexuality.

References

Andreouli, E. (2019). Social psychology and citizenship: A critical perspective. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 13*(2), e12432.

Ault, A. (1996). Ambiguous identity in an unambiguous sex/gender structure: The case of bisexual women. *The Sociological Quarterly, 37*(3), 449–465.

Bálint, E. & Sándor, B. (2020). *National analysis on violence against LGBTI+-Hungary. Diversity and childhood project.* https://www.diversityandchildhood.eu/project-reports

Barker, M. (2007). Heteronormativity and the Exclusion of Bisexuality in Psychology. In V. Clarke and E. Peel (eds.) *Out in Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470713099.ch6

Barker, M. H., Bowes-Catton, H., Iantaffi, A., Cassidy, A., & Brewer, L. (2008). British bisexuality: A snapshot of bisexual representations and identities in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Bisexuality, 8*(1–2), 141–162.

Barker, M., & Langdridge, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Understanding non-monogamies.* Routledge.

Barker, M., Richards, C., Jones, R., Bowes-Catton, H., & Plowman, T. (2012). *The bisexuality report: Bisexual inclusion in LGBT equality and diversity.* Open University.

Bergstrand, C. R. *& Sinski, J. B. (2010). Swinging in America: Love, sex and marriage in the 21st century.* ABC-CLIO.

Big Eye Agency. (2021). *Gender: Beyond the binary: Bigeye National Study 2021*. https://lp.bigeyeagency.com/2021_gender_research_report/

Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender outlaw: On men, women and the rest of us*. Routledge.

Bowes-Catton, H. (2007). Resisting the binary: Discourses of identity and diversity in bisexual politics 1988–1996. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review, 8*(1), 58–70.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Breetveld, R. (2020). Forms of bisexual injustice - Bi, being, and becoming a knower. In E. Maliepaard & R. Baumgartner (Eds.), *Bisexuality in Europe* (pp. 149–162). Routledge.

Butler, J. (1999). Revisiting bodies and pleasures. *Theory, Culture & Society, 16*(2), 11–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632769922050520

Caldwell, K. (2010). We exist: Intersectional in/visibility in bisexuality & disability. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 30*(3/4), 824.

Callis, A. S. (2013). The black sheep of the pink flock: Labels, stigma, and bisexual identity. *Journal of Bisexuality, 13*(1), 82–105.

Cascais, A. F. (2006). Diferentes como só nós. O associativismo GLBT português em três andamentos. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais, 76*, 109–126. https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.807

Cascais, A. F. (2020). Portugal 1974–2010: Da Revolução dos Cravos ao bouquet do casamento. *Melanges De La Casa De Velazquez, 50*(1), 163–187. https://doi.org/10.4000/mcv.12442

Cooper, D. (1993). An engaged state: Sexuality, governance, and potential for change. In J. Bristow & A. R. Wilson (Eds.), *Activating theory: Lesbian, gay, bisexual politics* (pp. 190–218). Lawrence & Wishart.

Davy, Z. (2011). *Recognizing transsexuals: Personal, political and medicolegal embodiment*. Ashgate.

Eadie, J. (1993). Activating bi/sexuality: Towards a bisexual politics. In J. Bristow & A. R. Wilson (Eds.), *Activating theory: Lesbian, gay, bisexual politics* (pp. 139–155). Lawrence and Wishart.

Emens, E. (2004). *Monogamy's law: Compulsory monogamy and polyamorous existence*. University of Chicago Public Law & Legal Theory Working Paper No. 58. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.506242.

Esterberg, K. (2002). The bisexual menace: Or will the real bisexual please stand up? In D. Richardson & S. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of lesbian and gay studies* (pp. 215–228). Sage.

Evans, D. T. (1993). *Sexual citizenship: The material construction of sexualities*. Routledge.

Fahs, B. (2009). Compulsory bisexuality? The challenges of modern sexual fluidity. *Journal of Bisexuality, 9*(3–4), 431–449. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316661

Ferreira, E. (2015). Movimento Lésbico em Portugal: Percursos e desafios. *Faces de Eva, 34*, 35–50.

Flanders, C. E. (2016). Bisexuality, social identity, and well-being: An exploratory study. *Sexualities, 19*(5–6), 497–516.

Fox, R. (1995). Bisexual Identities. In A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 48–86). Oxford University Press.

FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency). (2020). *European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey: Report*. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf

Galupo, M., Davis, K., Grynkiewicz, A., & Mitchell, R. (2014). Conceptualization of sexual orientation identity among sexual minorities: Patterns across sexual and gender identity. *Journal of Bisexuality, 14*(3–4), 433–456. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.933466

Ghorashi, H., & Ponzoni, E. (2014). Reviving agency: Taking time and making space for rethinking diversity and inclusion. *European Journal of Social Work, 17*(2), 161–174. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2013.777332

Gurevich, M., Mathieson, C. M., Bower, J., & Dhayanandhan, B. (2007). Disciplining bodies, desires and subjectivities: Sexuality and HIV-positive women. *Feminism & Psychology, 17*(1), 9–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353507072910

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575–599.

Hayfield, N. (2020). *Bisexual and Pansexual Identities: Exploring and Challenging Invisibility and Invalidation* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429464362

Hearn, J., et al. (2011). Understanding gender: Some implications for science and technology. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, 36*(2), 103–113.

Herek, K., Amaro, H., & Melton, G. (1991). Avoiding heterosexist bias in psychological research. *American Psychological Association, 46*(9), 957–963. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.46.9.957

Hines, S. (2009). A pathway to diversity?: Human rights, citizenship and the politics of transgender. *Contemporary Politics, 15*(1), 87–102.

Hines, S., & Sanger, T. (2010). *Transgender Identities: Towards a Social Analysis of Gender Diversity*. New York: Routledge. [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2019666658/

ILGA Europe. (2021). *Annual review of the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe and Central Asia*. https://rainbow-europe.org/sites/default/files/annual-report/Annual-Review-Full-2021.pdf

Isin, E. (2017). Performative Citizenship. In A. Shachar, R. Bauböck, I. Bloemraad, & M. Vink (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (pp. 500–523). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Isin, E. F. (2019). Doing rights with things. In K. Evert, P. Hildebrandt, S. Peters, M. Schaub, K. Wildner, & G. Ziemer (Eds.), *Performing citizenship: Bodies, agencies, limitations* (pp. 45–56). Palgrave Macmillan.

James, C. (1996). Denying complexity: The dismissal and appropriation of bisexuality in queer, lesbian and gay theory. In B. Beemyn & M. Eliason (Eds.), *Queer studies: A lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender anthology* (pp. 217–240). New York University Press.

Jorm, A., Korten, A., Rodgers, B., Jacomb, P., & Christensen, H. (2002). Sexual orientation and mental health: Results from a community survey of young and middle – Aged adults. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 180*(5), 423–427. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.180.5.423

Kaplan, M. B. (1997). *Sexual justice: Democratic citizenship and the politics of desire*. Routledge.

Klesse, C. (2011). Shady characters, untrustworthy partners, and promiscuous sluts: Creating bisexual intimacies in the face of heteronormativity and biphobia. *Journal of Bisexuality, 11*, 227–244.

Liguori, A. L., & Lamas, M. (2003). Commentary: Gender, sexual citizenship and HIV/AIDS. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 5*(1), 87–90.

Maliepaard, E. (2015). Bisexual citizenship in the Netherlands: On homoemancipation and bisexual representations in national emancipation policies. *Sexualities, 18*(4), 377–393. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460714550906

Maliepaard, E. (2017). Bisexuality in the Netherlands: Connecting Bisexual Passing, Communities, and Identities. *Journal of Bisexuality, 17*(3), 325–348, https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1342214

Maliepaard, E. (2018). Disclosing bisexuality or coming out? Two different realities for bisexual people in the Netherlands. *Journal of Bisexuality, 18*(2), 145–167.

Maliepaard, E., & Baumgartner, R. (Eds.). (2020). *Bisexuality in Europe: Sexual citizenship, romantic relationships, and Bi+ identities*. Routledge.

McLean, K. (2007). Hiding in the closet? Bisexuals, coming out and the disclosure imperative. *Journal of Sociology, 43*(2), 151–166.

Miskolci, R. (2009). A Teoria Queer e a Sociologia: O Desafio De Uma Analítica Da Normalização. *Sociologias, 11*(21), 150–182.

Monro, S. (2005). *Gender politics: Activism, citizenship and sexual diversity*. Pluto Press.

Monro, S. (2015). *Bisexuality: Identities, politics, and theories*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Monro, S., Hines, S., & Osborne, A. (2017). Is bisexuality invisible? A review of sexualities scholarship 1970–2015. *The Sociological Review, 65*(4), 663–681. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026117695488

Monro, S., & Richardson, D. (2012). *Sexuality, equality and diversity*. Red Globe Press.

Mulak, A. (2020). *National analysis on violence against LGBTI+- Poland*. Diversity and Childhood project. https://www.diversityandchildhood.eu/project-reports

Nogueira, C., & Oliveira, J. M. (Eds.). (2010). *Estudo sobre a discriminação em função da orientação sexual e da identidade de género*. Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género.

Pacheco, M. (2021, May 17). *Portugal está entre os quatro países europeus que mais respeitam os direitos das pessoas LGBTI. RTP Notícias*. https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/portugal-esta-entre-os-quatro-paises-europeus-que-mais-respeitam-os-direitos-das-pessoas-lgbti_a1320478

Petford, B. (2003). Power in the darkness: Some thoughts on the marginalisation of bisexuality in the psychological literature. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*, *4*(2), 5–13.

Pieper, M., & Bauer, R. (2005, November 5th/6th). *Call for papers: International conference on polyamory and mono-normativity*. University of Hamburg.

Plummer, K. (2003). *Intimate citizenship: Personal decisions and public dialogues*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Prell, E., & Træen, B. (2018). Minority stress and mental health among bisexual and lesbian women in Norway. *Journal of Bisexuality, 18*(3), 278–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1518180

Richardson, D. (2000). *Rethinking sexuality*. SAGE.

Richardson, D. (2018). Sexuality and citizenship. *Sexualities, 21*(8), 1256–1260. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718770450

Richardson, D., & Monro, S. (2012). *Sexuality*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Roseneil, S. (2013). Beyond citizenship? Feminism and the transformation of belonging. In S. Roseneil (Ed.), *Beyond citizenship? Citizenship, gender and diversity* (pp. 1–20). Palgrave Macmillan.

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2020). *The tenacity of the couple-norm: Intimate citizenship regimes in a changing Europe*. UCL Press.

Rust, P. C. (1995). *Bisexuality and the challenge to lesbian politics: Sex, loyalty, and revolution*. New York University Press.

Rust, P. C. (2000). Bisexuality: A contemporary paradox for women. *Journal of Social Issues, 56*, 205–221.

Santos, A. C. (2013). *Social movements and sexual citizenship in southern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Santos, A. C. (2018). Repronormativity and its others: Queering parental love in times of culturally compulsory reproduction. *Analize - Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies, 11*, 199–215.

Suess, A. (2015). *Transitar por los géneros es un derecho: Recorridos por la perspectiva de despatologización* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Universidad de Granada. https://digibug.ugr.es/handle/10481/42255

Van Lisdonk, J., & Keuzenkamp, S. (2017). Towards bi-inclusive policies: Suggestions based on research on Dutch same-sex attracted young people. *Sexuality research & social policy: journal of NSRC: SR & SP, 14*(2), 206–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-016-0241-1

Warner, M. (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory*. University of Minnesota Press.

Weiss, J. T. (2003). GL vs. BT. *Journal of Bisexuality, 3*(3–4), 25–55. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v03n03_02

Yip, A. (2008). Researching lesbian, gay, and bisexual Christians and Muslims: Some thematic reflections. *Sociological Research Online, 13*(1), 116–129.

Yoshino, K. (2000). The epistemic contract of bisexual erasure. *Stanford Law School, 53*(2), 353.

Yost, M. R., & Thomas, G. D. (2012). Gender and Binegativity: Men's and Women's attitudes toward male and female bisexuals. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 41*(3), 691–702. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9767-8

CHAPTER 4

Biocriminals, Racism, and the Law: Friendship as Public Disorder

Pablo Pérez Navarro

> The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we shall clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against Fascism. (Walter Benjamin, *Thesis of the Philosophy of History*)

> I'm sure I'm right, that the disappearance of friendship as a social relation and the declaration of homosexuality as a social/political/medical problem are the same process. (Michel Foucault, *Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity*)

Since its irruption in European civil codes during the nineteenth century, the notion of public order has become an essential part of state regulations of gender, kinship, and reproduction. Its common uses in the hands of governments, but also jurors and other public officers, entail the exercise of specific forms of sovereign power, often surpassing the limits of

P. Pérez Navarro (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal
e-mail: pabloperez@ces.uc.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_4

any meaningful separation of powers in Western liberal democracies. In this sense, while partly overlapping with the logics of exceptionality explored by Giorgio Agamben (2005), public order is the "dispositive", in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault, 1975, p. 133), through which sovereign power is disseminated in a microphysical form in the social field, extending its influence to (and from) every instance of the administrative and judicial structure of the nation state. This "internal" dissemination of the works of public order is in no way independent, though, from the biopolitical management of the borders, margins, and constitutive outside the community or the nation. On the contrary, the introduction of this strikingly slippery concept that, for some, "does not have the same meaning in different legal systems, and may not have any meaning at all in some legal systems" (Kiss, 1981, p. 295)[1] has served, from its inception, to put the legislative apparatus of the state at the service of reinforcing the internal *status quo*, in the very same gesture that "defends" the social order from alien and potentially contagious relational practices. In this sense, the biopolitics of public order are inseparable from the history of Western racism and anti-immigration policies, to which they belong as one of its vaguest and inapprehensible, yet ubiquitous and naturalized, constitutive elements.

In the name of public order, a wide range of "disordered" embodied life projects and relational practices, including gender transitioning, non-monogamous relationships, and queer reproductive projects, to name a few, are subjected to diverse forms of legal and moral scrutiny. However, in a similar way that migratory fluxes can be subjected to various forms of state violence, but are hardly ever stopped, so are deviant bodies and dissident relational practices exposed to "unequal distributions" of vulnerability (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 2), but it is hard to erase them from the cultural and political landscape. In the face of such a constitutive failure, a set of divisive questions arises: How are we to understand the incapacity of liberal state institutions, such as marriage, to contain the flux of "disordered" life projects and forms of relationality? And how can we

[1] Law studies provide as many definitions of public order as they raise concerns over its lack of one. As a preliminary approach, I suggest this eloquent definition from the early twentieth century France: "In legal language, '*ordre public*' is the collection of conditions—legislative, departmental, and judicial—which assure, by the normal and regular functioning of the national institutions, the state of affairs necessary to the life, to the progress, and to the prosperity of the country and of its inhabitants (….) It is neither a science nor a branch of the law. *It is a conception, and one so extensive that it rests upon our entire social structure and touches every cog of our legal organization* [emphasis added]" (Bernier, 1929, p. 85).

best describe this impulse towards relational heterogeneity and experimentation? Strategically speaking, should we aim at making already available institutions more inclusive, in a similar way that we can struggle to expand the scope of refugee and asylum policies, or should we aim, rather, at "opening of the borders" of state biopolitics of gender, kinship, and reproduction altogether? Moreover, are these two strategies compatible with one another, or do they just work in two opposite directions? If that were the case, is any of these paths intrinsically farther from the risks of neoliberal governance? Summing up, how can we best resist the order of public order?

This set of questions is not new, in the sense that it inhabits the history of radical feminist thinking, queer politics, and the encounter between (bio)power and resistance in a broad sense. We are bound to them, however, if we are to occupy a "critically queer" political position, to borrow Judith Butler's phrasing (1993). With them in mind, thus, and partly inspired by Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007), this chapter departs from Agamben's criticism of the logics of exceptionalism in order to expose some of its parallelisms, and differences, with the biopolitics of public order as such. Then, the relationship with the racist European genealogy of the very notion of public order will be considered, followed by an exploration of some of its works on state regulations of gender, kinship, and reproduction. By doing so, I hope to expose some genealogical links among the notion of public order and contemporary configurations of sexual and relational citizenship (Santos, 2019), including the homonationalist frame discussed by Jasbir Puar and whose links with monogamy, the institution of marriage, and French civil law may run somewhat deeper than we may think. Finally, I will turn to the critically *biocriminal* possibilities that remain inscribed in the forms of experimental cohabitation that Michel Foucault used to refer to as "friendship".

Hyper-Sovereign Dreams

In a similar way that, for Agamben, securitarian works of the state of exception concentrate nondemocratic forms of power in the hands of governments, the notion of public order does the same in those of jurors and other public officers in key state institutions. Moreover, the "quasilegislative" function of public order (Navarro, 1953, p. 61) would also extend the rule of law beyond the scope of written laws, hence blurring the distinction among judicial and legislative powers. There is, however, only one

president or prime minister, but countless judges. In that sense, whenever a court grounds its sentence in the name of the vague mandates of public order, it exerts both an *anti-* and a *hyper-*sovereign gesture: where the state of exception concentrates sovereign power, public order distributes it through the administrative and judiciary structures of the state. In this sense, the biopolitics of public order entail a profound destabilization of the Foucauldian opposition between sovereign, disciplinary power, associated with the figure of the "king", and the microphysical distribution of biopolitical governmentality.

At the same time, since the irruption of public order in modern private law and, more specifically, in the sixth article of the French civil code, where it is established that "public agreements must not contravene the laws which concern *public order and good morals*" (The Code Napoleon, 1824), public order has been closely linked to state policing of the moral order of society.[2] In this sense, public order was conceived as a limit to the exercise of negative freedoms in Western liberal thinking, intensely overlapping with the moral policing of the so-called private sphere. Furthermore, from that moment on, public order-based policy has been directly involved in the delimitation of what counts as a public or a private space in each historical context. Turkish historian Ferdan Ergut makes this link explicit when he notes that:

> The definitions of "private" and "public" spheres are constantly at work in public order policing. This is because of the special character of the term "public order" (. …) The lives of those who do not belong to any corporate body such as a family, guild, factory, etc., were treated as "public" and their lives were opened to police intervention. The police themselves justify their policing practices according to the dominant perceptions of "public" and "private" spaces. Furthermore, detection of "disorder" is in itself a subjective judgement that is difficult to disprove. (Ergut, 2007, p. 176)

This reflection stems from an analysis of the constitution of the public sphere in the late Ottoman Empire, but the works of public order over the moral distinction of the private from the public are anything but exclusive to any specific legal system. At the very least, it seems to be inherent to most receptions and national variations of the sixth article of the French

[2] Nowadays, this link is especially explicit in Anglo-Saxon criminology, since "crimes against-public order" stand for so-called victimless crimes, that is, crimes of an explicit moral nature, with the prosecution of pornography and sex-work as paradigmatic examples.

civil code. For instance, the Spanish Supreme Court provided a good example of this relation of public order with the moral realm when, literally referencing a sentence from the time of Franco's dictatorship,[3] it considered public order to be "integrated by those judicial principles, *public and private*, political, economic, *moral and even religious*, that are absolutely mandatory for the conservation of the social order in a given country and time [emphasis added]".[4] In this ambitiously all-encompassing but still profoundly indeterminate way, the court aimed at providing a "definition" of the otherwise opaque seven references to the public order in the Spanish civil code that still mimic the French one by simply juxtaposing "moral y orden público" [moral and public order].[5] In another telling example, the Portuguese civil code establishes no less than 13 times the limits of sociolegal legitimacy in the name of its "ordem pública" by adding the very Napoleonic complement "ofensiva dos bons costumes" [or offensive of good manners].[6] In Italy, for the sake of sticking to Southern Europe, where the civil code evolved from a direct translation of the Napoleonic Code, the correlation between "ordine pubblico" [public order] and "buon costume" [good manners] reaches up to nine mentions,[7] the most striking of which limits the "act of disposition over one's own body"[8] in the name of both. And the list could easily go on, provided that the emancipation of public order from the moral sphere is by large an unresolved matter in Western legal systems, serving as grounds for a fundamental part of its current biopolitical scope.

There is, at this point, another important contrast to be made between the order of public order and that of the state of exception. In Agamben's view, refugee and prisoner camps are the paradigmatic spaces of the state

[3] Thus, literally inscribing the public order of the dictatorship in the temporality of the democracy. The court ruling providing the definition dates from 1966 (Spanish Supreme Court - RJ 1966\1684).

[4] Spanish Supreme Court, April 19, 2010.

[5] Specifically, in the article establishing to the limits of the rule of customary law in the absence of written laws (article 2) and also in the Spanish adaptation of the sixth article of the French civil code, limiting the "pacts, clauses and conditions" (article 1255) that can lawfully be established.

[6] Out of 22 references to the public order in the Portuguese civil code, the moralizing complement "or offensive of good manners" is included in Arts. 271, 280, 281, 281bis, 334, and 340.

[7] Out of 12 total references to the public order in the Italian civil code, Articles 5, 23, 25, 31, 31 bis, 634, 1343, 1354, and 2031 add the formula "and good manners".

[8] Article 5 of the Italian civil code.

of exception. The properly biopolitical, totalitarian gesture of the camp, in particular, would reside in the way it dehumanizes prisoners and refugees, reducing them from their status as subjects of rights to that of "mere bodies". Public order, for its part, points to an equally intimate, but quite different, relation between *bare* bodies and the state. Let me illustrate this by turning briefly to one of Michel Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, where he established a particular relation between bodies, sexuality, and reproduction that is crucial, in my view, for the understanding of the biopolitical works of public order:

> On the one hand, sexuality, being an eminently corporeal mode of behavior, is a matter for individualizing disciplinary controls that take the form of a permanent surveillance (. …) But because it also has procreative effects, sexuality is also inscribed, takes effect, in broad biological processes that concern not the bodies of individuals but the element, the multiple unity of population. Sexuality exists at the point where body and population meet. And so it is a matter for discipline, but also a matter of regularization. (Foucault, 1997, p. 252)

Therefore, sexuality, for Foucault, would act as a surface loaded with biopolitical transcendence, where the encounter between the body and the population takes place, not only for being an "eminently" corporeal mode of behaviour, reducing human activity, as it were, to that of "mere bodies" but also, and crucially so, as a result of its reproductive dimension. In this sense, where the exceptionality of prison and refugee camps deals with the production of less-than, or simply "non-citizens", the dispositive of sexuality deals with their *reproduction* and, through it, with the set of norms and exclusionary frames of intelligibility sedimented in the legal frames of national citizenship. That would be the *ordinary* space of operation of the biopolitics of public order and of its multiple ramifications over the biopolitics of gender, kinship, and reproduction. In other words, where the state of exception represents the inclusive exclusion of those who are *no longer* treated as citizens, if they ever were, public order is the name of the biolegal dispositive that, while operating also in the threshold between life and the law, turns bare bodies into properly gendered and reproductive sexual citizens.

The Biopolitics of Public Order

Where the refugee camp, for Agamben, represents an exemplary instance of the logics of exceptionality, the paradigmatic form of the biopolitics of public order is no other than the institution of monogamous and reproductive marriage sustained over the binary conception of gender. This seems to be the case, at the very least, since the jurist Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis introduced his sole reference to the notion of public order in his preliminary address on the first draft of the Napoleonic Code, referring to it as a tool assuring that "the legislator can, in the interests of public order, establish such impediments [to civil marriages] as they deem appropriate" (Portalis, 2016, p. 17). The Islamophobic undertones of this link are made especially evident when, in a text filled with references to the moral advantages of European climates over those places of the world where polygamy might be admitted, he expresses his wish that "the publicity, the solemnity, of marriages may alone prevent *those vague and illicit unions* [of uncivilized peoples] that are so unfavorable to the propagation of the species" (Portalis, 2016, p. 16). Ever since, and emulating the propagation of the species, as it were, uses of public order propagated in a chain of performative repetitions favoured by the imperial and colonial system, way beyond the limits of Europe, from Latin America to Japan (Noriega, 2007; Novoa Monreal, 1976). As a result, the senses of public order were disseminated geographically and semantically, without ever abandoning a vagueness of its meaning that, as many law scholars have argued, poses specific authoritarian threats. This is made especially clear, perhaps, in the field of public law, where the maintenance of public order acquires its so-called material sense, associated with the task of state security forces. Nonetheless, its biopolitical role as a fundamental organizer of the interrelated fields of gender, reproduction, and kinship, with equally arbitrary, authoritarian, and "material" effects, largely remains until the present.

Let me illustrate this point by recourse to a few contemporary examples of the works of public order-based policy in the so-called private realm. Gender identity, to begin with, is strictly policed precisely in the name of public order. An important part of this takes place through the intimate relations that Western states tend to establish among public order and personal data comprised in the civil registration and/or civil status, that is to say, bureaucratic information such as date of birth, nationality, and marital status, including two of the main gender performatives administered

by the state: proper names and legal gender marks.[9] Romania provided a telling example when, in 2016, a national court refused legal gender recognition to a Romanian trans man who had already obtained it in Italy, on the understanding that "a request for legal gender recognition *pertained* [emphasis added] to the public order, and therefore fell within the exclusive remit of Romanian courts" (Köler & Ehrt, 2016, p. 63). Similarly, in the case of Ms Stephanie Nicot, a French trans woman, the courts grounded their forced sterilization policies resulting from their cis-reproductive concern that, otherwise, "a person who is male in appearance would continue to have female genitalia and could thus give birth to a child",[10] on the basis that "the information pertaining to civil status *belonged to the public order* [emphasis added] and therefore it could not be left to the discretion of the individual" (Köler & Ehrt, 2016, p. 51). Indeed, as these and other similar cases show, the information comprised in civil status, including proper names and gender marks, is commonly considered as a public order issue in Western legal systems.

In a similar way, the allegedly inherent monogamous character of public order is invoked as a protective mantra by European courts, on the basis that polygamous marriages "present a threat to the national public order, which is why most of these [European] countries hesitate to recognise their validity and tend to activate the public order reservation" (Stybnarova, 2020, p. 106). Typical examples range from the denial of widow's pensions and family reunions to migrants and refugees alike (Welfens & Bonjour, 2020), to plain deportations. In a recent, blatant case, the National High Court of Spain refused the appeal of a Senegalese citizen whose residence permit renewal had been denied due to his polygamous civil status, on the basis that polygamy would "*sicken* the Spanish public order".[11] The rhetorical assumption that public order can be "made sick" has, indeed, a history that precedes even the French Revolution[12] and

[9] For a discussion of administrative control over gender performatives and their relation with the construction of national identities, focusing in the case of Spain, see Pérez Navarro and Silva (2020).

[10] *Case of A.P., Garçon and Nicot V.*, (April 6, 2017), European Court of Human Rights, France, Strasbourg.

[11] *SAN 465/2019*, (February 4, 2019), National High Court of Spain.

[12] The expression "Il y a quelque chose [in the Jesuit institute] *qui repugne à l'ordre public*" is already used in the *Comptes rendus des constitutions et de la doctrine des sois-disans jésuites* (Bertrand, 1762, p. 5) in a passage that closely links public order, the hostility to Jesuit institutions, and their disgusting effects on the sovereign's physical body.

nowadays is still very expressive of the role of public order as protection from moral contagion. As a result, and despite the ebullient historical variations and resignifications of public order, the premise that "public order is monogamous in the Western world" (Noriega, 2007, p. 2) exposes non-monogamous kinship, including polygamous, polyamorous, and multiparent family structures to extensively naturalized forms of social vulnerability and legal discrimination (Klesse, 2019; see Pérez Navarro, 2017). In this sense, the biopolitics of public order impose their monogamous "relational performativity" (Santos, 2019) *within* the community, the nation, or even the "civilization", in the very same move that restricts their permeability to alien arrangements of sexuality and kinship coming from their constitutive and racialized outsides.

Accordingly, reproductive technologies that defy the binary gender norms or the monogamous organization of kinship represent a common target of public order-based policy. Transnational surrogacy arrangements are, no doubt, a case in point, especially when involving the presence of same-sex parents on birth certificates. This has been made evident the proliferation of legal struggles in European national and communitarian courts in recent years, frequently entailing the intervention of public order-based arguments (Fenton-Glynn, 2017; Igareda González, 2019). Turning again to the telling example of Spain, where surrogacy arrangements have no legal backup in the national territory, the fact stands out that the only surrogacy case that has reached the level of the Constitutional Court involves a birth certificate with two fathers which, it has been argued, would be at odds with the national public order. The role of public order in consolidating heterosexual reproduction as the solid infrastructure of kinship in this case is specially made clear when considering that gay and lesbian kinship relationships have been formally equal to heterosexual ones since 2005 and, also, that the recourse of same-sex parents to gestational surrogacy represents a small proportion of the total of surrogacies performed abroad every year (Pérez Navarro, 2018).

It is, therefore, under the influence of the lasting "marriage" between public order and the cisgender, monogamous, reproductive couple in the Napoleonic Code that a wide range of sexual and racial others, from queer to transgender and non-monogamous relationships, are subjected to the *état de siege* of Western regimes of "sexual exceptionalism" (Puar, 2007). Persuasively, Puar has argued that queer bodies are constituted as such as a result of an assemblage of discourses, affects, and norms within the terms provided by an imperialist frame hierarchically distributing the legitimacy

of claims of national sovereignty in the international arena. For the most part, Puar relates this regime to US military campaigns and foreign policy and to the various ways in which the Islamic Other is transfigured from an erotically invested "site of homophobic fantasy" (Butler, 1995, p. 12) into a threat to the emerging, queer-friendly public order of the West, hence justifying the exercise of various forms of state violence in the name of the protection of both public order and national queer communities. However, taking into account the role of public order policy in recent evolution of Western securitarian paradigms, notably so after *both* 9/11 (see Hörnqvist, 2004) *and* COVID-19,[13] could a reading of its European genealogy shed a new light on the genealogical bonds established among racial politics and state regulations of the sexual field? If that were the case, what is there to be learned from the sexual imaginaries involved in the racist genealogy of the "fortress Europe"? This line of inquiry seems to be a good complement to Puar's understanding of homonationalism, especially when considering the role of public order as a biolegal dispositive in European imperial and colonial projects since the times of the first French Empire at the very least and its works as a shield against the moral and cultural influences of the "Oriental world".

Racism as Public Order

Therefore, to understand the role racism plays in the French genealogy of public order, I would like to turn briefly (again) to Foucault's account of biopolitics. At the end of one of the most influent discussions of biopower that Foucault offered in his lectures at the College de France, he introduced a crucial analysis of its relations with state racism. If biopolitics, he argued, refers to the governmental rationality substituting the sovereign right to kill by the regulation of populations considered primarily as a community of living beings, then how do modern nation states justify their "need to kill people, to kill populations, and to kill civilizations" (1997, p. 257)? For Foucault, this necropolitical side of biopower, as Mbembe refers to it, would not reside in a specific kind of governmental

[13] This chapter was written before non-pharmaceutical responses to COVID-19 strengthened the link among public order policing, bio-securitarian paradigms, and racial politics in previously unthinkable ways. While revising it, I decided to include this sole reference to the ongoing effects of the health crisis on the biopolitics of public order. For a preliminary discussion, please refer to Pérez Navarro (2020).

rationality. In his view, the category that makes it possible for the political economy of biopower to exercise the right to kill *on its own terms* would be no other than race. In his account, therefore, racism would be the name of the biopolitical strategy through which the Other is depicted as a threat to the well-being of the group and the moral or the eugenic health of the population—not to mention "the survival of the species", as it is typically argued in the rejection of polygamy in the Orientalist tradition, from Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* to Portalis' presentation of the Napoleonic Code. Through racism, Foucault argues, the state performs its killing function in the name of the protection of life itself. Furthermore, departing from the model of state racism, the eugenic logic of racism would extend its rule to a whole spectrum of deviant subjects: "Once the mechanism of the *biocriminal* was called upon to make it possible to execute or banish criminals, criminality was conceptualized in racist terms. The same applies to madness and the same applies to various anomalies" (Foucault, 1997, p. 258).

There is, however, a topological ambivalence involved in this account of the right to kill. The literal or metaphorical killing—"when I say killing, I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death of some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on" (Foucault, 1997, p. 256)—of the biocriminal Other cannot be depicted as the killing of an *absolute* Other. Otherwise, the racist construction of the threat of miscegenation as a model for moral and cultural degeneration would lose its sense. That is to say, the target of state racism *always already* belongs to the population whose well-being justifies its killing: an absolutely alien Other can hardly be constructed as a threat of contamination. In this sense, the biocriminal is never fully outside nor a member of the population. She/he defines, rather, where its margins are. Never within nor fully outside, hence, of any historical configuration of citizenship, the racial and sexual biocriminal would, like Agamben's refugee, be a "limit concept" (1998, p. 134).

The biopolitics of public order are embedded in this topological ambivalence, as an effect of the killing function defining the inside, the outside, and the margins of the community or the nation. The *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* of 1951 provides a paradigmatic example when it establishes that states shall not expel lawfully a refugee save on the grounds of national security *or public order* (The UN Refugee Agency, 2010, art. 32). By doing so, the Convention reenacts the understanding of public

order as a legal shield against potential threats coming from the outside of the nation state, while, at the same time, however, it posits public order as the very element of the nation that is in need for protection from external threats. Through this gesture, which is also paradigmatic of the uses of public order in international private law, public order is posited as the lens through which vulnerable others can be read as that which the state is in need of protection from. Unsurprisingly, the temporality of the operation is close to an indefinite detention turned inside out, in the form of a preventive, "indefinite expulsion" that shares its extralegal dimension and the racist topology exposed in Judith Butler's (2004) and Giorgio Agamben's (2005) criticism of detainee and refugee camps, respectively.

Allow me to further illustrate this by recourse to an interesting essay by Chilean jurist Eduardo Novoa Monreal, in which he defends the nationalization of the Chilean copper industry from neoliberal, universalist understandings of the international public order. In particular, he turns to what he refers to as the "unlimited" use of the concept of public order by French jurists, reading it as a sign of judicial *and* cultural imperialism. According to him, this would be made especially evident in the work of influent legal theorists of twentieth-century France such as Lerebours-Pigeonnière and Loussoam, who explicitly refer to the role that public order plays in defending Europe from legal and moral influences coming from "states of inferior or radically different civilization" and to the necessity of "protecting our Western civilization against the debilitating factor that would result *from the penetration of the customs of Orientals who are already established in Europe* [emphasis added] or from the assimilation of Europeans to Oriental customs" (Lerebours-Pigeonniére & Loussouam, 1970, p. 500). The ambivalence of the margins of a civilization that is allegedly in need from protection—internal and external at once—is quite clear in the Islamophobic tradition of public order that Novoa Monreal refers to. In this work, he was primarily worried by the works of public order in the Chilean's autonomy in economic matters, but he does emphatically notice that public order is primarily a moral tool of the judicial system in the field of family law. Moreover, the history of public order, he argues, would be bound to the project of avoiding the conflicts arising "among Western countries recognizing monogamous marriage and Muslim countries accepting polygamy" (Novoa Monreal, 1976, p. 134). For that reason, he argues, the proper field of application of public order would be no other than family relations, including the recognition of paternity, acceptation or not of divorce, and the like. It is precisely in this

sense that public order defines and operates within a multidimensional biopolitical space linking the fields of gender, sexuality, reproduction, and kinship in such a way that they sustain an Islamophobic narrative constructed upon a set of constitutive exclusions of the idea of the West.

Of course, what counts as "disorder" changes in different ways and paces in different locations. Biocriminality is not an ahistorical social marker but a contested field where political struggles take place, often resulting in the sedimentation of once "exceptional" norms in the public order of the nation. That would be precisely how the protection of a restricted spectrum of gay and lesbian and trans rights has crystallized in the ordinary public order in some Western states, accompanied by a narrative of historical progress from de facto to civil unions to gay and lesbian marriage, with the monogamous structure of kinship as its cornerstone, the heterosexual organization of the reproductive field as its sound infrastructure, and binary gender as its glass ceiling. That this narrative of progress is not at odds with the mandates of monogamy constitutes a good sign of the contemporary strength of the Western/Oriental divide that it emerges from. Moreover, the European genealogy of the biopolitics of public order may deepen our understanding of the homonationalist frame of international relationships by situating the emerging, gay-friendly layer of citizenship in a specifically European, historical relation to postcolonial sexual politics.

Friendship as Public Disorder

It should be clear by now that, despite its fragmentations and its emerging forms, public order is a state performative of the social *status quo*. Therefore, while it is true that jurors and public servants invoke its name in often arbitrary ways, producing new meanings for an otherwise empty signifier, they do so only to allow for the effective distribution of its deeply normalizing inertia. As a result, even the most unexpected resignifications of public order works to slow down the pace of the changing landscapes of the relational field. In other words, the performative power of public order would be antagonistic to gender, reproductive, and relational dissidence in a broad sense.

At this point, it is not easy to take this antagonism into account without reducing it to just another variation of the repressive hypothesis and of the judicial model of power against which Michel Foucault warned us about in his *History of Sexuality*. With that in mind, in the search for theoretical

and political alternatives for thinking resistance to the mandates of public order, it might be useful to turn to Foucault's insights given to gay magazines such as *Christopher Street*, where he provides a compelling account of the tension existing among of law-sanctioned relational structures and possibilities for overcoming them, a tension that exceeds the relation with the law without being finally independent from it. For sexual countercultures to be part of a political project, he argued, they should exceed individual rights in direction to the creation of a "mode de vie" (Foucault, 1994a, p. 158). That is to say, they should cherish a kind of relational creativity entailing the overcoming of the terms of recognition provided by state institutions to what counts as a legitimate, lawful form of sexuality, kinship, or cohabitation and the parodic subversion of the law itself. In one of those interviews, he provided a quite specific example:

> We should fight against the impoverishment of the relational fabric. We should secure recognition for relations of provisional coexistence, adoption [of children] or—why not?—of one adult by another. Why shouldn't I adopt a friend who's ten years younger than I am? And even if he's ten years older? Rather than arguing that rights are fundamental and natural to the individual, we should try to imagine and create a new relational right that permits all possible types of relations to exist and not be prevented, blocked, or annulled by impoverished relational institutions. (Foucault, 1994a, p. 158)

By suggesting the use of adoption in a creative way for which the institution was not intended, Foucault was not solely thinking of the political interest of producing alternative kinship and sexual bonds. In a way, he certainly was, but he was *also* thinking about how to turn these alternatives into a proliferation of institutional mutations. Therefore, the political move that Foucault had in mind encompasses a desire for investing in the kind of "vague and illicit unions" that Portalis was so concerned about in the presentation of the Napoleonic Code. Moreover, he inscribes that desire in the very same *quasilegislative* political realm that is, precisely, the domain of public order: one step backwards, within the field of the written law, and the other decidedly beyond its limits.

As suggested above, the name given by Foucault to resistance within that realm—that is to say, the antagonistic force to public order—was none other than friendship. In effect, in the aforementioned interview, but also in others like "Sex, Power, and the Politics if Identity" (1994b) and "Friendship as a Way of Life" (1994c), Foucault attributes to friendship

the role of exciting our political imagination towards the radical transformation of the liberal state institutions. In a way, Foucault points to an anarchist-like project of producing new forms of relationality beyond the normalizing powers of the state that is, at the same time, bound with the project of producing alternative arrangements of private law as a means for subverting the order of the public order. This is, in my view, a productive liminal position and, also, a criticism of liberal struggles for individual or minority rights, which I take to be similar to the one Lisa Duggan points to in "Queering the State":

> What I am suggesting in substance is *that we look beyond the language of rights claims for a fixed minority and calls for antidiscrimination* [emphasis added] (rhetorical positioning largely borrowed from the civil rights movement and feminism), and instead borrow from and transform another liberal discourse, that surrounding the effort to disestablish state religion, to separate church and state. We might become the new disestablishmentarians, the state religion we wish to disestablish being the religion of heteronormativity. (Duggan, 1994, p. 9)

Following Duggan's account of "disestablishment" as a suggestive model for thinking queer struggles, I would like to conclude with a final example that may shed light on the antagonism existing between friendship, in the Foucauldian sense, and public order. It is related to a worrying episode of Spanish gay and lesbian activist discourse that took place in 2017, when a group of Saharawian migrants was retained at Madrid airport, waiting to initiate their petitions for political asylum. Meanwhile, they were in a legal limbo, not asylum seekers yet nor just undocumented migrants. In the interim, some of them were accused of using homophobic slurs among them to refer to their interpreter, without knowing that he was in fact their interpreter nor that he could actually understand them. On the sole grounds of this accusation, two of them were directly deported and, therefore, deprived from their right to even ask for asylum. Promptly, the LGTB+ Collective of Madrid, COGAM, along with two LGBT police collectives, among other groups, published a letter supporting the deportation (Fernández García, 2018). In a way, this letter reflected the growing force of the punitive approach to hate speech in the emerging set of regional laws (not including Madrid at the time) in Spain, to the point that any concerns over the violation of the rights of refugees was superseded by the determined will to ban homophobic slurs, that is to say, to ban their

use by migrants in a particularly vulnerable position, given that its use within the national territory—by migrants and nationals alike—is only prosecuted by administrative sanctions and that only in a few regional jurisdictions.

As a response, the manifesto *Not in our name* was published and signed by a heterogeneous group of activists and collectives in rejection of the deportation and, also, in solidarity with Sahrawian struggles for political autonomy. Curiously, even though it started with the words "We, fags, dykes, trans and other dissidents" (Orgullos Críticos, 2017) and was signed primarily by queer and LGBTQ collectives, including Christian LGBT groups, the final list of signatories included refugees' rights organizations, migrant collectives of all sorts, sex worker organizations, anti-islamophobia associations, anti-austerity groups, and gender nonconforming children's parents collectives, to name a few. Unfortunately, in a sense, the manifesto was utterly useless, as the deportation had already taken place. Yet in another sense, the encounter among these collectives offered an example of radical cohabitation among disparate political cultures, one that was intended, precisely, to resist the increasingly violent effects of homonationalism over the mobility of racialized others and, hence, over the limits of cohabitation in the public sphere. In this sense, the manifesto expressed a collective desire for cohabitation precisely intended to disestablish the homonationalist layer of racial and sexual citizenship, that is to say, a desire for friendship as public disorder. And that might well be a particularly productive kind of desire, for it points to directly into the risky path that any radical sexual politics needs to venture into at one point or another, even if it is at the risk of losing, in the encounter with its "others", its most cherished features identifying it as radical, as sexual, or as politics.

References

Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford University Press.

Agamben, G. (2005). *State of exception*. The University of Chicago Press.

Bernier, M. J. B. (1929). Droit public and ordre public. *Transactions of the Grotius Society, 15*, 83–91.

Bertrand, M. (1762). *Comptes rendus des constitutions et de la doctrine des sois-disans jésuites*. Conseilleurs-Commissaires au Parlement à Metz.

Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. *GLQ, a Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 1*(1), 17–32.

Butler, J. (1995). Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of post-modernism. In S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornel, & N. Fraser (Eds.), *Feminist contentions: A philosophical exchange* (pp. 3–21). Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.

Butler, J., & Athanasiou, A. (2013). *Dispossession: The performative in the political. Conversations with Athena Athanasiou*. Polity Press.

Orgullos Críticos (2017). No en nuestro nombre. *Orgullos Críticos Do Sul*. https://orgulloscriticos.wordpress.com/2017/09/04/no-en-nuestro-nombre/

Duggan, L. (1994). Queering the state. *Social Text, 39*, 1–14.

Ergut, F. (2007). Surveillance and the transformation of public sphere in the Ottoman Empire. *METU Studies in Development, 34*(2), 173–193.

Fenton-Glynn, C. (2017). International surrogacy before the European Court of Human Rights. *Journal of Private International Law, 13*(3), 546–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/17441048.2017.1385901

Fernández García, D. A. (2018). Islamofobia queerizada y resistencias musulmanas queer en tiempos de homonacionalismo. *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos, 24*, 71–88. https://doi.org/10.15366/reim2018.24.005

Foucault, M. (1975). *Surveiller et punir*. Gallimard.

Foucault, M. (1994a). The social triumph of the sexual will. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics, subjectivity and truth. The essential works of Foucault, 1954–1984* (Vol. I, pp. 157–162). The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1994b). Sex, power, and the politics if identity. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics, subjectivity and truth. The essential works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984* (Vol. I, pp. 163–175). The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1994c). Friendship as a way of life. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics, subjectivity and truth. The essential works of Foucault, 1954–1984* (Vol. I, pp. 135–140). The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1997). Society must be defended. In M. Foucault, M. Bertani, & F. Ewald (Eds.), *Lectures at the Collége de France 1975–1976*. Editions de Seuil/Gallimard.

Hörnqvist, M. (2004). The birth of public order policy. *Race & Class, 46*(1), 30–52.

Igareda González, N. (2019). Regulating surrogacy in Europe: Common problems, diverse national laws. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 26*(4), 435–446.

Kiss, A. C. (1981). Permissible limitations on rights. In L. Henkin (Ed.), *The international bill of rights: The covenant on civil and political rights* (pp. 290–301). Columbia University Press.

Klesse, C. (2019). Polyamorous parenting: Stigma, social regulation, and queer bonds of resistance. *Sociological Research Online, 24*(4), 625–643.

Köler, R., & Ehrt, J. (2016). *Legal gender recognition in Europe*. Transgender Europe (TGEU) – Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. https://tgeu.org/toolkit_legal_gender_recognition_in_europe/

Lerebours-Pigeonniére, P., & Loussouam, Y. (1970). *Droit international Privé*. Dalloz.

Navarro, M. A. (1953). El orden público en el Derecho internacional privado. *Revista Española de Derecho Internacional, 6*, 33–81.

Noriega, A. E. F. (2007). *El orden público en el derecho privado* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. http://tesis.pucp.edu.pe/repositorio/handle/20.500.12404/4680

Novoa Monreal, E. (1976). *Defensa de las nacionalizaciones ante tribunales extranjeros*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Pérez Navarro, P. (2017). Beyond inclusion: Non-monogamies and the Borders of citizenship. *Sexuality and Culture, 21*(2), 441–458. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-016-9398-2

Pérez Navarro, P. (2018). Surrogacy wars: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of reproduction. *Journal of Homosexuality, 67*, 577–599.

Pérez Navarro, P. (2020). Pandemia y orden público: el espacio de la protesta. *Voluntas: Revista Internacional de Filosofía, 11*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.5902/2179378643541

Pérez Navarro, P., & Silva, L. M. (2020). Un nombre propio: género y políticas de atribución de nombre. *Daimon, Revista Internacional de Filosofía, 79*, 117–132.

Portalis, J. M. (2016). *Preliminary address on the first draft of the civil code (1801)*. Université de Bordeaux.

Puar, J. K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press.

Santos, A. C. (2019). One at a time – LGBTQ polyamory and relational citizenship in the 21st century. *Sociological Research Online, 24*(4), 709–725. https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780419874080

Stybnarova, N. (2020). Teleology behind the prohibition of recognition of polygamous marriages under the EU family reunification directive: A critique of rule effectiveness. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 40*(1), 104–116.

The Code Napoleon. (1824). *The code Napoleon or the French civil code, literally translated from the original and official edition, published at Paris in 1804*. Charles Hunter Law Bookseller.

The UN Refugee Agency. (2010). The convention relating to the status of stateless persons. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*. UNHCR Communications and Public Information Service.

Welfens, N., & Bonjour, S. (2020). Families first? The mobilization of family norms in refugee resettlement. *International Political Sociology, 15*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olaa022

CHAPTER 5

Embodied Queer Epistemologies: A New Approach to (a Monstrous) Citizenship

Ana Cristina Santos

Historically monsters have been represented as those who do not fit, whose bodies, practices or experiences constitute powerful reminders of inadequacy, unsuitability or wrongness. However, both history and culture have demonstrated that monsters are also admired and popular. Monsters can even become heroes. Indeed, many of the heroes in mainstream literature could fit into dominant representations of monstrosity.

The central argument in this chapter stems from the ambiguity conjured up by the notion of the monster. It is a twofold argument, producing different but related results: that monsters are misfits (Garland-Thomson, 2011; Santos & Santos, 2018) and that monsters

Part of the research leading to this publication received funding from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology regarding the study REMEMBER - Recording Experiences of LGBTQ Elders in Post-Dictatorship Portugal (reference n. PTDC/SOCASO/4911/2021).

A. C. Santos (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal
e-mail: cristina@ces.uc.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_5

(i.e. monstrous misfits) trigger reactions of both fear and desire. These and other affects attached to monstrosity will be explored in light of queer critiques of the concept of citizenship. The first part of the chapter explores the notion of the monster, with a particular interest in queer readings of monstrosity. In that section, monsters will be unpacked against the backdrop of the archetype of the hero. The second part of the chapter focuses on the notion of citizenship and aims at recuperating its potential in the light of both contemporary queer critiques and evidence-based needs to strengthen formal recognition in times of anti-LGBTQI+ backlash. Finally, the notion of monstrous citizenship will be advanced as part of what I am suggesting be interpreted as an embodied turn in (queer) epistemologies.

When discussing monstrosity through a queer lens, it is crucial to consider the impact of heteronormativity defined as a range of "multitudinous (social, legal, political, cultural) ways in which heterosexuality is normalized, naturalized and privileged as an institution, and to the ways in which homosexual practices and relationships are excluded, stigmatized, marginalized, and minoritized" (Roseneil et al., 2013, p. 166). In parallel to this naturalized privileging of heterosexuality, cisnormativity—understood as the default assumption that a person's gender identity matches their biological sex—plays a crucial role in disciplining and domesticizing bodily diversity.

To reiterate, cis-heteronormativity fosters the conditions under which certain identities, practices and experiences are bound to remain monstrous, whereas others retain their moral, social and political aura, often conflated with heroism. The next section focuses on an artifice: the socially constructed opposition between monsters and heroes.

On Dirty Monsters and Worthy Heroes[1]

In April 2017, the broadsheet newspaper *Expresso* published the very first long piece on Portuguese media about non-binary people. The headline read, "O nome dela é Pedro e ela é um monstro" [Her name is Pedro and she is a monster] (Martins, 2017). The piece further elaborated on that content, purposively playing with gendered names and pronouns and offering more details on what had been labelled as monster:

[1] In this section, I will partially draw on my previous work on trans people as heroes (Santos, 2021).

> They are on the cover of *Time* magazine, but are censored on YouTube. Fluid, disruptive, unyielding. They are beyond definitions. Neither LGBTQ nor anything that has labels. Something new. Pedro is one of them. How many feel like monsters as children, while they are just one of us?
>
> To be. Male, female, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer. Human. Or not to be. None of this, nor anything else in opposition to any of these definitions. This is no longer the question. A genre that goes beyond predefined rules and begins to make itself felt before it makes good use of society, still in its idealized and asexual childhood. Genres that go on being. Gerund, much more than defined. Infinite. Because her name is Pedro but that's not enough for her.

Based on this piece, the reader of this Portuguese newspaper understands that disobeying gender-based norms such as the gender binary is highly disruptive and risky, eventually leading to dispossession of humanity and a consequential transformation into something else, something new, odd and wild. This disruption triggers fear, but at the same time familiarity. There are daily and multiple encounters with that which is beyond the human as we know it. As Stockton (2009) reminds us, we speak of children as both wild and monstrous. In addition, more recently, Halberstam (2020) elaborated on the multiple connections between the human and the wild that emerge from popular culture regarding monstrous figures.

The strangeness attached to the non-binary body and experience is enough to yield the label of monster. In Pedro's case, monster appears as a self-chosen category that may offer a symbolic place to feel at home in the world (Ahmed, 2017), at last. Later on in this chapter, I will return to this idea of being and/or feeling at home as monsters, but for now I would like to focus on the dominant, shared imaginary that the category "monster" conjures up.

A simple search for synonyms and definitions of monster leads to the idea of big, massive, enormous, gigantic and colossal. Other words associated with monsters share a strange interconnection, as if an invisible thread drew a line separating "us" from "them": misfit, odd, eccentric, unusual, peculiar, atypical, dissident, nonconforming, wrong, mistake and error. Some of these words—perhaps most of them—are loaded with pejorative connotations. An obvious example, very close to the focus of this chapter, is the word mistake, often used in popular media to viciously describe trans bodies as evidence of nature's wrongdoings.

The image of the monster has been historically used to epitomize sin, danger, pain and illness. Even before angels, monsters were already portrayed as messengers who anticipated catastrophes, such as storms and other dramatic events simply too strong to be undone by the average human being. Monsters can only be avoided through good behaviour or fought through faith in something that is, in itself, larger than human and not explained through scientific reasoning—hence, through magic, witchcraft or religion. Overall, monsters can only be fought by other equally powerful entities, such as other monsters. Arguably, the monster is always already attached to the idea of the hero. This hero can either be the other of the monster, often a human being who faces and defeats the monster (David facing Goliath, the beauty facing the beast, etc.), or the monster itself (McGunnigle, 2018). Indeed, if you extract from monsters' material bodies the qualities they display, features such as bravery, fearlessness, strength and being immortal could easily describe the qualities of heroes, including the complex and rich cultural construction of any national hero.

To reiterate, the strong connection between monsters and heroes is constitutive of the very notion of both monster and hero, and the acknowledgement of this interconnectedness is, in itself, a powerful reminder of the frailty of the (artificially constructed) binary that places unworthy monsters in opposition to worthy heroes. The final part of this section focuses on national heroes as part of the dominant narrative that undermines the significance of monstrosity in daily life.

National heroes are part of the discourse that constructs the modern nation as a coherent fantasy. But who are they? National heroes are predominantly represented as (cisgender) men who display features that are inherent to the construction of mainstream (toxic) masculinity: they are brave, strong, unstoppable, determined, resilient, resistant and fearless. National heroes not only know what the right thing is, but—most importantly—they are able to deliver it. The imagery of "the nation" would not be complete without these figures, because they play an active part in the making of "us", a chosen collective that is portrayed as better than any of its counterparts. The heroic-like qualities of the imagined nation are displayed in most patriotic symbols, including the flag, the national anthem, national memorials and statues (Martins & Cardina, 2019; Rao, 2021).

In Portugal, this discourse has ancient roots that travel back to the "discoveries" (better described as invasions) and all the alleged bravery of men who faced sea monsters, unknown dangers, merciless indigenous communities, and others—and survived. As the first lines of the national anthem establish, the Portuguese are "Heroes of the seas, noble people, a

brave and immortal nation". Post-colonial studies have demonstrated that this heroic acritical narrative is still constitutive of the way Portuguese children study their history and learn about how to become part of this collective us-against-them, or at least us-as-opposite-to-them (Araújo & Maeso, 2012).

One of the most puzzling aspects of the representation of national heroes is the fact that despite allegedly representing such a large entity as "the nation", they are surprisingly homogenous and linear. Thinking mostly (but not exclusively) about the context of Southern Europe, the hero is, by default, a cisgender, heterosexual, White, young, fit and able-bodied man. This homogenous representation of the heroic figure implies that, in fact, heroes lack the possibility of diversity. Consequently, diversity belongs to the realm of monsters, which are much more unlike each other and have dissimilarities amongst them. As such, it seems only fair to argue that monsters are unique, whereas heroes are average.

In light of this argumentation, what is our problem with monsters? Why are they given little value when compared to other collective imagined categories, namely, that of heroes? The linearity in narratives around heroes forces us to question how great a community can aspire to become when the official tales it authorizes to be representative of itself are so linear and reductionist. Perhaps one would be much better off being represented by an untamed monster.[2]

There are few exceptions in literature and in popular culture that ascribe positive value to monstrosity. Exceptions would include the *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* or *Pete's Dragon*, for instance. But even those tales of exception teach us that even kind-hearted creatures do not seem able to escape the abject impact of their misfit bodies. Monsters are to be avoided and feared precisely because they have the appearance of a monster and that appearance has been culturally constructed to provoke fear and rejection. They look like that which escapes categorization. Therefore, the problem with the monster, which is used to trigger terror and abjection, is the monster's visible body, the way the monster looks and the way it looks at us. The monster's gaze is frightening, because it is simply too strong to be disciplined, interpreted

[2] For this category of untamed monster, I am clearly drawing on Audre Lorde (1988) who spoke about writing as an untamed force: "I am going to write fire until it comes out of my ears, my eyes, my noseholes—everywhere. Until it's every breath I breathe. I am going to go out like a fucking meteor!" (pp. 76–77).

or read. Furthermore, by looking at the monster (or being looked at by the monster), we are confronted with an image most of us refuse to accept—the image of our own vulnerability.[3] If we stare at the monster and are the object of the monster's gaze, our own bodily fragility betrays us. If we look at Medusa, our humanity vanishes as we turn into stone. When angels stayed too close to Lucifer, they lost their wings and became devils. Therefore, the story proceeds in only one of two possible directions: the proximity to the monster will either kill us or turn us into monsters.

The rejection of the monstrous body is condoned by a variety of social agents, some of them with strong symbolic leverage. In an insightful talk during the "2018 CES Monsters Summer School", Zowie Davy offered the following reflection:

> The monstrous archetypes in social theory (…) have been shown to breach binary notions of the human in medicine, law, biology and so on. How much though have these archetypes impacted on the binary ideal beyond the academic debates? What countermeasures develop in restricting the monstrous becoming mainstream through a politics of difference? (Davy, 2018a)

The politics of difference alluded to by Davy has always been in dialogue with the politics of appearance, as defined by Garland-Thomson within the fundamental theoretical framework of feminist disability studies (Garland-Thomson, 1997). Both perspectives share the belief that there is a political dimension associated with embodiment and the way beauty is socially constructed to serve certain purposes. A tacit ally of a certain way of beauty, as opposed to misfit (monstrous) bodies, is biomedical power and its cis-heteronormative apparatuses that, by eliminating difference, aim at bounding beauty and (re)production. The example of surgeries on non-consenting intersex newborns is an example of such alliance that serves no other purpose than disciplining the body.

This leads us to the fundamental claim of self-determination advanced by trans and intersex movements worldwide against pathologization. To summarize what is a very rich field of collective action and knowledge production, these movements position gender as an ongoing script that is

[3] On the topic of vulnerability in relation to sexuality and sexual diversity, see Pieri (2019, 2021, 2023).

socially and culturally constructed through subjectivity and multiple nuances (Davy, 2011, 2018b, 2021). As such, gender is ultimately personal and political, hence the urgency of unbinding gender from the biomedical power (Davy et al., 2017; Preciado, 2021). This means, amongst many other measures, stopping conversion torture, unnecessary surgeries on intersex babies and the language of dysphoria.

Before moving to the next section, we give a final remark about the link between bodies and moral systems of value. From a sociological point of view, it is intriguing that, despite the monster's material body being that which is in sharp contrast with dominant standards and, thus, is subject to various attempts of 'correction' and domestication, the monster remains associated with qualities that belong to realm of morality, customs and behaviour. We previously suggested that the proximity to the monster either kills (Medusa) or transmutes mortals into monsters (Lucifer). According to Portuguese traditional folklore, some women are converted into headless female donkeys because they had a sexual encounter with a priest. The headless female donkey is still used in popular culture and daily conversations, hence embodying the connection between monstrosity and defiance against sexual moral norms.

Other examples come to mind when we focus more closely on queer monstrosity as a sphere where monstrosity is defined not through features related to material embodiment but precisely because of morals, customs and behaviours. Who could be described today as monstrous intimate citizens? Based on their intimate biographies, which figure would fit best into a category well-known for its connotation with the misfit, odd, unusual, dissident, nonconforming, wrong and like features? Perhaps the surrogate woman and polyamorous parents who defy repronormativity (Klesse, 2018; Pérez Navarro, 2018); the non-monogamous partner who challenges mononormativity (Santos, 2019) and the couple norm (Roseneil et al., 2020); the trans, inter and the non-binary body who exposes cis-heteronormativity (Preciado, 2021); or the older lover who confronts ageism (King, 2016; Traies, 2016). These are only a few examples of identities and experiences that have been devalued, described in derogatory terms and constructed as (queer) monsters because they remain misfits under the dominant cis-heteronormative system.

That said, let us return briefly to how this section started—the piece published in a mainstream newspaper reading "O nome dela é Pedro e ela é um monstro" [Her name is Pedro and she is a monster] (Martins, 2017). Based on the arguments offered in this section, it seems safe to argue that,

under a dominant paradigm that fears monstrosity, calling a non-binary person a monster because of their gender diversity may well contribute to an already onerous connection between queer and evil. That is one reason why the concept of monster has faced historical difficulties in being appropriated and politicized, as it happened with other insulting categories in the past.

Moreover, some juridical frameworks view sexual or gender diversity as both sinful and contrary to natural laws—unnatural or *contra natura*. Interestingly enough, the chosen word to describe someone who is allegedly detached from nature—monster—is also used to describe a variety of expressions from the natural world, from animals to weather-related phenomenon (Halberstam, 2020). This only adds to the ambiguous nature of the category of monster, as previously advanced in the chapter. The next section will explore the potential within the notion of monster in light of the framework of citizenship.

A Place to Call My Own: From Loathed to Desired Citizenship

Historically created as a framework of exclusion fraught with power asymmetries, the notion of citizenship has been at the core of rich theoretical contributions and intense political debates and under fierce critique, especially from feminist and queer scholars (Lister, 1997).

The construction of citizens as those who participate publicly in decisions that affect their lives brought to light new layers of exclusion, as well as new opportunities to frame citizenship beyond a narrow understanding of formal rights (Hines & Santos, 2018). The notions of intimate, sexual and reproductive citizenship were crucial in shifting the original focus of citizenship on participation and rights to spheres previously excluded from the relation between individuals and the state, highlighting how political the personal was (Roseneil et al., 2016). The decision to revisit the notion of citizenship, instead of replacing it with something radically different, was a strategic move. Much of what the word citizenship entailed was already culturally established, which made it convenient to retain the word while expanding its meaning and practice.

Today it is argued that citizenship can be understood both as "an academic and political concept and as lived experience" (Lister et al., 2007, p. 1). In LGBTQI+ politics, the relation to citizenship remains

ambiguous, permeated with expectations and disappointment. The consolidation of notions such as sexual, intimate or reproductive citizenship has not solved the conundrum yet (and will never?). How can one claim the right to sit at a table that is politically flawed? Despite remaining a loaded notion, the potential it triggers regarding recognition and equality offers a platform for negotiation that would otherwise quickly dismiss LGBTI+ people. In such context, it seems important to consider the mutual implications of intimacy and citizenship, exploring the extent to which issues such as partnering, parenting and friendship are important aspects of being/becoming recognized as citizens, against all (cis-heteronormative) odds.

Changes in family life and intimacy in recent decades illustrate significant sociocultural transformations. Literature on the sociology of the family examines the decline of marriage and fertility rates, together with the increase in divorce, solo-living, single parenthood by choice, LGBTQI+ families and non-cohabiting relationships (Roseneil et al., 2020). In the dynamic and changing context of personal lives, LGBTI+ people have been identified as pioneers in the making of a new model for relationships. One powerful example at the turn of the twenty-first century was the notion of "families of choice" (Weeks et al., 2001), highlighting the importance of social and cultural ties over blood or biological ties.

Transformations in family life and intimacy have also influenced the way citizenship is understood and how individual and collective identities become politicized and recognized in the public sphere. Public concerns over personal relationship are visible not only at the national state level but also in local government and supranational institutions. Ken Plummer's (1995, 2003) notion of intimate citizenship is particularly important in this regard, advancing an understanding of citizenship mostly centred on everyday life and how people can (or cannot) live, personally. Drawing on Plummer's early writings, Sasha Roseneil (2010) suggested that we look on intimate citizenship as:

> the freedom and ability to construct and live selfhood and a wide range of close relationships—sexual/love relationships, friendships, parental and kin relations—safely, securely and according to personal choice, in their dynamic, changing forms, with respect, recognition and support from state and civil society. (p. 82)

This definition puts selfhood and close relationships at the centre of recognition and support from both dominant legal frameworks and society at large. In so doing, intimate citizenship is extremely effective in capturing the merging of public and private and personal and political.

However, this apparently agreeable synchronicity between intimacy and citizenship cannot erase a shared memory of times (and contexts) in which citizenship was (is) armoured against gender or sexual diversity. More importantly, not only was diversity absent from the citizenship framework, but it was also considered deviant and abnormal. To illustrate the impact of such an understanding, suffice it to say that only in 2017 did the "International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision" (ICD-11) from the *World Health Organization* remove the categories for diagnosis of trans and gender diverse people from the mental health chapter. In addition, in Italy LGBTI+ people are still denied parenthood rights, and in countries such as Portugal, the so-called conversion therapies remain legal, despite increasing opposition (Gomes et al., 2021).

In recent times, across Europe and beyond, there have been increasing attacks on sexual freedom, with LGBTQI+ people being framed as particularly dangerous, especially to children. Examples range from LGBT-free zones in Poland to Hungary's law banning the depiction of homosexuality to under-eighteens (Möser et al., 2022). The populist, far-right anti-LGBTI backlash has actively contributed to the demonization of gender and sexual diversity, producing narratives strongly reminiscent of the 1980s and the 1990s when mainstream society considered homosexuality to be linked to sexual abuse (the ghost of the gay sexual abuser) and/or disease (the ghost of AIDS) (Jarman, 1993). Those were the queer monsters in the 1980s and 1990s. In a surprising return to the past, the queer monster is being flagged up again today, with calls for punishment and silencing of LGBTI diversity grounded on moral panic (Möser et al., 2022; Patternote & Kuhar, 2017). In other words, previously achieved intimate citizenship rights are, once again, under attack.

The growing populist backlash on equality and anti-discrimination policies is one strong reason to reflect upon the current limits of citizenship and to push for further expansion of its theoretical and political potential. In this chapter, I suggest doing so through revisiting, unpacking and reclaiming the notion of monster and by ultimately advancing the idea of monstrous citizenship.

Monstrous Citizenship and Embodied (Queer) Epistemologies

In his keynote address for an audience of gender studies scholars and students in Louvain-la-Neuve in 2018, Ken Plummer confided that he had never been that interested in law, explaining how intimate citizenship was not about juridical texts because "rights on their own are not enough" (Plummer, 2018). As intimate citizenship is mostly about everyday life and how people can (or cannot) live personally, so monstrous citizenship can be understood as a symbolic platform, a cluster of arguments that sustain the (mostly sociocultural) possibility of a legitimate and safe existence beyond dominant material and/or moral categories. Similarly to what happens with intimate, sexual or reproductive rights, the link to citizenship anchors the notion of the monster in the broader framework of democratic justice and accountability, hence excluding any practice or behaviour that is contrary to the principles of the rule of law in democratic societies. In the following excerpt from Paul Preciado's address to an assembly of health professionals, the transition from monster to citizen is described as a purposeful move away from pathologization:

> Today I address myself to you, the academicians of psychoanalysis, from my 'cage' as a trans man (. …) I am the monster who speaks to you. The monster you have created with your discourse and your clinical practices. *I am the monster who gets up from the analyst's couch and dares to speak, not as a patient, but as a citizen, as your monstrous equal.* As a trans body, as a non-binary body, *whose right to speak as an expert about my condition, or to produce a discourse or any form of knowledge about myself is not recognized* by the medicinal profession, the law, psychoanalysis or psychiatry, I have done as Red Peter did, I have learned the language of Freud and Lacan, the language of the colonial patriarchy, your language, and I am here to address you. (Preciado, 2021, p. 12, emphasis added)

In this empowering speech, Preciado is occupying the space of citizenship as someone who "dares to speak, not as a patient, but as a citizen", as a "monstrous equal" to anyone in the room and as both an expert and a knowledge producer. Later on in the same book, a link is made between the changing regime of sexual difference and the early signs of emergence of a new epistemology:

> Shaken by profound changes, *the epistemic regime of sexual difference is mutating and, within the next ten or twenty years, will probably give way to a new epistemology*. Trans feminist, queer and anti-racist movements, together with new approaches to filiation, to loving relationships and to identification in terms of gender, desire, sexuality and naming, are merely signs of this mutation and of experiments in the *collective construction of a different epistemology of the living human body*. (Preciado, 2021, pp. 30–31, emphasis added)

In this excerpt, the mutating "trans feminist, queer and anti-racist" dissident becomes the symbol of a new form of knowledge production that takes the body as its focal point. Drawing on the topic of monstrosity and, more specifically, of monstrous citizens, in this final section I want to advance the notion of embodied (queer) epistemologies.

The term epistemology is derived from the two Greek words *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason). Epistemology is defined as the theory of human knowledge, an area in philosophical thought that is concerned with issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry. So what would a monster-friendly embodied epistemology look like? How would it operate, and what could it offer in the fields of academia, citizenship and culture? These are some of the questions that will guide us in the remaining part of the chapter.

Queer to the Bone: the Monster in Me Is the Monster in You

The epistemological framework offered in this section draws on queer as epistemology, as the lens through which the world can be understood and, hopefully, monster-inclusive knowledge can be produced. Writing in 2009, Muñoz called for a hopeful future delivered by queerness as a map into other ways of being in the world:

> We must strive, in the face of the here and now's totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a then and there. Some will say that all we have are the pleasures of this moment, but we must never settle for that minimal transport; we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds. Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing (. …) the quotidian can contain a map of the utopia that is queerness. (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1)

Before we return to Muñoz, I suggest we take a short tour to the imaginary world offered by the Italian artist Luigi Serafini who, between 1976 and 1978, created *Codex Seraphinianus*, an illustrated encyclopaedia originally published in 1981. The book is approximately 360 pages long, based on illustrations of monstrous creatures, and it is written in a cipher alphabet using an imaginary language. It is a very strong example of how relatable, unintelligible and interchangeable images can be. The human in us is revealed precisely through those interchangeable shapes. It is diversity, not silencing, that enables a sense of promise and future, even in contexts of strong deprivation of freedom and hope. Law and social policy need to retain the interchangeable nature of the multiple shapes of human. And this leads us back to Muñoz's eloquent appeal, according to which we can unpeel queer, expose its nuances and rejoice with its multiple layers. For the purposes of this chapter, I want to briefly mention five constitutive layers of queer. First, *queer as imaginary and representation*, both aesthetical and political (hence also personal), embracing difference (hence the misfit). Secondly, *queer as a project of becoming*, characterized by ongoing construction, embracing failure and undoing crystallized and binary perspectives. Thirdly, *queer as a promise* of future and as a promise of resistance, including queer as outlaw (disobedient, fluid, contradictory). Fourthly, *queer as a theoretical and political framework*, a field of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, intersectional and *undisciplinary* knowledge—a subversive knowledge–pleasure. Finally, *queer as standpoint* (and utterance), a platform from which to speak and a place of belonging.

I find this fifth aspect in queer—queer as a standpoint—particularly engaging for a project that draws on monsters to suggest a new embodied (queer) epistemology.

Placing the Body in the (Queer) Epistemology

In her work published in 2017, Sara Ahmed speaks of "a body that is not at home in the world" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 13), explaining how that discomfort produces ideas, frameworks and concepts that are particularly difficult. These are "sweaty concepts", and by this Ahmed means

> a description of how it feels not to be at home in the world, or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it. Sweat is bodily; we might sweat more during more strenuous and muscular activity. A sweaty concept might come out of a bodily experience that is trying. The

> task is to stay with the difficulty, to keep exploring and exposing this difficulty. (Ahmed, 2017, p. 13)

The notion of monstrous citizenship is a sweaty concept, in the sense that it stems from a dislocated body, a body that is not at home in the world, but which nonetheless is in the world. More precisely, monsters are often made to feel that they do not belong to the realm of citizenship, and yet here they (we) are—in the *polis*, in parliament, in the academia and in the world—trying, staying with the difficulty and owning the sweat. Two decades before Ahmed, Susan Stryker had pointed out to the transformative power of rage, explaining that rage resulting from stigma can become a source of power once it is put to use (Stryker, 1994, p. 261).

In 2017, Ahmed claimed: "the monsters will lead the way" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 227). Three years down the road, speaking of his own process of transition as a self-identified trans man, Preciado explained how embracing monstrosity released a multitude of possibilities that could never be anticipated under constraining cis-heteronormative regimes:

> [H]ad I not preferred my monstrosity to your heteronormativity, had I not chosen my sexual deviance over your sexual health, I would never have been able to escape… or, to be more precise, would never have been able to decolonize, disidentify, debinarify myself (. …) The monster is one who lives in transition. One whose face, body and behaviours cannot yet be considered true in a predetermined regime of knowledge and power (. …) This awakening is revolution. It is a molecular uprising. An assault on the power of the heteropatriarchal ego, of identity and of name. The process is a decolonization of the body. (Preciado, 2021, pp. 23–24)

The "awakening of another genealogy" is described as revolution, as "a decolonization of the body". It is this misfit, awakened, revolutionary body that enables monsters to lead the way into a new embodied epistemology.

In her book *Embodying the Monster*, Shildrick makes a strong claim for retaining the importance of the body. She wrote: "The task is to reject biologism—with its appeal to prediscursive natural givens—at the same time as recuperating the possibility of embodiment" (Shildrick, 2002, p. 2).

Drawing on situated knowledges as my own ontological positioning, I suggest that embodied epistemologies take the body as a point of departure, a platform from where to speak, a political statement. Embodied

epistemologies thrive on bodily nonconformity. Under this category of nonconforming embodiment, we can think of bodies that refuse reproductive normativities (e.g. the surrogate mother); bodies that refuse gender-based normativities (e.g. trans and intersex bodies in sports (A. L. Santos, 2020)); bodies that escape the bodily limits (e.g. conjoint twins); and bodies that leak (Shildrick, 1997, 2002).

The knowledge that embodied epistemologies enable is made possible through the recognition of nonconforming bodies as untamed monsters who become a source of conceptual challenge, cultural inspiration and political respect. Embodied epistemologies take the daily experience-based constraints and possibilities attached to corporeality and use this embodied knowledge in order to occupy space and to make room—hence ascribing theoretical and political centrality to the materiality of embodied resistance. There is much theoretical inspiration to be found in dis/obedient embodiment.

Finally, embodied epistemologies offer the scholarly basis for advancing a more encompassing monstrous citizenship, one that recognizes the unsurmountable role of monsters in assessing one's own humanity. Halberstam (2020) equates the monster in its different shapes (including the zombie) as the undead, eloquently described as follows:

> The living, walking, suppurating dead are those bodies we have assigned to the grey zone between the good life and the bare life—they include the incarcerated, refugees, the hungry, the terminally ill, the sick and the dying, the very young and the very old, the homeless, the drug addicts, the endangered species, the mentally ill, the disabled, the starving, the dispossessed, the occupied, the unsaved, unremembered, irredeemable, illegible, illegitimate undead. The undead are hungry, they are angry, they are sick, and they are tired. And while you may look upon them with horror today, tomorrow you will no doubt try to save them in order to redeem a seriously compromised sense of your own humanity. (p. 174)

Once it becomes possible to overcome the terror triggered by the misfit body of the monster, a whole range of possibility and freedom emerges. As such, embodied epistemologies are an acknowledgement of the significance of both corporeal materiality and conceptual audacity, an appreciation of knowledge production that takes discomfort as a productive, driving force, in as much as failure has come to be recognized as imminently queer (Halberstam, 2011).

Conclusion

In 1780, Johann Silberschlag coined the term "Brockengespenst", or Brocken spectre. Silberschlag, a German Lutheran pastor, went for a walk alone in the mountains and was surprised by an enormous, moving spectre in the clouds opposite to where he was standing. The apparition resembled a giant, grey monster, whose head was surrounded by halo-like rings of coloured light forming a rainbow. Associated since medieval times with magic forces and other obscure manifestations, these visions actually result from a rare weather phenomenon. Under the right combination of light, angle and mist, the magnified shadow of someone walking or standing on the top of a mountain can be projected upon clouds opposite the sun's direction. The phenomenon takes its name from the Brocken, a peak in the Harz Mountains characterized by frequent fogs, but has been observed in other parts of the world (McKenzie, 2015).[4]

Writing in 2020, Halberstam argued that "we have fashioned monsters to embody what we cannot name, to frame what we have come to fear, and to banish what we cannot tolerate" (Halberstam, 2020, pp. 147–148). What I find particularly compelling about the Brocken spectre is the fact that these intolerable, horrifying monsters, sighted across the globe, were no less than humans themselves who, unknowingly, became terrified of the way they "looked". Unable to recognize their own bodies, deformed, grey and massive as they were projected in the distant misty clouds, these observers found themselves in the ironic position of generating, through their own material bodies, the monsters who they deemed as dangerous and frightening. The moment they suspended their walk to observe, directing their human gaze towards the spectre, they were simultaneously connecting and detaching from monstrosity, illustrating the inescapable overlap of humans and monsters. Each monstrous spectre is simply an unexpected manifestation of the gazer's own body.

Furthermore, the Brocken spectre points to the plasticity of representations of one's body and highlights the importance of context and perspective. It is also a powerful reminder of the potential each person holds of suddenly generating unwanted reactions of fear and abjection in and from others (including oneself) because of features that cannot be prevented or stopped. In that particular moment in time, the observer cannot help

[4] I am deeply grateful to Ana Lúcia Santos for having brought this phenomenon to my attention in one of our many fruitful conversations over the years.

being that person on the top of the mountain who is faced with the monster (themselves).

Weather events aside, arguably each human is always already multiple, mutant, even kaleidoscopic. Humans are monster-like because the monster is no less than a human projection. Similarly, identities, practices and experiences are ever-changing and situated, blurred and strategically deployed (and silenced).

A central topic in the chapter was the ambiguity that produces two different but related ideas: that monsters are misfits (Garland-Thomson, 2011) and that the monstrous misfit generates both fear and desire. As was argued throughout the chapter, despite having been historically depicted as an imagined homogenous category, the concept of monster, when unpacked, will necessarily mean so many (wonderfully different) things to each person. Through the queer lens advanced in this chapter, the idea of the monster captures the multiple oppressions experienced by misfits—misfits who are immediately read as misfits, bodies which are visibly transgressive, but also invisible ones, like people with invisible illness or disability. Moreover, the monster embodies a potential which is richer and more promising than the one mainstream, homogenous heroes are programmed to deliver.

This chapter also aimed at questioning the gap between monsters and citizenship, and in so doing, it advanced the notion of monstrous citizenship. As explored in the chapter, citizenship lends itself to a fair amount of criticism. However, it also forces the state to pay attention and to acknowledge its own responsibilities. That is why, despite admitting that laws are not enough, most vulnerable groups have been organizing collectively across the globe to push for legal recognition. Law is still an important platform for public acknowledgement and cultural legitimacy. As such, citizenship remains a serious issue, with a great degree of formality and symbolic advantage attached to its procedures and outcomes. Therefore, when monster and citizenship are brought together in one sentence, causing perplexity, discomfort or unsettlement, the political work begins. Because monsters by definition are not subjects of rights—that is, are not citizens—the idea of a monstrous citizenship invites those who read or listen to pose the question: Why? What is it about? Who are these monsters who demand to be acknowledged and cared under the rule of law?

A related set of questions beg to be made at this stage. How does the law accommodate, block or encourage (monstrous) diversity? How do we characterize the dominant sexuality and gender regimes of a particular

country or region? How can culture explain both perpetuity and transformation? Which exclusions do we replicate in our multiple fora of militancy?

Surely, there are no single or easy answers to any of these questions. Any attempt to respond will undoubtedly be bound to one's own experience of time and place. Nevertheless, bringing context to the centre of our analytical concerns is a crucial political step that prevents monsters from becoming atomized exceptions, isolated accidents and residual collateral damage. In other words, as we have learned from feminist disability studies, it is never about someone's inability to fit—it is always about the context's inability to overcome the narrow boundaries within which it operates on a political, legal and sociocultural level.

Therefore, it is fundamental to take a closer look at local contexts and at the broader structures of power that so eagerly produce monsters as outcasts—sexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, ableism, racism, ageism and fatphobia—the list goes on. In so doing, this chapter sits at the intersectional crossroads of queers, crips and other misfits, pointing towards the future of intersectional coalition making.[5] This leads us to the final argument in the chapter: the suggestion of a new embodied queer epistemology drawing on the role of monsters as leading the way—embodied epistemologies—the way the (monstrous) body is perceived through its materiality, its practices and its experiences.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that the category of monster holds enormous epistemological and political potential, especially when compared to some of its conceptual predecessors. It is possible to self-identify with categories that were once used as insults. For decades, people would not choose to self-identify as queer or crip. However, words change and concepts travel: from insult to political banner and from shame to pride. Contrary to the words queer and crip, which were insults attached to one particular category, the word monster already cuts across a range of possible identities and belongings from the outset. As Halberstam aptly notes, "The monster announces the fall of the father, the end of Oedipus, the solidarity of the monsters (. …) The monster of whom you speak, has left his cage" (Halberstam, 2021, p. 1). The word monster is not attached to a particular experience and therefore contains the potential to relate to other categories of oppression. Butler once wrote: "It matters that as bodies we arrive together in public/As bodies we suffer/we require food/and

[5] On the topic of intersectional and integrated ways of doing politics and generating coalitions, see Elpes (2020).

shelter and as bodies we require one another in dependency and desire. So this is a politics of the public body" (Butler, 2011). Monsters evoke intersectionality by exposing nonconformity as a constitutive element of humanity. Therefore, monstrosity cannot be dismissed as accidental or distant; it is here to inspire, to unsettle and to get us going—back, forward, sideways or in circles—but going until we can, at last, feel safe and embraced in all of our diversities.

References

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.

Araújo, M., & Maeso, S. R. (2012). History textbooks, racism and the critique of eurocentrism: Beyond rectification and compensation. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 35*(7), 1266–1285.

Butler, J. (2011, October). *Speech given at Washington Square Park, New York*. Retrieved from http://occupywriters.com/works/by-judith-butler.

Davy, Z. (2011). *Recognizing transsexuals: Personal, political and medicolegal embodiment*. Ashgate.

Davy, Z. (2018a). *Monstrous archetypes are becoming* [Paper presentation]. CES Monsters Summer Schools, Coimbra.

Davy, Z. (2018b). Genderqueer(ing): 'On this side of the world against which it protests'. *Sexualities, 22*(1–2), 80–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717740255

Davy, Z. (2021). *Sex/gender and self-determination. Policy developments in law, medicine and pedagogical contexts*. Policy Press.

Davy, Z., Sørlie, A., & Suess Schwend, A. (2017). Democratising diagnoses? The role of the depathologisation perspective in constructing corporeal trans citizenship. *Critical Social Policy, 38*(1), 13–34.

Elpes, G. S. (2020). Trans* identities and politics: Repertoires of action, political cleavages, and emerging coalitions. *Politics and Governance, 8*(3), 301–311.

Garland-Thomson, R. (1997). *Extraordinary bodies: Figuring physical disability in American culture and literature*. Columbia University Press.

Garland-Thomson, R. (2011). Misfits: A feminist materialist disability concept. *Hypatia, 26*(3), 591–609.

Gomes, C., Santos, A. C., Nolasco, C., Carvalho, C., Fontes, F., Henriques, M., Fernando, P., & do Carmo, R. (2021). *Franet national contribution to the fundamental rights report 2021–Portugal*. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/frr2021_portugal-frr2021_en.pdf

Halberstam, J. (2011). *The queer art of failure*. Duke University Press.

Halberstam, J. (2020). *Wild things. The disorder of desire*. Duke University Press.

Halberstam, J. (2021). Endorsement. In P. B. Preciado (Ed.), *Can the monster speak?* Fitzcarraldo Editions.

Hines, S., & Santos, A. C. (2018). Trans* policy, politics and research: The UK and Portugal. *Critical Social Policy, 38*(1), 35–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317732880

Jarman, D. (1993). *At your own risk*. Vintage Classics.

King, A. (2016). *Older lesbian, gay and bisexual adults: Identities, intersections and institutions*. Routledge.

Klesse, C. (2018). Polyamorous parenting: Stigma, social regulation, and queer bonds of resistance. *Sociological Research Online, 24*(4), 625–643. https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780418806902

Lister, R. (1997). Citizenship: Feminist perspectives. Macmillan.

Lister, R., Williams, F., Antonnen, A., Bussemaker, M., Gerhard, U., Heinen, J., Johansson, S., Leira, A., Siim, B., Tobio, C., & Gavanas, A. (2007). *Gendering citizenship in Western Europe: New challenges for citizenship research in a cross-national context*. The Policy Press.

Lorde, A. (1988). *A burst of light: Essays*. Firebrand.

Martins, C. (2017, April 16). *O nome dela é Pedro e ela é um monstro*. Expresso. https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2017-04-16-O-nome-dela-e-Pedro-e-ela-e-um-monstro

Martins, V., & Cardina, M. (2019). A memory of concrete: Politics of representation and silence in the Agostinho Neto memorial. *Kronos, 45*(1), 46–64. https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-9585/2019/v45a3

McGunnigle, C. (2018). The difference between heroes and monsters: Marvel monsters and their transition into the superhero genre. *University of Toronto Quarterly, 87*(1), 110–135.

McKenzie, S. (2015, February 17). Shades of grey: What is the brocken spectre? *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-31447148

Möser, C., Ramme, J., & Takács, J. (Eds.). (2022). *Paradoxical right-wing sexual politics in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising utopia the then and there of queer futurity*. New York University Press.

Patternote, D., & Kuhar, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Anti-gender campaigns: Mobilizing against equality*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Pérez Navarro, P. (2018). Surrogacy wars: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of reproduction. *Journal of Homosexuality, 67*(5), 577–599.

Pieri, M. (2019). The sound that you do not see. Notes on queer and disabled invisibility. *Sexuality & Culture, 23*(2), 558–570.

Pieri, M. (2021). Illness comes to bed. Chronically ill lesbian women discuss sex, intimacy, and sexual practices. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 25*(3), 212–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2020.1778882

Pieri, M. (2023). LGBTQ+ People with Chronic Illness. Chroniqueers in Southern Europe. London: Palgrave MacMillan (forthcoming).

Plummer, K. (1995). *Telling sexual stories: Power, change, and social worlds.* Routledge.
Plummer, K. (2003). *Intimate citizenship: Private discussions and public dialogues.* University of Washington Press.
Plummer, K. (2018, April 26). *Re-imagining intimate citizenship in a troubled world* [Keynote]. Conference The Political in the Personal: Families and Sexualities in Times of Social Change in Europe. Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL), Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.
Preciado, P. B. (2021). *Can the monster speak?* Fitzcarraldo Editions.
Rao, R. (2021, November 15). *What do we mean when we talk about statues?* [Paper presentation]. HRICS Seminar Series, CES-UC, Coimbra, Portugal.
Roseneil, S. (2010). Intimate citizenship: A pragmatic, yet radical, proposal for a politics of personal life. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 17*(1), 77–82.
Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2013). Changing landscape of heteronormativity: The regulation of same-sex sexualities in Europe. *Social Politics, 20*(2), 165–199.
Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (Eds.) (2016). Reproducing citizens: Family, state and civil society. .
Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2020). *The tenacity of the couple norm: Intimate citizenship regimes in a changing Europe.* UCL Press.
Santos, A. C. (2019). One at a time: LGBTQ polyamory and relational citizenship in the 21st century. *Sociological Research Online, 24*(4), 709–725.
Santos, A. L. (2020). Trans athletes and the Posthuman: A critical analysis of trans policies in sports. In Z. Davy, A. C. Santos, C. Bertone, R. Thoreson, & S. E. Wieringa (Eds.), *The sage handbook of global sexualities* (pp. 267–290). Sage.
Santos, A. C. (2021). From villain to hero: Trans men and non-binary persons as care providers in Southern Europe. *International Journal of Care and Caring, 5*(2), 319–333. https://doi.org/10.1332/239788220X16051223899742
Santos, A. C., & Santos, A. L. (2018). Yes, we fuck! Challenging the misfit sexual body through disabled women's narratives. *Sexualities, 21*(3), 303–318.
Serafini, L. (1981). *Codex Seraphinianus.* Rizzoli International Publications.
Shildrick, M. (1997). *Leaky bodies and boundaries: Feminism, postmodernism and (bio)ethics.* Routledge.
Shildrick, M. (2002). *Embodying the monster: Encounters with the vulnerable self.* Sage.
Stockton, K. B. (2009). *The queer child, or growing sideways in the twentieth century.* Duke University Press.
Stryker, S. (1994). My words to victor Frankenstein above the village of Chamounix: Performing transgender rage. *GLQ, 1*(3), 237–264.
Traies, J. (2016). *The lives of older lesbians.* Palgrave Macmillan.
Weeks, J., Heaphy, B., & Donovan, C. (2001). *Same sex intimacies: Families of choice and other life experiments.* Routledge.

PART II

Care Matters

CHAPTER 6

Building Safer Spaces: Daily Strategies and Networks of Care in Cisheteronormative Italy

Tatiana Motterle

This chapter discusses the undeniable importance of affects, friendships, collective and mutual care and support among LGBTQ people. We will see how different kinds and levels of collective mutual support—where one is never just either cared for or caring—stand at the roots of a broader and creative resistance to an oppressive context. Sharing knowledge, information and experience and helping and caring for each other are fundamental means of empowerment and resistance.

In the chapter I will navigate through the experiences and stories of participants following a route that goes from the material and symbolic consequences of the lack of laws protecting LGBT rights to the different strategies they adopt to counteract and live what Judith Butler calls livable lives (Butler, 2004, 2009). Following Baumle and Compton (2015), this chapter aims at shedding light on the individual and collective forms of resistance, defiance and manipulation that participants carry out vis-à-vis a legal system that does not recognize them.

T. Motterle (✉)
Padua, Italy

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_6

Law (and its absence) does not constitute the only problem LGBTQ people face throughout their lives, but it surely is a central issue, particularly concerning gay fathers through surrogacy and trans people. Moreover, such an evident lack of basic rights is one of the peculiarities of Italy in comparison with other Southern European countries studied in the INTIMATE research project, namely, Spain and Portugal (Santos, 2013).[1]

Indeed, in 2015 Italy only had a law on rectification of sex attribution (Act 164/1982) and one against discrimination in the workplace (also) based on sexual orientation (Legislative Decree 216/2003). At that time, the most recent attempt to issue a law against homophobia and transphobia was Bill 245/2013, which proposed adding sexual orientation and gender identity as motivations to two already existing laws against hate crimes based on racial, ethnic and religious motives: it was approved by the Chamber of Deputies, but stopped once it passed to the other chamber of Parliament, the Senate. In November 2020, a law proposal that gathered five similar texts written between 2018 and 2019 was approved by the Chamber of Deputies and passed to the Senate (where it is still waiting to be discussed at the time of writing). The main content of the proposal consists of adding motives "based on sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability" to two articles of the Criminal Code dedicated to hate crimes and hate speech, namely, 604-*bis* ("Propaganda and incitement to commit crimes for reasons of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination") and 604-*ter* ("Aggravating circumstance").

In July of 2015, the European Court of Human Rights stated that Italy breached the European Convention of Human Rights by not providing any legal form of recognition to same-sex partnerships. A few months later (October 2015), right in the middle of the INTIMATE[2] project, Senator Monica Cirinnà presented a bill on civil unions for same-sex people and de facto unions for all couples. The Senate approved Cirinnà's Bill in February 2016. After months of parliamentary discussions, with a strong opposition by right-wing, conservative and Catholic politicians of both fronts, a provision on stepchild adoption was eliminated from the text of the bill—which eventually became law on 20 May 2016 (Act 76/2016)—thus

[1] For a thorough analysis of the Italian legal context and LGBTQ social movements, see also Bertone and Gusmano (2013); Biagini (2018); Trappolin (2004).

[2] INTIMATE—Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe was funded between 2014 and 2019 by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement [reference n. 338452].

leaving unchanged the status of hundreds of LGBTQ parents waiting for recognition. Not surprisingly, same-sex parenting was the most troubling issue and faced the strongest resistance. One of the arguments rhetorically and strategically used against it was surrogacy: some politicians claimed that legalizing stepchild adoption would have legitimized gay men who had children through surrogacy abroad and encouraged more of them to do so. This kind of discourse circulated in the media and in the public debate and was endorsed by a part of the feminist and lesbian movement, which proposed abolishing and penalizing surrogacy worldwide (commercial surrogacy in particular). As a result, a homophobic narrative specifically directed against gay fathers, intertwined with a feminist one against the exploitation of surrogate women, ended up damaging LGB social parents, who remained unrecognized by the law, since stepchild adoption was not approved. Moreover, during this whole process, lesbian mothers were totally invisibilized (Guerzoni & Motterle, 2018).

In order to better understand the situation of same-sex parents in Italy, it must be remembered that they have absolutely no reproductive rights, since Act 40/2004 on Medically Assisted Procreation allows the use of *Assisted Reproductive* Technology (ART) only to married or cohabiting different-sex couples with documented infertility. Moreover, it prohibits surrogacy and its promotion. In consequence, anyone who wants to become a parent, be they single or a same-sex couple, is forced to go abroad, which implies an economic investment that not everyone can afford.

Moreover, according to Act 184/1993 on adoption and fostering of minors, full adoption, too, is strictly reserved to married heterosexual couples (or unmarried couples that have been living together for at least three years before marriage). Nonetheless, Art. 44 of this law provides for the so-called adoption in particular cases, which, as shown in the next paragraph, is used by the courts to legitimize stepchild adoption for same-sex couples. Temporary fostering follows less strict rules, allowing single people to foster (used in the courts to accord such possibility to same-sex couples).

When talking about Italy, it is necessary to highlight the role of the Catholic Church, its institutions and allies and its deep, strong influence on the national public discourse and on the political agenda. Indeed, concerning questions, particularly but not solely, connected to sexual and reproductive rights (from abortion to same-sex civil unions), the Church has always been extremely active and present in the political field and the

media (Cafasso, 2014; Congiargiu, 2015; Lorenzetti & Viggiani, 2015). As Sara Garbagnoli (2017) recalls when talking about the huge success of the rhetoric of "gender ideology" in Italy, the Church and the "Conferenza Episcopale Italiana—CEI" [Italian Episcopal Conference] have influenced political agendas through both a more intransigent and publicly visible line, promoting and supporting public conferences and demonstrations, and a more subtle and "moderate" stance of parliamentary lobbying. Their actions are part of a broader, multifaceted assemblage/network of associations, think tanks and other entities, from fascist and far-right forces to anti-abortion associations, which have been successfully using the rhetoric of "gender ideology". Their influence is so strong that it has been capable of blocking any law concerning LGBT rights (or part of it, as in the case of same-sex civil unions) and, among other effects, it impeded the implementation on strategies against homophobia and transphobia in public school, also leading to the withdrawal of a children's book on family diversity from primary schools.

Since the 2010s—given the discrepancy between such lack of legislation and the growing claims and needs coming from LGBTQ individuals, couples and parents[3]—some Italian courts have made decisions regardless of Italian law, based on the Constitution and European legislation (Barel, 2020). For example, between the approval and the entry into force of Act 76/2016, the Supreme Court, with decision no. 12962 (26 May–22 June 2016), stated the legitimacy of stepchild adoption in the case of a lesbian couple who had their child abroad through ART. Moreover, the Juvenile Court of Rome, with its decision of 23 December 2015 (the first unappealable decision on stepchild adoption for a gay couple), ruled that the partner of the biological father could adopt the child, on the grounds of a specific instance of the so-called adoption in particular cases. This has been used extensively by courts on this matter and remains the only option for lesbian and gay social parents, as an alternative to stepchild adoption, which is itself a specific kind of adoption in particular cases.

[3] According to research, 3.4% of gay men and 5.4% of lesbians in Italy are parents (10% of gay men and 19% of lesbians are over 35 years old): most of them have children from previous heterosexual relationships, but in the last years, more and more lesbian and gay couples (especially lesbian ones) have been trying to have children together (Gigli, 2011). Out of 1391 LGBTQ families interviewed, 28.6% (16% of whom are single) have at least one child; out of this sample of 424 nucleuses, 7% had children through auto-insemination, 12% through surrogacy (abroad), 41% through assisted reproduction techniques (ARTs) and 20% from previous heterosexual relationships (Centro Risorse LGBTI, 2017).

Another kind of court decisions concerns the transcription of birth certificates made abroad, which was legitimated by a decision of the Supreme Court of Cassation that accepted the transcription of the birth certificate of the child of a lesbian couple (*Court of Cassation*, I Civil Section, no. 19599, 21 June–30 September 2016).

Methodological Section

This chapter is based on the interviews I collected in Italy for the INTIMATE project between 2015 and 2017 with five coupled lesbian and bisexual cis women (2015), five gay men who had children through surrogacy (2016) and five trans and non-binary persons. On interview, participants were between 25 and 45 years old (with two exceptions) and were living in Rome (most of them came from other cities). All of them were born in Italy and are White and able-bodied. In addition, I interviewed nine key informants.

Participants were interviewed using the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2001) by key experts using semi-structured interviews.[4]

The recruitment methods we used in Rome for biographic interviews ranged from contacting LGBTQ organizations and collectives via mail to distributing informative flyers in LGBTQ gatherings and spaces, to getting help by friends and acquaintances, to snowballing. As concerns our sampling criteria, besides following the basic common criteria of the INTIMATE project, I tried my utmost (though I did not always succeed) to differentiate the sample in terms of age, geographic and socio-economic origins and political involvement.

The BNIM interviewing technique entails a two-part interview, the first part beginning with a broad question about the study theme and allowing interviewees all the time and freedom they need to talk about their biography and the second part being a sequence of questions coherently and subsequently based on the biographic account. My interviews lasted from 50 minutes to 5 hours, with a mean duration of about 2 hours.

The interviews were analysed through the NVivo software using a wide and complex array of nodes (topics) that were created by the whole team in order to have a common ground for a comparative analysis.

[4] For the sake of anonymity, only the age range will be indicated and pseudonyms will be used.

Before going on to present their stories, I will introduce the people who generously gave their time and helped me with my research. I will sort participants into the project's strands and studies.

(a) Strand: Micropolitics of partnering—Study: Lesbian coupledom (2015):

- Alice, 40–44, lesbian, unemployed, living with her partner
- Fiore, 25–29, lesbian, student, living with a friend
- Ipazia, 35–39, bisexual, freelance, living with others
- Lenù, 25–29, bisexual, unemployed/precarious, living with her partner and a friend
- Vittoria, 30–34, lesbian, full-time job, living alone

All are White, cisgender, able-bodied and born in Italy. The majority come from other cities and/or regions and had been in a relationship for at least six months.

The key experts who participated in the lesbian study are the activists Miryam Camilleri, lawyer with Rete Lenford,[5] Antonia Ciavarella and Graziella Bertozzo. Elena Biagini also made an important contribution through a recorded informal conversation.

(b) Strand: Micropolitics of parenting—Study: Surrogacy (2016):

- Carlo: 30–34, gay, precarious freelancer,[6] lives with his partner Sergio and their son Ilario
- Filippo: 40–44, gay, full-time employed, lives with his husband Giacomo and their twin sons Giulio and Andrea
- Gianni: 30–34, gay, precarious freelancer, lives with his partner Riccardo, their son Calogero and the nanny, Cathrine
- Michele: 45–49, gay/bisexual, freelance, lives with his partner, their twin sons and the nanny
- Vanni: 45–49, gay, freelance, lives with his husband Vittorio and their daughter Carlotta

[5] Rete Lenford is a professional body of lawyers dedicated to LGBTI rights.

[6] I indicated as 'precarious freelancer' the participants who had legally defined freelance jobs, which actually are full-time jobs but only with the duties (but not the rights) of a full-time regular contract by part of the worker.

All are cis-men, White, able, coupled and born in Italy. Most of them come from other regions.

The key experts I interviewed for this case study were Carlo Flamigni, gynaecologist and member of the Bioethic Council; Sergio Lo Giudice, at that time senator for the Democratic Party (and father through surrogacy); Susanna Lollini, lawyer with Rete Lenford; and Tommaso Giartosio, radio presenter for a public national channel and father through surrogacy.

(c) Strand: Micropolitics of friendship—Study: Care and transgender (2017):

- Bibi: 40–44, trans woman ("dad trans woman"), lesbian, full-time job, lives alone, two daughters from previous heterosexual marriage
- Flavio: 40–44, trans man, heterosexual, part-time job, lives alone
- Max: 25–29, trans man ("atypical masculinity"), pansexual, freelance, lives with mother and one sister
- Penelope: 25–29, transgender girl (purely binary identity, non-binary expression), demisexual, panromantic, part-time job, lives with parents and brother
- Silom: 30–34, genderqueer, pansexual, unemployed/precarious, lives alone

Three had precarious jobs or were unemployed, one had a part-time job, and another had a full-time job. Their monthly income went from less than €500 to €1500/2000. Two of them lived with their families of origin, and three lived alone, with only one owning his own house.

As key experts I interviewed Ilaria Ruzza of Sat Pink, a support service for trans persons, and Valentina Coletta of MIT (Movimento Identità Trans—Trans Identity Movement).

Michela Angelini and Egon Botteghi of Anguane and Christian Leonardo Cristalli of Rete Trans gave a fundamental contribution through recorded informal conversations.

In this chapter I will take into consideration 13 of the 15 biographic interviews and, in particular, the part of them where the topic of care, in/visibilization and daily micro-practices of resistance are explicitly expressed. Regarding key informants, their contribution is, sadly, underrepresented, since my choice here was to focus on biographic experiences.

Systemic Invisibilization

The issue of systemic invisibilization, its internalization and the micro-practices used to tackle it emerged from the case studies with which this chapter engages. Before focusing on the consequences of (the lack of) law in participants' lives, I will therefore dedicate this section to illustrating how interviewees suffered and reacted to the consequences of systemic invisibilization, meaning the social and structural phenomena through which the lives, experiences, needs and existences of LGBTQ people are silenced, underrepresented and marginalized. Through the following accounts, we will see how this process also works through daily micro-practices of (self-)in/visibilization.

Starting with lesbian and bisexual women, I found the accounts of Ipazia and Fiore very telling. Recounting their times at high school, both told me they did not know about any lesbian girls back then and they did not even consider the possibility of being lesbian or bisexual themselves. Nonetheless, they knew some boys who were gay. Even if their age difference is not so remarkable, there are some substantial differences between the two historical periods in which they attended high school: during the decade that separates their teenage years, lesbian women have become slightly more visible in popular culture and mainstream media (e.g. an Italian TV channel started to broadcast the US lesbian series *The L Word*) and the LGBTQ movement in general gained visibility (Cirillo et al., 2010), but that does not seem to trigger significant differences in their experiences in their school years.

> In my class there were two or three homosexuals (...) but there were no lesbians. I hadn't thought I could be attracted to women, too, honestly. (Ipazia, 35–39, bisexual)

> We didn't even know a person who self-defined as a lesbian, so we knew... Of course, we knew... I mean, we are in the 2000s, not in the fifties, though... I had always had the suspicion that my brother was gay (. …) It was logical for us to like boys. (Fiore, 25–29, lesbian)

In the case of gay men interviewed (particularly older ones), (self-) invisibilization involved the desire to become a parent—similarly to what Beatrice Gusmano found about lesbian mothers (Gusmano & Motterle, 2019):

> There was the desire to be a parent for a long time (. …) But obviously, since I did not associate homosexuality with parenthood, it seemed like something that could not be done (. …) I must say that I had to overcome my resistance to seeing… homosexuals with children. (Michele, 45–49, gay/bisexual)

> The desire to become a dad is something not taken for granted in my life, in the sense that for a first part of my life that was an idea that I never considered... (. …) Because I probably made a very simple association [:] I am homosexual, so I cannot have children, I do not want them. (Filippo, 40–44, gay)

Nonetheless, self-invisibilization is tackled and actively brought into question by the interviewees, both in private and public spaces.

The issue of visibility and invisibility often emerged when the interviewees were talking about their families of origin. Indeed, structural invisibilization of LGBTQ subjects reproduces itself through daily micro-practices, and it is also through micro-practices that these subjects fight and react. The relationship with their family of origin is a good example of this.

Even if the reaction from parents and siblings to their sexual orientation and gender identity was not always good, participants nonetheless generally wanted to keep a good relationship with their parents whilst demanding recognition and expecting acceptance both as individuals and as a couple.[7] This can imply continuous and distressing conflicts with parents, or at least employing caution with their feelings regarding their children's open sexual orientation and gender identity, by employing daily strategies of in/visibility, namely, at family gatherings or in the town of birth (when the parents still live there).

When we consider gay fathers and trans people, the issue of visibility acquires specific contours since it would be almost impossible to hide their reality from their families and still nurture a relationship with them. The

[7] The effort employed by some of the participants to preserve their relationship with the family without renouncing the visibility of the couple confirms what Chiara Bertone (2008) recalls when describing personal communities in Italy as less developed outside the family than inside. Moreover, as Bertone and Pallotta-Chiarolli argue, "(t)he limited research into heteronormative families of origin is a striking absence, especially if viewed with Southern European eyes, where inter-generational closeness and dependence mark people's lives" (Bertone & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2014, p. 2).

situation is different for lesbian women, since they could, in principle, continue seeing their families without ever coming out to them. Sometimes, actually, being "seen" by their families is a problem in itself. Indeed, in the lesbian coupledom case study, three participants out of five came out to their families of origin after starting a relationship: the couple stood out, then, as an element of visibility, as "the proof" of lesbianism (or bisexuality) from which the family cannot look away (Roseneil et al., 2020). On the other hand, it also functioned as a banalizing factor of the revelation; that is, the couple per se can make lesbianism visible without the need to declare it explicitly (Chetcuti, 2014).

Filippo's experience is one of positive change and personal satisfaction. He and his partner informed their parents from the beginning of the surrogacy process, trying to make them understand and accept their wishes. Eventually, not only did the relationship with their parents improve, but Filippo's relationship finally became visible in his hometown and with his extended family.

> The evolution our families had with children is something extraordinary (. …) When I went back there [hometown], I jumped into the past, I don't know how to say, but really [it was like] two realities. Now that separation is gone. There is only what I am. And the same happened to my family (. …) I would have never imagined to see my parents proudly talk about their grandchildren and normally talk about our family, as they do now. (Filippo, 40–44, gay)

Gianni's parents were also happy with him having a son with his partner. However, when I interviewed him, they were still "in the closet" in their town. Gianni would have liked them to be more open, but he also understood their fears and hesitations. Therefore he respected their limits and decided for a compromise for the upcoming summer holidays: he would go and visit them with his partner and their son, but they would be staying in another town, where his mother "at least (…) will have the chance to come and stay with us". Gianni's attitude about his own homosexuality also evolved when his son arrived, since it became much easier to be open about it, even in his own hometown.

In the experiences of trans interviewees with their families of origin, we find similar accounts of sons and daughters assuming a caring role, guiding and supporting their parents through a path of learning and

acknowledgement. In Flavio's case, for example, transitioning actually made him reconnect with his parents:

> When I had to start this path, (…) it was an opportunity... somehow, to take care of our relationship (. …) I accompanied them a little: I prepared some written things (. …) A support path, really (. …) Well, it wasn't easy. But this forced us... forced me, when I was more than adult, to bring up feelings, emotions, [my] whole life, to narrate, (…) to narrate about us and to do this thing together.

Bibi, too, tried to guide her parents through her coming out as a trans woman. Differently from Flavio, she did not receive the same support from them, and when I interviewed her, she was still struggling at least not to be called by her dead name or with male pronouns in public. Fortunately, she is consistently supported by her daughters ("within the family context, they were the first people who supported me", she told me):

> They always call me "dad", anyway [she smiles], (…) but they inflect it as feminine. My younger daughter… we were having lunch at my parent's, with some family friends (…) and this child (…) said: "But how is it, a female dad? There are no female dads!" "Yes, my dad is a female, so they exist!" And she always corrects my parents when they use the masculine with me.

Invisibilization Through Lack of Law

Systemic invisibilization also operates through the legal system, as the disturbing issue of the lack of legal recognition of the social parent—and, then, of their relationship with their children—demonstrates.

> I mean, it has to do with being actually socially recognized, that is, our relationship is there, it exists, and we want you to know that it exists! (…) Same thing for the social recognition of the relationship between Carlotta and me, which is a parent-child relationship (. …) It is not only a right about my daughter, but it is also a duty towards her. (Vanni, 45–49, gay)

This problem also involves the whole family of origin of the social parent:

> My mother was sorry when she discovered she wouldn't become part of (…) Carlotta's family line. She cared much about being also recognized as

> the grandmother (. …) The same goes for my brother: as an uncle, he also felt sorry (. …) It is not that he isn't, he is in fact. I mean, that's the thing: you actually are but there's a 'No', (…) a ban by the authorities, which is… it is unfair. (Vanni, 45–49, gay)

Vanni shed light on the social and emotional implications of laws on partnering and parenting (Baumle & Compton, 2015). Moreover, he expressed the legitimate fear of having to suffer the consequences of potentially illegal actions or facing homophobic discrimination by public institutions due to the lack of specific legal protections:

> I was a little insecure. Not so much about being a parent, but about the legal safeguards we would have, and if social services could interfere in our history, what power they had. That scared me a little.

As respondents' experiences show, this sense of insecurity is produced not only by the absence of law or by the existence of clearly homophobic legislation but also by the unclear, unpredictable and discretional application of the law (Baumle & Compton, 2015).[8] Indeed, some of the fathers I interviewed spoke about the problems they encountered when trying to transcribe the birth certificate of their children in Italy. For example, Vanni, once again, recalled the fear of doing something illegal, when talking about putting both fathers' names on the certificate:[9]

> As long as you do it with the marriage certificate, you risk it, whatever, you don't care, you try it. To fight, to move on. But when your child's life is involved, maybe you say: "Well, let's not risk it, let's try to do things as best we can".

[8] Moreover, as Baumple and Compton recall, laws protecting LGBT rights may be perceived as temporary achievement that could be erased at any moment, depending on the political situation.

[9] The "Appellate Court of Trento", with order of 23 February 2017, ruled that the social father could be recognized as legal parent of the two children he and his partner (genetic father) had had though surrogacy.

Filippo's case is even more complicated, since one of his twins is genetically bonded to him and the other to his husband. Indeed, he notes how in his case it is nearly impossible to avoid illegality.[10]

> We also had to agree to make a choice that, I'm not ashamed to say, does not follow the law, but there are situations you don't know how to handle [:] Italian law cannot provide for our case. (Filippo)

This issue clearly depicts how the legal system reproduces the symbolic and material hierarchy of genetic ties between parents and children (Nebeling Petersen, 2016; Riggs & Due, 2013). As Michele, genetic father, told me: "to be honest, you must admit [that] if there were a conflict, the law would be on my side".

So, when it comes to the interactions with institutions, gay fathers, together with lesbian mothers, are often discriminated against and invisibilized or face an institutional lack of knowledge about their specific kind of families. Faced with such difficulties, they employ different daily micropractices of resistance (Gusmano & Motterle, 2020), some of which border on illegality and are themselves a kind of resistance to the inadequacy of the legal system (Baumle & Compton, 2015) as we saw in the examples above.

Even when respecting the rules as much as possible, open discrimination can be encountered, as happened to Carlo, whose experience is representative of many others in Italy:

> Because of the mere fact that one can grasp that Ilario is the son of two dads, but is recognized only by one, we have received an obstructive formalism in the transcription of this certificate (…) "Do you know (…) that (…) rented uterus is illegal?" (…) This sort of veiled threat (. …) We [asked] "Famiglie Arcobaleno"[11] [:] it turned out that everyone had faced this exact same script, this kind of formalist obstructionism (. …) Then a manager took this situation to heart (…) in short, this was then solved.

[10] The "Appellate Court of Milan", with decree of 28 December 2016 (six months after I interviewed Filippo), ruled that two gay fathers, each genetically connected to each of their twins, could give both their surnames two both twins. However, the children were not legally recognized as brothers, since each was the legal child of a different father.

[11] "Famiglie Arcobaleno" [Rainbow Families] is an organization for homosexual individuals and couples who have or want to have children.

Notwithstanding the "veiled threats", as a lawyer Carlo knew that registry employees could do nothing against him and his partner legally. Moreover, they had the chance to compare their experience with other similar ones, thanks to "Famiglie Arcobaleno". His example shows how resorting to surrogacy and facing all the different kinds of difficulties that it entails requires not only economic capital but also social and cultural ones (Gusmano & Motterle, 2020).[12]

For her part, Lenù considered going abroad with her partner Noe, to "build a family": together with the dramatic employment situation affecting her generation, the lack of legal recognition as a couple[13] and as (potentially future) mothers is an extra motivation to consider leaving Italy. However, in a context of socio-economical precariousness, Lenù and Noe's projects for a future together also included other potential plans, beyond the couple. Indeed, the option that actually seemed closer to becoming true, at the time of the interview, was participating in a project with some of their friends in order to work together, sharing responsibilities and professional skills.

The importance of social capital in the forms of (networks of) friends, colleagues and political comrades will be analysed later in this chapter. Before that, the next section will focus on the particular invisibilization that trans people suffer in Italy, in spite of a law on gender identity actually existing.

When the Law Is Not Enough

The experiences of some of the trans persons I interviewed—which echo those of many trans people in Italy and beyond—show how, even when a law does exist, it can fail to help and protect the very subjects it aims to serve. In fact, the law fails in particular because it does not recognize non-binary, gender-variant and other non-normative subjects, who consequently remain invisible (Voli, 2018).

Italy was one of the first European countries to pass a law on gender identity: Act 164 of 1982, "Norme in materia di rettificazione di

[12] Other examples that confirm the centrality of cultural and social capital come from Michele and his partner, who researched and studied books and articles on surrogacy and searched the web and asked other fathers, to be sure their choice was ethically sustainable. Moreover, a certain fluency with the English language is needed to communicate with surrogacy agencies, donors and surrogates.

[13] When I interviewed her, the law on civil union was yet to come.

attribuzione di sesso" [Rules Concerning the Rectification of Sex-Attribution] was a fundamental achievement. However, it showed some shortcomings, especially in its enforcement, and is now extremely outdated. Firstly, even if the law does not explicitly demand surgical genital rectification for legal gender recognition, Italian jurisprudence always interpreted it that way, until two recent decisions by the Court of Cassation (decision n. 15138, 20.07.2015) and the Constitutional Court (decision n. 221, 05.11.2015). Secondly, a long and difficult path is required in order to have name and gender changed on one's ID. Indeed, excluding some rare exceptions, the procedures for gender reassignment in public centres follow the guidelines of the National Observatory on Gender Identity (ONIG), which demand at least six months of psychotherapy before starting hormonal treatment (during the year-long, so-called real-life test). Only after that is it possible to ask a judge for the authorization to change one's ID.[14]

Some of the trans and non-binary participants described their experience with public health services regarding their transitioning process as extremely unsettling, both because of economic issues[15] and the serious lack of professionalism they faced (Dierckx & Platero, 2018).

Indeed, despite being supposed to provide help and support, health services may happen to be the very place where one not only undergoes frustrations and injustices but also institutional and social power structures that limit the rights of trans people to show themselves in their concrete, material functioning (Braz & Souza, 2018; Butler, 2004; Hines, 2007). The so-called medicolegal system (Butler, 1993; Hines et al., 2018) and its discourse reproduces and strengthens (hetero)cisnormativity by shaping "the trans person" as a perfectly gendered subject, in order for them

[14] ONIG guidelines are followed by most national public hospitals' multidisciplinary specialized centres that deal with gender transitioning; very few centres follow the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) "Standards of Care" protocol, which is notably less demanding. NB. In November 2020 ONIG guidelines were updated, including an explicit call for depathologization.

[15] According to Italian law, the transitioning process is covered by the public health system, but there are actually substantial costs to face (medical, administrative, judicial). In September 2020, the AIFA (Italian Medicines Agency) added hormone therapy to the list of free-access medicines (under the National Health System). However, this news is not as good as it seems, since the conditions for free access follow a strongly pathologizing and binary stance: https://con-te-stare-transgender.it/terapia-ormonale-sostitutiva-gratuita-per-persone-trans-facciamo-chiarezza/; https://www.dinamopress.it/news/falsa-buona-notizia-dibattito-sulle-terapie-ormonali-sostitutive/.

to fit exactly into socially expected gender norms. In particular, Max disapproves of the strong gender binarism he encountered among professionals: "They end up in binarism, too. So if you're FtM you necessarily have to dress in a certain way, have a certain kind of sexual orientation, have a certain kind of sexual fantasies".

Strict binary approaches contribute to leading to what Penelope strongly deplores, regarding both the psycho-medical and the jurisprudential application of the law on gender recognition, that is, the obligation for trans people to fit into an extremely rigid and standardized model of what being trans—that is, being a man and/or a woman, too—should be, in order to have their rights recognized and their gender legally registered (Garosi, 2012; Lorenzetti, 2015).

> There are methods that can make people feel good right away, methods that may even be reversible (. …) And yet... it is assumed that everyone must / really prove/ [*with emphasis*] they need all this. That is, you really have to get there and prove that you are worthy of the path. Which is somewhat the same as (…) the fact that we must /prove/ [*with emphasis*] to a judge that we are really who we are. We are not free. We are not free to self-determine ourselves, a judge must decide for us. (Penelope, 25–29, trans, demisexual, panromantic)

The account of Valentina Coletta, one of the key informants I spoke to during fieldwork, shows the contradictions and self-inflicted invisibilization that many non-binary persons—and any other gender non-conforming individual—face when trying to get a legal gender recognition.[16] Legal recognition, as a matter of fact, is a basic matter of living one's daily life without having to face continuous troubles and complications, so that it keeps being an obliged objective even for the people who do not recognize themselves in any of the two binary genders. Indeed, finding (and keeping) a job is one of the most serious and common problems among trans people (Saraceno, 2003)[17]:

[16] It is worth mentioning that these appropriation strategies are also used, very diffusely, by trans people who do not necessarily question the transitioning process as imposed on them nor gender binarism. Many of these people also do not fit into the well-defined and rigid boxes in which they are constrained.

[17] Keeping one's job is another expectable problem. Moreover, even in formally supportive workplaces, daily life may not be easy, as in the case of one participant, Bibi, who keeps being teased by colleagues and suffers from her boss's transphobic stereotypes.

> I started thinking about changing my ID when I started having problems for the job (. …) I mean, it's something that repels me, but you must be pragmatic and find ingenious solutions to survive in a precarious world. So that was the main goal: finding a job. (Valentina Coletta)

In fact, we cannot forget the economic, class and racial implications (Spade, 2006): not only is the transitioning process not for free at all, despite being covered by the public health service, but for people who do not want to undergo this kind of scrutiny, looking for solutions outside standard procedures may be the only option, which implies a much more expensive path (Davy, 2012) that few people can afford.[18]

Once again, participants' accounts show that economic capital can make a difference when rights are limited, but also that other kinds of capital are important and are in fact used.

For example, an interesting strategy that emerged from some interviews and is significantly connected with social and cultural capital concerns communication with medicolegal institutions. As the scientific and activist literature emphasizes, lying and acting for medicolegal institutions and their gatekeepers is a common strategy among trans people along the transitioning process, with the aim of fitting into the normative model and so getting access to the whole process and to having their IDs changed (Arfini, 2007; Arietti et al., 2010; Nicotra, 2004). Zowie Davy (2012) talks about "stage-managing" to describe a respondent's behaviour, that is, "[t]he ritualistic, lengthy and patronizing processes involved in persuading their psychiatrist (gatekeepers) that they are legitimate candidates for hormonal and surgical intervention" (p. 135).

Max gave a perfect example of that:

> I had already studied all those tests (. …) So I knew how I had to answer, [in order to] have certain reactions on their part (. …) But if I had told them that my experience is both feminine and masculine (…) they would have never let me start the transition (. …) According to them (…) if you are FtM, (…) you must like women, (…) you must dress in a certain way, you mustn't use make up, you must completely reject your genitals, you must necessarily do surgery or take your breasts off (. …) I manipulated the tests

[18] Considering this situation, some trans people choose to follow self-administered hormonal therapy, with the aid of others that already did it and finding hormones in different (not always legal) ways (Braz & Souza, 2018).

> all the way through, in order to give them what they wanted and to have what I wanted.

Valentina Coletta traced an interesting parallelism with the experience of undocumented migrant people:

> Having worked with refugees for years, I see that I'm doing the same things they do to get a paper (. …) They go before a commission, I go before three judges to have my life judged, and most likely I will also have to lie, because I cannot reveal the fact that I am a lesbian, the fact that I don't fully identify with female sex. One must lie, lie until death [*laughter*]!

The different strategies I described above often implied a significant social capital. Indeed, many accounts showed how support from friends, families, comrades, colleagues and former partners played a central role, as we will see in the next section.

The Importance of Networks of Care

One of the central issues that came out from my research with lesbian couples, gay parents and trans and care in the Italian context was the importance of different kinds of networks in the lives of participants in order to live liveable lives (or survive) in a cisheteronormative society, respecting and being proud of themselves, getting help and care (material and immaterial), sharing knowledge, and so on.

The role of friends in the daily lives of the respondents was strongly stressed by many of them, especially in the third case study, "Care and transgender". At the same time, however, someone recalled how some friends left for good and some friendships changed for the worse.

The importance of sharing common experiences with trans girlfriends is clear in Bibi's words, as is the soothing sensation of living a "normal life" and doing "normal things" together, in contrast with daily experiences of transphobic discrimination:

> We had a very healthy dinner at the pizzeria, the two of us talking. So, normal life [she smiles] without the anguish of being trans... (. …) To see that one can do absolutely normal things, gave me the peace of mind to continue doing what I did before.

Valentina Coletta underlined that friends also support the daily work of resistance to imposed gender binary:

> People who, like me, are not binary but then followed a medicalized path, end up by clashing with that. (. …) [T]he institution, the state… you must accept a binary choice of gender, (…) but it is a bit dangerous, you feel dragged to the other side. But you have an anchor [:] your network of non-binary friendships, that make you stand with your feet on the ground.

As I recalled above, families of origin are often included in such networks, even when they act as perfect representatives of the cisheteronormative system.

In Flavio's experiences, his family of origin blends into a larger community of care he is trying to build: another kind of extended family, where he calls "my children" the children of his ex-partners and friends. Starting from a clear separation between family of choice and family of origin (which he had a very difficult relationship with before), Flavio ended up actively mixing it all up by creating his version of "personal community" (Formby, 2017, p. 8), where the boundaries separating different affective contexts of references get blurred (Bertone & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2014).

Lenù underlined the central role that friends play in her and in her partner Noe's life. In her case, however, there is no blending, since she explicitly talked about "famiglia naturale" [natural family] and "famiglia acquisita" [acquired family], the latter meaning the family she chose and created in Rome, outside the family of origin: "I have a family and I also have another family here [in Rome]. It doesn't necessarily have to be just Noe, it can be my friends, the people I feel fine with".

> Max sees his friends as a full-fledged family:
>
> Friends for me are a family, (…) [F]riendship is fundamental in my opinion, especially if you don't really have a family or you have a family (…) that doesn't confirm you. In all the fundamental steps of this transitioning, Francesca and Anna have been there (. …) In the sense of support, but also of protection, (…) I see it in them, they are my family (…) at a very emotional level. Whereas my family are still strangers to me, (…) they do not understand me.

When talking about families, the accounts of gay fathers were very significant. These participants highlighted the affective bonds and

relationships they built with gestational carriers, egg donors (to a lesser extent) and their families, way before the child was born.

When describing how they found carriers and donors, participants talked about a bidirectional process, where the main features they looked for (and found) in those women had to do with a commonality of beliefs and motivations, first a desire to get to know each other and then to keep the relationship going after the children are born (Berend, 2016).

> We started building this relationship as we wanted, I mean, as an extended family (. …) A sense of family was created before the babies were born (. …) It's an evolving relationship and it evolves more and more as regards children, now that they are (…) more autonomous, more independent (. …) It's a relationship they are building with their… we call them "cousins", I mean (…) Brooke's children. (. …) So we know what their children do and they know what our children do. So we accompany each other, step by step. It feels like family. (Michele)

> When we talk about Helen we never separate her from Shawn and Mark (…) all her family participated and helped us with this project (. …) And they still are now our full-fledged American family. (Filippo)

Different kinds of informal groups and support networks are deemed fundamental, even life-saving, in participants' daily lives, as seen above with fathers through surrogacy and "Famiglie Arcobaleno". Such contexts, indeed, are extremely useful and necessary not only to find and share information but also for emotional support.

Getting first-hand information directly from people who are in the same situation and already had direct experiences is one of the first objectives. Moreover, realizing that there are other people in very similar situations, and that many different experiences exist and are equally worthy, can be a tremendous relief:

> [W]hen you talk to other people and you realize that there are people like you, then you understand that: "yes I exist". And you legitimate yourself, in a certain sense. (Silom, 30–34, genderqueer, pansexual)

> And it helped me a lot, or at least it helped me to understand that I was not the only one who was transsexual and homosexual, that my sexual orientation did not clash with this situation (. …) It was mainly the fact of discovering

> all the differences and the facets, and the fact that there is no /single right way/ [*with emphasis*] to be trans. (Bibi, 40–44, trans, lesbian)

Information sharing easily becomes mutual care, and virtual spaces can become spaces of care, where every experience counts and anyone who comes searching for help can rapidly become a helper, these two roles always coexisting (Hines, 2007).

Flavio shed light on the collective dimension of care: having serious difficulty trying to help a young trans person, he asked other people for help, and he finds that such collective caring strengthened and enhanced his relationships with those people, whom he thinks could be at his side in other future experiences.

Concluding Remarks

> Of course, we lie. We lie so beautifully that our stories are almost as powerful and big as the lies they tell about us. Our lies keep us alive. Our lies build communities out of the nothingness of colonization and stretch across diaspora, genocide, and heartbreak. Our lies are prayers to each other. They become flesh, grow bodies, begin a second order of naming.
>
> –*Gwen Benaway*, *Pussy*, 2018

> [F]riendship can create affective spaces that heal wounds inflicted by social norms. (Cornejo, 2014, p. 360)

This chapter tries to provide a summary of three years of fieldwork, by choosing to focus on Italian's peculiar legal situation and on how the persons I interviewed dealt with it at the time.

Being aware that the lack of law is not necessarily the main problem for LGBTQ subjects in their daily lives and that the existence of legislation that protects their rights is neither a definitive nor a determinant solution in cisheteronormative societies, I purposely left space to engage with participants' experiences of invisibilization and discrimination beyond the absence of laws. Moreover, especially through the accounts of trans people, I recalled how laws and their application, although fundamental to making many lives liveable, can invisibilize and ostracize many others, due to their deference to the cisheteronormative values that inform the social context.

However, apart from being accepted and suffered, the law and its mechanisms can be worked around and resisted in various ways, as the experiences of gay fathers through surrogacy and trans people I interviewed show. Wanting to exist and be recognized as a non-heterosexual parent or a trans person in Italy generally implies having to deal directly with the issues of law, whether it is there or not. Participants who talked about it described their fears and frustrations on the matter, but also showed awareness and knowledge vis-à-vis such a hostile context. These biographies (trans people's in particular) illustrate a wide, multifaceted flow of resistance and reappropriation (Busi & Fiorilli, 2014), where one of the most apparent (and common) skills is being able to read and interpret normative and oppressive systems and deploying strategies to make the most of them without bending to their standards.

Awareness, knowledge and other much-needed tools to manage these kinds of issues are strongly connected with social, cultural and economic capital. Among them, different networks of care (friends, associations, informal and virtual networks) emerged clearly as a fundamental and powerful support, not only when having to do with the law. In contrast with a neoliberal narrative of the individual capacity to overcome every difficulty thanks to one's inner force and capacity, even when living as abject and outcast subjects in Western democracies, the accounts of these participants show it is worth considering the political value of any relationship of care they experienced. This may take the form of emotional support among friends, in families, self-help groups, political collectives, virtual gaming groups or BDSM groups; of technical advice from more (and to less) experienced people in individual or collective contexts; of medical and psychological care from professionals; and so on.

To conclude, my—inevitably partial—analysis shows the importance of more research on the topic of care among LGBTQ people in Italy. In particular, what my research lacks is what I find most interesting to focus on, in particular: the experiences with (networks of) care and support of LGBTQ Black people and people of colour, migrant people, young people and children and older people.

References

Arfini, A. (2007). Sullivan's Travel. Formazione di un gay. In S. Antosa (Ed.), *Omosapiens 2. Spazi e identità queer* (pp. 149–160).

Arietti, L., Ballarin, C., Cuccio, G., & Marcasciano, P. (Eds.). (2010). *Elementi di critica trans.* Manifestolibri.

Barel, B. (2020). Le nuove frontiere dell'adozione dei minori: dal sempre più ampio riconoscimento delle adozioni all'estero all'accesso all'adozione interna da parte di coppie *same-sex* e di single. *GenIUS. Rivista Di Studi Giuridici Sull'orientamento Sessuale e l'identità Di Genere, 2020*(1) Online first.

Baumle, A. K., & Compton, D. R. (2015). *Legalizing LGBT families: How the law shapes parenthood*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12208

Berend, Z. (2016). The morality of contract surrogacy. *InGenere*. https://www.ingenere.it/en/articles/the-morality-of-contract-surrogacy-us-surrogates-perspectives

Bertone, C. (2008). Confini familiari. Paradossi e possibilità negli studi sulle famiglie omosessuali. In L. Trappolin (Ed.), *Omosapiens 3. Per una sociologia dell'omosessualità* (pp. 182–193). Roma: Carocci.

Bertone, C., & Gusmano, B. (2013). Queerying the public administration in Italy: Local challenges to a national standstill. In Y. Taylor & M. Addison (Eds.), *Queer presences and absences. Genders and sexualities in the social sciences* (pp. 260–279). Palgrave Macmillan.

Bertone, C., & Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (2014). Putting families of origin into the queer picture: Introducing this special issue. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies, 10*(1–2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2013.857494

Biagini, E. (2018). *L 'emersione imprevista*. Edizioni ETS.

Braz, C., & Souza, É. R. (2018). Transmasculinidades, transformações corporais e saúde: algumas reflexões antropológicas. In *De guri a cabra macho: masculinidades no Brasil* (pp. 28–42). Lamparina.

Busi, B., & Fiorilli, O. R. (2014). Introduzione. Per Una Prospettiva (Trans) Femminista Sulla Salute Ai Tempi Del Neoliberismo. *DWF, 2014*(3–4), 5–14.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2009). Performativity, precarity and sexual politics. *AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana, 4*(3), i–xiii.

Cafasso, S. (2014). *Figli dell'arcobaleno. Madri lesbiche, padri gay, diritti negati in Italia*. Donzelli.

Centro Risorse LGBTI. (2017). *#Contiamoci! Una fotografia delle famiglie LGBTQI in Italia*. http://www.risorselgbti.eu/contiamoci-famiglie-lgbtqi/

Chetcuti, N. (2014). *Dirsi lesbica. Vita di coppia, sessualità, rappresentazione di sé*. Ediesse.

Cirillo, L., Correale, F., Guazzo, P., Lopresti, C., Mamini, E., & Muraro, A. (2010). Introduzione I. In L. Cirillo, F. Correale, P. Guazzo, C. Lopresti, E. Mamini, & A. Muraro (Eds.), *Orgoglio e pregiudizio. Le lesbiche in Italia nel 2010: politica, storia, teoria, immaginari* (pp. 7–11). Alegre.

Congiargiu, N. (2015). *La volontà di non sapere: Genealogia e decostruzione dell'ideologia del gender in Italia*. University of Cagliari.

Cornejo, G. (2014). For a queer pedagogy of friendship. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly, 1*(3), 352–367. https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2685633

Davy, Z. (2012). *Recognizing transsexuals: Personal.* Routledge.

Dierckx, M., & Platero, R. L. (2018). The meaning of trans* in a family context. *Critical Social Policy, 38*(1), 79–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317731953

Formby, E. (2017). *Exploring LGBT spaces and communities.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315747798

Garbagnoli, S. (2017). Italy as a lighthouse: Anti-gender protests between the "anthropological question" and national identity. In R. Kuhar & D. Paternotte (Eds.), *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against equality.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Garosi, E. (2012). The politics of gender transitioning in Italy. *Modern Italy, 17*(4), 465–478. https://doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2012.706998

Guerzoni, C., & Motterle, T. (2018). Sul corpo delle surrogate. Analisi del discorso pubblico italiano sulla gestazione per altri. *Gender/Sexuality/Italy, 5*(2018) Retrieved from http://www.gendersexualityitaly.com/8-sul-corpo-delle-surrogate-analisi-del-discorso-pubblico-italiano-sulla-gestazione-per-altri/

Gusmano, B., & Motterle, T. (2019). The micropolitics of choice in Italy: How the law affects lesbian and bisexual women's daily life. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 23*(3), 336–356. https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2019.1598719

Gusmano, B., & Motterle, T. (2020). Genitorialità senza diritti: risultati del progetto Intimate in Italia. In F. de Cordova, G. Selmi, & C. Sità (Eds.), *Legami possibili: Ricerche e strumenti per l'inclusione delle famiglie LGB.* Edizioni ETS.

Hines, S. (2007). Transgendering care: Practices of care within transgender communities. *Critical Social Policy, 27*(4), 462–486.

Hines, S., Davy, Z., Monro, S., Motmans, J., Santos, A. C., & Van Der Ros, J. (2018). Introduction to the themed issue: Trans* policy, practice and lived experience within a European context. *Critical Social Policy, 38*(1), 5–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317732879

Lorenzetti, A. (2015). Il cambiamento di sesso anagrafico e le sue condizioni: la necessità o meno dell'intervento chirurgico. Brevi riflessioni sulla situazione attuale e sui prossimi sviluppi. *GenIUS. Rivista Di Studi Giuridici Sull'orientamento Sessuale e l'identità Di Genere, 2015*(1), 174–189.

Lorenzetti, A., & Viggiani, G. (2015). Italy. In M. F. Moscati (Ed.), *Same-sex couples and mediation in the EU.* Wildy, Simmonds and Hill.

Nebeling Petersen, M. (2016). Becoming gay fathers through transnational commercial surrogacy. *Journal of Family Issues, 1–27.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X16676859

Nicotra, M. (2004). *TransAzioni* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykX87ndODo8

Riggs, D. W., & Due, C. (2013). Representations of reproductive citizenship and vulnerability in media reports of offshore surrogacy. *Citizenship Studies, 17*(8), 956–969. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2013.851145

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2020). *The tenacity of the couple-norm intimate citizenship regimes in a changing Europe*. UCL Press.

Santos, A. C. (2013). *Social movements and sexual citizenship in Southern Europe*. Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137296405

Saraceno, C. (Ed.). (2003). *Diversi da chi? Gay, lesbiche, transessuali in un'area metropolitana*. Guerini.

Spade, D. (2006). Compliance is Gendered: Struggling for Gender Self-Determination in a Hostile Economy. In P. Currah, R. M. Juang, & S. P. Minter (Eds.), *Transgender Rights* (pp. 217–241) Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1209984

Trappolin, L. (2004). *Identità in azione*. Mobilitazione omosessuale e sfera pubblica.

Voli, S. (2018). (Trans)gender citizenship in Italy: A contradiction in terms? From the parliamentary debate about Law 164/1982 to the present. *Modern Italy, 23*(2), 201–214. https://doi.org/10.1017/mit.2018.8

Wengraf, T. (2001). Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured method. *Sage*. Publications.

CHAPTER 7

Insurgent Parenting: Political Implications of Childrearing and Caring Practices in Spain

Luciana Moreira

Introduction

In Spain, same-sex marriage and adoption were legalized in 2005, and in 2006 a new law of assisted reproduction stated for the first time that every woman could have access to those techniques regardless of their marital status and sexual orientation. This was not forbidden under previous legislation, although, in the case of lesbian couples, the non-biological mother could not register the child (Moreira, 2018; Pichardo, 2009; Trujillo & Burgaleta, 2014). While examples of queer family constellations involving parenting practices already occurred, the creation of a legal framework for these families further boosted their existence and growth. The existence of new family models has enhanced academic studies about the diversity of families and the importance of rethinking gender roles and childcare within the motherhood system (or parenting). As in other contexts, Spanish feminism has also questioned Western ideology about motherhood and conservative reactions to women's claims within and outside feminist movements for more equality within the family, the domestic

L. Moreira (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_7

space, and the care of children (Blázquez Rodríguez & Montes Muñoz, 2010; Esteban, 2000).

Regarding same-sex parenting, according to research on the Spanish context, we can identify patterns of both transformation and sameness in lesbian motherhood concerning the role of the family (Pichardo, 2009; Platero, 2014; Santos, 2012; Trujillo & Burgaleta, 2014). People engaging in same-sex coupling and parenting tend to justify themselves as being "good" parents or living in "normal families" because of social levels of stigmatization and also implicitly created impediments, but on the other hand, the structure of these families' daily life in itself challenges the normative system of kinship and the sex/gender system with respect to parental models (Moreira, 2018; Platero, 2014; Ryan-Flood, 2009), even if the link between marriage and filiation rights with the expansion of the neoliberal economy remains strong (Duggan, 2003; Richardson, 2005).

Thus, while both in Spain and abroad the link between family and neoliberal expansion is being reinforced, it is also true that many family projects offer alternatives to living in a globalized world through counterhegemonic practices of care and affections that, to different degrees, challenge patriarchal culture, neoliberalism, and conservatism (hooks, 1984, 2000; Chavkrin, 2010; Llopis, 2015; Rich, 1986). Parallel to significant alternatives that have already emerged from Black and lesbian feminist studies, current possibilities enabled by intimate citizenship rights also present interesting practices of care outside the traditional family norm (Moreira, 2018; Ryan-Flood, 2009; Taylor, 2009). In the current context of neoliberal globalization, the concept of "insurgent cosmopolitanism" (Santos, 2006) in this chapter serves as a tool to understand the practices of counterhegemonic parenting that might result from knowledge exchange within subaltern movements and identities, also propitiated by globalization.

Exchanges of knowledge and experience are a constant in contemporary societies, and parenting practices are not excluded from those exchanges. It is also interesting to see how many of these practices also aim to challenge the neoliberal system. Emancipatory practices of questioning and refusing the patriarchal parenting model can be found in different parts of the globe, and Spain is no exception. People seek to achieve greater equality between genders and between people in general while promoting respect for the free development of children and young people, particularly as regards their sexual orientation and gender identity.

My analysis draws, on the one hand, on interviews with lesbian and bisexual mothers and, on the other hand, on interviews with trans people whose parents were part of their networks of care within the project *Intimate – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe*.[1] This empirical material collected in Madrid is constituted by two different studies: lesbian and bisexual mothers who talk about their experiences of motherhood and young trans people who reflect on the importance of their families, considering them part of their support networks. The chapter will contribute to studies on parenting and care, specifically showing how parenting practices may be a tool to (1) ascribe social visibility to sexual and gender-diverse identities and families; (2) educate children beyond a gender binary system; (3) subvert the neoliberal supremacy of work over motherhood; and (4) raise children in a larger network of care, beyond the couple/children norm.

Dissident Parenting Against and Beyond Familial Gendered Relations

In her book, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler departs from the tragic figure of Antigone (one of the daughters of Oedipus and Jocasta's incestuous relationship), portrayed in the tragedy of Sophocles, to both dwell on the taboos governing kinship and question what is meant by family "in its normative sense" (2000, p. 22). According to Butler, "Antigone figures the limits of intelligibility exposed at the limits of kinship" (2000, p. 23), functioning as a metaphor that catches the possibilities behind the heterosexual and monogamous normative framework of families and kinship. This makes space to discuss incest, parenting shared by same-sex couples, nuclear and non-nuclear forms of families, blended models, absent figures, and the "dysfunctional" discourse about a wide range of possibilities that do not fit into the normative ideal of family.

Indeed, escaping or subverting the norm happened in many different ways throughout history, as the very subject of the classic tragedy of Oedipus (and his daughter/sister Antigone) illustrates, but the pressure of

[1] "Intimate – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe" was a five-year project involving qualitative studies on LGBT partnering, parenting, and friendship across Portugal, Spain, and Italy. It was coordinated by Ana Cristina Santos, at Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal, between 2014 and 2019. The interviews used in this chapter were collected in Madrid in 2016 and 2017.

the norm has also been great and continued, anchored in legislation, state norms, and religious and/or cultural norms. Nevertheless, to better understand the centrality of the family "in its normative sense", it is necessary to follow a vast array of queer and feminist analyses of patriarchy or also the so-called sex/gender system (Rubin, 1996).

The family norm is largely anchored in the different (and binary) gender roles assigned to males and females, that is, to the management of relations between men and women (both cisgender), especially regarding sexuality and kinship. For instance, Preciado (2011) identifies the family as one of the institutions (along with others such as medical and legal institutions) that guarantees the binary sex assignment, ensuring the constancy of gendered bodies. Indeed, the sex/gender system is based on what Judith Butler, following the work of authors such as Gayle Rubin (1996), Adrienne Rich (1980), or Monique Wittig (1992), called the "heterosexual matrix" (1990). The sex/gender system not only subjugates women in general (through the implication of gender roles in the public and private domains) but also controls affect, sexuality, reproduction, kinship, possible experiences of fluidity, and transit that may exist beyond the heterosexual contract and gender experiences outside cisnormativity.

Several authors have attempted to draw the history of patriarchal rule as well as to discuss the concept. While its origins are unclear, it is generally agreed that patriarchy or heterocispatriarchy (to emphasize the dependence of this social system on the heterosexual matrix) is, above all, an imposed ideological cultural construct.[2] Several feminist authors, as well as authors of postcolonial studies, have pointed to the greater role of colonialism and capitalism in the expansion of patriarchal ideology. Oyèrónké Oyewúmì (1997), Rita Segato (2003), and Maria Lugones (2008), among others, denounced the fact that the hierarchical organization of genders is related to the modern colonial Western system, which imposed it on the spaces it was trying to colonize. Thus, the male/female dichotomy and the heterosexual norm underlying the patriarchal system also served to subjugate other people who did not follow the same norms.

Although a diversity of family organizations persists today, as well as an array of gender expressions that question the male/female binary system in some communities in different parts of the globe (Glenn et al., 1994; Herdt, 1994; O'Reilly, 2004), the colonial system and globalization spread and rooted patriarchal norms (which often already worked in

[2] See, for example, Lerner (1986), or Nicholson, L. (1997).

non-Western spaces as well). It is in this sense that gender roles and the nuclear family have become the cornerstones of many societies and are, therefore, at the root of women's oppression and sex-generic dissent.

Due to the binary division of genders, the institution of motherhood (part of the "heterosexual matrix") has had and still plays a fundamental role in maintaining the sex/gender system, as it legitimates and conveys its conservative values. If men take a leading role within the patriarchal culture, so does the representation of women through the creation of images such as "of the archetypal Mother which reinforce the conservatism of motherhood and convert it to an energy for the renewal of male power" (Rich, 1986, p. 61). Therefore, many feminist, mostly White, bourgeois-born authors attack motherhood as well as marriage as institutions that underlie women's oppression, which binds them to domestic spaces and care-related tasks, allegedly preventing women from gaining economic autonomy—understood as a fundamental form of emancipation (Collins, 1994; hooks, 1984, 2000); O'Reilly, 2004; Rich, 1986).

However, it was also within a feminist framework that alternative voices emerged to rescue motherhood, as if they were Antigones defying established rules. Adrienne Rich (1976/1986) pioneered advocating emancipatory practices of mothering to challenge what she called "patriarchal motherhood". bell hooks (1984, 2000) and Patricia Hill Collins (1994), among others, highlight the emancipatory and community role of motherhood and child-caring in African-American communities as a site of resistance rather than collusion with the normative system.

In addition to the different contexts from which each author comes, it is also interesting to reflect on the terminological differences that each one of them adopts.On the one side, Adrienne Rich (1986) denounces the link between patriarchal culture and motherhood as an institution and then proposes the term "mothering" (as opposed to "patriarchal motherhood") to speak of positive and emancipatory practices that break or mitigate a sexist education. On the other side, bell hooks also suggest that the term "motherhood" reinforces "central tenets of male supremacist ideology" (1984, p. 135) and goes further by proposing a more neutral term: parenting. Based on the experiences of African-American communities (even giving her personal example) and building on the promotion of gender equality, the author advocates for "revolutionary parenting" (hooks, 1984, p. 133) and "collective parenting" (p. 146) as models that go far beyond the nuclear traditional family, pillar of the heterosexual

matrix, and would therefore be a mechanism for valuing equality and diversity in childrearing. According to hooks:

> Structured into the definitions and the very usage of the terms father and mother is the sense that these two words refer to two distinctly different experiences. Women and men must define the work of fathering and mothering in the same way males and females are to accept equal responsibility in parenting. (1984, p. 137)

Childrearing shared by fathers and mothers is a common practice in many families and groups of friends today. More than that, the demands and social changes experienced in recent years have made it possible not only for childcare to be shared by male and female figures, but it is also a task for people who identify outside the binary gender system. Trans and agender parenting are a reality. For example, Del LaGrace Volcano is an interesting case, since they[3] is an intersex photographer and performer, raised as a girl but that later decided to live openly their intersexuality, performing both femininity and masculinity. They are from the USA, live now in Stockholm, and are the MaPa of two children that they and their partner are raising without gender rules. According to a published interview to María Llopis, MaPa is how Del LaGrace Volcano identifies, for being both mother and father, due to their intersexuality. Their children call them that, and Del is known in their oldest child's school as a MaPa, both by caregivers and by other children. Llopis (2015) attests that "through their artistic work and their life experience [Del] inspires us to escape from the narrow social conventions of heteronormativity" (p. 77).

Since the first calls made in the streets by gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans people in the 1960s and 1970s in the Western world (mostly in democratic countries), many discriminatory laws have been abolished, and anti-discriminatory laws have come into force, including those regarding marriage and parental rights (Evans, 1993; Ryan-Flood, 2009; Santos, 2013; Weeks et al., 2001). As Weeks et al. put it: "Non-heterosexual people have had to be the arch-inventors, because so few guidelines have existed for those living outside the conventional heterosexual patterns" (2001, p. 20). In a world where the rejection of queer lives may lead to the loss of family and (straight) friends' support, new networks of care and families of choice (Warner, 1991; Weston, 1991) have become

[3] I am using here gender-neutral language since Del uses neutral pronouns.

fundamental, mostly when biological families are homophobic and violent. Those practices, despite their specificities, may be compared to Black communities and the reliance on care and support from others beyond nuclear or biological families. Thus, new commitments among queer people, including the formation of parental emotional and legal bonds, looking for care, love, and support beyond the traditional family are also good examples of challenging social norms based on the masculine/feminine binary and the wide range of roles attached to it (Moreira, 2018; Ryan-Flood, 2009; Taylor, 2009). Equally important for the education of a fairer society through parenting practices are the families that have supported their gender-diverse and/or transgender children, fighting alongside them, allowing them to be who they are, respecting the free personal and emotional development of their children (Aramburu Alegría, 2018).

In this sense, Adrianne Rich already advocated for the destruction of the institution of motherhood. This author's proposal was not to abolish motherhood but "to release the creation and sustenance of life into the same realm of decision, struggle, surprise, imagination and conscious intelligence, as any difficult, but freely chosen work" (Rich, 1986, p. 280). Those emancipatory possibilities may arise from parenting when, like Antigones that no longer need to commit suicide, people destabilize sexual, racial, and gender norms (to quote just a few of contemporary social norms) embracing social justice through revolutionary parenting and care. As Ana Cristina Santos argued: "failing to be a particular kind of (heteronormative, cisnormative, mononormative) mother may offer a fruitful way for queering parental love through embracing reproductive misfits" (Santos, 2018, p. 211).

My suggestion is that the mentioned emancipatory possibilities constitute forms of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls "insurgent cosmopolitanism" (2006, 2014). As cosmopolitanism goes side by side with globalization, in the next section, I will outline the connection between the heterosexual matrix and globalization, to situate insurgent cosmopolitanism within this specific constitution of the contemporary world.

Resisting Globalization: Globalizing Resistance Through Parenting and Care

Globalization is a process of transforming what belonged previously to a local context into the global. It may be understood as a contemporary concept to describe a vast array of phenomena, such as the elimination of borders (or simplification in travel processes), the centrality of the media, massive international trade, respect for the human diversity present in different parts of the globe, constant networks among societies, and the spread of knowledge (Berggren & Nilsson, 2015; Castells, 2004; Garber, 2006). In his analysis of societies and globalization processes, Castells (2004) stresses the importance of networks and denounces the relative lack of a historical representation of networked structures, even if they were (and are) subjected to vertical logics and power forces (p. 4).

But the three or four past decades show also how globalization maintained its relations to economic and social power, enabling new chains of procedures that allow the Western world, or its elites, to continue to take advantage of other geographies, but also subaltern and/or minority groups within it. In other terms, the politics of globalization seem to be grounded in uniform processes applied to a global scale, with the aim of achieving and exercising positions of power over the populations or communities (Santos, 2006). Thus, capitalism and neoliberalism are strongly connected to the phenomenon of globalization (Dasgupta & Pieterse, 2009; Santos, 2006, 2014; Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2005). Samir Dasgupta (2009) suggests that "globalization is the latest hegemonic expression of capitalism. It can be explained in terms of economic, political, intellectual and cultural hegemony of the global players. We can argue that at present globalization has completely been merged with neocapitalism" (p. 8).

Furthermore, both political and military conflicts and demands issued by social movements that took place throughout the twentieth century (and even earlier), mainly in the Western world, led to a wide range of transnational legal documents and policy statements, according to which civil, political, and socio-economic rights of all human beings are to be respected and governments should be proactive in maintaining or fulfilling those rights. Nevertheless, despite being based on a transnational awareness of the need to defend human rights, those documents are prepared and negotiated based on dominant models of Western societies, such as Western feminism, liberalism, and capitalism (even patriarchy), in what

may be understood as an attempt to standardize (or universalize) social and economic systems that do not work at a local level (Merry, 2006; Santos, 2014). The hegemony of these documents and of specific social and economic models based on capitalism and patriarchal values lead to two different consequences: on the one hand, they cannot be implemented effectively in other communities or other parts of the world without caution and efforts of resignification of some cultural and political concepts at (other) local levels (Merry, 2006). On the other hand, those documents may be and are being used as oppressive strategies to claim Western superiority and as argument to invade and control nations and regions in the name of human rights when in fact economic and political powers are behind its usage (Douzinas, 2007; Moyn, 2014).

Therefore, in a globalized world, heir of a colonial system, the traditional and heterosexual nuclear family has been supportive of the hegemonic system, with clearly defined gender roles (Lugones, 2008; Oyewúmì, 1997). In that sense, concerning colonial power and coloniality, Maria Lugones (2008) argues that the gendered colonial system imposed through colonialism erodes previous perceptions of both gender and sexuality. She goes further in arguing that gender and race are Western concepts and indigenous women became defined according to such concepts, even if they were not before (Lugones, 2008, p. 2).

It may be argued that the absence or invisibility of other models of families beyond the rules of nuclear model (what hooks, 1984, calls revolutionary parenting), based on the heterosexual organization of relationships, or of practices of childcare more based on the community than on the nuclear family (what hooks, 1984, calls collective parenting) is also a part of the capitalist and globalizing project and its Western models. Gender and sexual diversity used to be also erased and combated in Western societies, and colonialism spread those prejudices. However, nowadays, with globalization, LGBT rights are sometimes used as a political strategy to claim Western supremacy and as an argument to control or deny help to non-Western states.[4]

Furthermore, while on the one hand the acceptance of sexual and gender diversity is the result of social struggles and extensive work within institutions and states, it is also certain that the rights achieved (sometimes marked by the absence or weakness of public policies that combat discrimination on a daily basis) are connected to neoliberalism, through the

[4] See, for example, Puar (2013) and Tamale (2013).

role that the couple and the family assume in contemporary societies as focuses of consumption (Duggan, 2003; Richardson, 2005). It is possible to trace a link between relational rights[5] with the need to maintain and enlarge the neoliberal economy (based also on the family as institution) accommodating those who claim their intimate and sexual rights.

But when thinking about family, it is very important to think also about parenting roles and parenting practices. They play an important role in this analysis of globalization for two reasons: on the one hand, the sex/gender system has defined different roles for men and women, from their traditional places in society, which made care and affection essentially women's tasks; on the other hand, feminist claims within the framework of the more bourgeois White, cut-out feminism demanded broad access for women to the working world, but without sufficient mechanisms in place to fulfil women's domestic tasks. Women have accessed autonomy, but this also means that the labour force is bigger now, and so are the possibilities of consumption. Therefore, families with both members working are part of the gear of neoliberalism and hegemonic globalization. Wendy Chavkrin (2010) draws attention to the problems of women's entry into the world of labour and the gap they left regarding childcare. Political response to that change was not enough, even more in a globalized world where parenting leave is short and where schools have schedules which are different to those of parents' work; as the latter are becoming more and more flexible, which also means working outside "nine to five" schedules, "women have turned to other working women to perform domestic 'care work'" (Chavkrin, 2010, p. 7). According to this author, some problems concerning motherhood and childcare that arose from globalization are:

> (…) the exacerbation of inequities; the commodification of new aspects of the human experience; the reach of the market into realms of scientific exploration and wide spread use of technologies before enough is known about their long-term health implications; the conversion of social change into privatized individual problems; the questionable/changing ability of the nation state to protect, to provision, to exclude; and the philosophic and political meaning of self, of personhood, of identity. (Chavkrin, 2010, pp. 12–13)

[5] Such as the right to officially marry and have children.

However, in a globalized world of constant transnational interactions, it is possible to find both grassroots movements and individuals adopting emancipatory practices and trying to resist or counteract the dimmer side of globalization, learning and exchanging knowledge with different groups from different parts of the globe. While resistance to savage capitalism and neoliberalism is very common among those who try to avoid the negative aspects of globalization, equal values and human respect also circulate, with many people trying to live and spread life models outside of sexist, racist, and homophobic patterns. It is in the street and in social movements that these ideas and ways of resisting take shape and spread, yet the private space of care and affection is also an important, though often neglected, place for changing mindsets. In this sense, the care of children is particularly important.

To describe the spread of knowledge and mobility allowed by globalization itself, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006, 2014) proposed the concept of insurgent cosmopolitanism as a "transnationally organized resistance against the unequal exchanges produced or intensified by globalized localisms and localized globalisms" (Santos, 2006, p. 397), which would be a more egalitarian mode of production of globalization. In the same line of thought, Wendy Chavkrin pays attention to "the liberatory possibilities and inventive new forms of connection at play in the globalization of motherhood" (2010, p. 13). Thus, insurgent cosmopolitanism benefits from some of the characteristics of hegemonic globalization while providing other emancipatory ways of creating other possible, more egalitarian, and affective worlds in a counterhegemonic posture based on alternative cultural values.

Southern European societies may be analysed as very patriarchal and familistic. Nevertheless, at that point they are also strongly imprinted with legal and social changes due to feminism and sexual and/or gender-diverse people's claims. In that sense, projects of family that go beyond the ideal of the Western traditional, nuclear, heteronormative family, as a consumerism vehicle, are a new approach to inhabiting a globalized world through insurgent models of living that reject the sex/gender system, but also neoliberalism and capitalism, in more or less intense ways. Queer movements or queer lives in the Spanish context may be analysed within the insurgent cosmopolitanism approach, as they embody a strategy to fight against the sex/gender system and hegemonic globalization, even more when it touches on caring practices, as a way of generating different futures.

Insurgent Parenting Practices

Drawing on the research I carried out between 2016 and 2017 in Madrid within the project *Intimate – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe*, about assisted conception (with lesbian and bisexual mothers) and with trans people whose parents or other family members were part of their networks of care, I will now analyse non-normative ways of experimenting and living childcare, beyond normative models in Spain. To do that, drawing from Santos' (2006) concept of "insurgent cosmopolitanism", I propose the concept of insurgent parenting to describe practices of counterhegemonic parenting that might result from knowledge exchange within social movements and identities and that are also propitiated by globalization or internationalism (feminism, queer mobilization, anti-racism, etc.). Those practices—most of the time related to caring and rearing—are performed by persons who understand themselves, and the children they raise, beyond gender, race, or sexuality, and who try to reject neoliberalism and capitalism, in more or less intense ways. Insurgent parenting is agender; it may be lived by traditional family members, but it also characterizes the community that parents choose to be part of their caring journey. Insurgent parenting does not praise men because they took good care of the children. Insurgent parents rear children beyond traditional gender roles and embrace or try to embrace different ways of living intimate relationships, friendships, and childcare, as a way of generating more egalitarian futures.

I would like to start with an example of insurgent ways of experimenting and living childcare, beyond the heterocisnormative society based on the traditional family, analysing an interview with Mónica, a cisgender woman in her mid-thirties, mother of a child with her partner, whom she married just to avoid a process of co-adoption by the non-birth mother. Mónica and her partner are actively raising their children avoiding gendered toys and clothes, so that they can experience multiple possibilities of play, out of the imposed binary boy/girl model. The children were assigned a gender at birth, and they use gender marks in language but try to avoid socially performed markers such as clothes and toys:

> We are feminists, it couldn't be otherwise, and we want our children to have all the options – we have bought all kinds of toys: soccer balls, etc. Well, I also like sports a lot, I like football and then, well, we have bought a little of the things that we like, we have bought cars, Legos, everything. Those

> things that now have to be differentiated by sex, such as pink Legos for girls and such have never been very cool to us (….) We want them to play with everything: with dolls, with constructions, with cars… we understand that games have no gender and we want them to be whatever they want in the future. (Mónica)

Monica and her partner want the children to decide what they would like to be or not decide at all. The important thing for them is to empower them to be whatever they want without conservative gender restrictions and to accept their diverse family and understand that diversity is positive. Besides that, I would also like to highlight this couple's attention in relation to the childcare institution where their children are enrolled:

> In day care there are all social strata, that is, there are people who have more money, people who have less, people who are there with the support of the social services, someone whose father has been in jail, I mean, I don't even know why—whatever—Muslim families, a little of everything. So, I like them to see all the realities. I mean, I didn't want to take them to a private school—apart from that we don't have money for a private school—nor do I want them to just hang out with that kind of people. (Mónica)

Another good example of insurgent parenting, this time mostly against the capitalist system, is Blanca's case. She is in her early thirties, and she and her partner are mothers of a two-year-old boy. For them, to put him into a school as soon as her maternity leave finished would be very neoliberal and patriarchal, because their son would be without them both the whole day, lacking their care and affection. Therefore, they both agree that Blanca would stay at home, as long as they could economically bear the situation. According to her, it was not a difficult decision:

> That is, she prefers to go to work, even though she doesn't want to send her child to day care. For her, the ideal is that I'm with our son, and for me the ideal is to be with him, that is, it is by mutual agreement. But if we had the roles the other way round, the two of us would be uncomfortable: I would not want to go to work and leave our son here, and she would not want to be here all day with him, because she would go crazy. (Blanca)

As pointed out by Wendy Chavkrin (2010), female entry into the labour market, despite being a huge feminist achievement, was not accompanied by effective measures to provide childcare. Day care became an industry in

the globalized world, floating between public and private schools and the work of usually migrant women. In the case of Blanca and her partner, the non-biological mother is an autonomous worker, so, besides her own preferences, she is more likely to earn more than Blanca if she works more, so they decided also based in the fact that she would be the only economic provider, for a while. Blanca and her partner agree that to leave her son at an early age at school for the whole day would probably mean that he would not develop affectivity the same way he does at home. They also agree that in capitalist societies women are encouraged to go to work soon after they give birth, relegating care and affection to others, like nannies or schools.

Another interesting case is that of Juana, a cis woman in her early forties, and her partner. In the interview, Juana said that with their earning salaries, they had no choice but to return to work after maternity leave (as a biological mother, Juana took the longest). The couple went through some difficult times in their relationship with Juana's parents because of their sexuality and even more when they decided to get pregnant, but fortunately at the moment of the interview, they were part of their care network, concerning the child. But they were not the only ones:

> We have two friends, who are sisters, and my relatives, who come to see [the children] practically every day (. …) Once we had one of them sick and we had to go [to the hospital], and they were able to stay with the other one (. …) My parents are the ones who take the children to school every day (. …) The truth is that those two friends are the ones who have been closest to the entire treatment [to get pregnant]. Well, also when I had the miscarriage, they were with us… (…) and we went out a lot with them. Of course, when I say, "with them", the children come first, they go everywhere with us. (Juana)

Juana's words undoubtedly evoke African-American feminist references to Black communities and the support that different adult people provide to each other, regardless of biological kinship and family hierarchies. This kind of "community parenting", to use bell hooks' (1984) formulation, shows how larger communities of childcare are essential in times when most people cannot afford to avoid work to stay with children. African and African-American knowledge about childrearing in community are benefiting different kinds of people, with examples of extended families beyond nuclear formations and biological ties.

But emancipatory parenting practices did not only emerge from interviews on medically assisted reproduction in 2016. In 2017 I conducted a study on friendship (trans people and care networks) in Madrid, and it was quite interesting to see how biological families also played an important role in the lives of trans youth. Informants related remarkable caring and parenting practices outside the conservative and patriarchal model, and that happened in both nuclear and extended models of family.[6] One case of supportive family members is that of Salvador, a non-binary, pansexual person in his early thirties, who chooses to be addressed and referred to in the masculine. His parents failed to support him economically and emotionally when he come out as a lesbian (ten years ago). But his grandparents, whose house were always a safe space for him, since childhood, were there for him:

> I was running out of money and I had the alternative of going to an apartment that my grandparents had in Salamanca, which was an apartment where my mother and my cousins had studied (. …) My grandparents had always told me: "When you need it, the floor is there, and that's for you". And I decided to ask them so that I could at least stop paying rent and could tackle the entrepreneurship project more thoroughly. And they kindly opened the doors for me. So it did not affect at all that I was whatever I was or that I liked who I liked. The truth is that the support I have had from them, even though they would not agree [with who I am], I find it admirable. Sure, compared to the experience I had with my parents, it was very different. Yes, yes, yes, in fact, I left my house with one hand in front and the other behind, literally. (Salvador)

The support and help that Salvador's grandparents provide for him should be what any child or young person, trans or cisgender, feels from his parenting community. But this will only be possible in a future born from transformative models such as the ones I analyse, among others, regardless of parental figures' gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnical belonging, and others.

Violeta is a rare case that shows how things could be different. She is a student in her late teens, identifies as a bisexual woman, and lives with her parents and brother and mentioned her parents as one of the pillars of her

[6] There were also reports of more conservative families who refused to deal with the gender identity of their children. These examples will not be covered in this chapter as they fall outside its scope.

life, during the interview. Violeta knows the difficulties that many trans people face with their families, and she was grateful for having a supportive context, where her parents allowed her to develop freely, caring for her even when it was difficult for them:

> When I was five or six years old, my parents went to the LGTB pride of Madrid, they got into the pride march, with their child, in a space in which they would not feel completely comfortable either. On my mother's side it probably wasn't that complicated, but I bet it was a serious effort for my father. At that time, my mother was attending courses in relation to trans childhoods, well, I'm talking about ten years ago, twelve years. Now there have been associations for parents that do provide care, but at that time there was nothing (….) I was certain that I had the support of my parents and, well, also considering my character, I was more patient, maybe more submissive… whatever you want to call it. I do not know. I know I accept the time that my parents have taken and the time that my brother is taking, and I am happy with the simple fact that they try. (Violeta)

At the moment of the interview, Violeta had applied for university without ever missing one year at school. She knew this was possible because her parents never raised any problem about her gender identity and never caused her any stress or emotional pain. They both, even if mostly her mother, tried from an early age to understand what was happening, at a time where activist groups for parents of trans and other gender-diverse children did not exist in Spain.

Final Considerations

Family has been well identified as a space of oppression. But it is also within multiple familial constellations—which may consist of, but also go much beyond, the nuclear family—that may occur, through care and parenting practices, important ways of destabilizing not only the sex/gender system but also the capitalist system itself. Through social mobilization within the contemporary world, insurgent parenting practices may become widespread through virtual or real networks. This has a great impact on civil society, even if it seems to happen in baby steps. The context of the pandemic that we went through in 2020 gives a clear idea of how essential it has become to engage in virtual contact with family, friends, or activism communities for care, fun, and political commitment, in order to overcome isolation and to cope with the oppression of the lived reality.

In this chapter, I analysed insurgent parenting and insurgent childcare as a combative possibility of struggle against normativity, which is rooted in patriarchal and capitalist understanding of societies, economy, and the world. Care matters as well as insurgent theories and practices of caring if one is committed to a more understanding and egalitarian society. Organized resistance from grassroots movements such as queer and/or feminist movements certainly has a significant impact on people's daily lives, as shown. Parenthood and childrearing may be strong tools against patriarchal culture and neoliberalism, through the prioritization of love and care. In bell hooks' words, "an overall cultural embrace of a love ethic would mean that we would all oppose much of the public policy conservatives condone and support" (2000, p. 91), and it is certainly a way of raising more diverse and sensitive citizens, who are more conscious about the self and the other, about acceptance, and about mutual help or/and respect for the globe.

References

Aramburu Alegría, C. (2018). Supporting families of transgender children/youth: Parents speak on their experiences, identity, and views. *International Journal of Transgenderism, 19*(2), 132–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2018.1450798

Berggren, N., & Nilsson, T. (2015). Globalization and the transmission of social values: The case of tolerance. *Journal of Comparative Economics, 43*, 371–389. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2015.02.005

Blázquez Rodríguez, M., & Montes Muñoz, M. J. (2010). Emociones ante la maternidad: de los modelos impuestos a las constataciones de las mujeres. *Ankulegi, 14*, 81–92.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble. Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2000). *Antigone's claim: Kinship between life and death*. Columbia University Press.

Castells, M. (2004). *The network society: A cross-cultural perspective*. Edward Elgar.

Chavkrin, W. (2010). The globalization of motherhood. In W. Chavkin & J. Maher (Eds.), *The globalization of motherhood: Deconstructions and reconstructions of biology and care* (pp. 1–15). Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (1994). Shifting the center: Race, class, and feminist theorizing about motherhood. In E. N. Glenn, G. Chang, & L. R. Forcey (Eds.), *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency* (pp. 45–65). Routledge.

Dasgupta, S. (2009). Introduction: A reflection on politics of globalization and textual entrails. In S. Dasgupta & J. N. Pieterse (Eds.), *Politics of globalization* (pp. 1–37). Sage Publications India.

Dasgupta, S., & Pieterse, J. N. (Eds.). (2009). *Politics of globalization*. Sage Publications India.

Douzinas, C. (2007). *Human rights and empire. The political philosophy of cosmopolitarism*. Routledge.

Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality? Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Bacon Press.

Esteban, M. L. (2000). La maternidad como cultura. Algunas cuestiones sobre lactancia materna y cuidado infantil. In E. Perdiguero & J. M. Comelles (Eds.), *Medicina y cultura: estudios entre la antropología y la medicina* (pp. 207–226). Edicions Bellaterra.

Evans, D. (1993). *Sexual citizenship: The material construction of sexuality*. Routledge.

Garber, L. (2006). On the evolution of queer studies: Lesbian feminism, queer theory and globalization. In D. Richardson, J. McLaughlin, & M. E. Casey (Eds.), *Intersections between feminist and queer theory* (pp. 78–96). Palgrave Macmillan.

Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., & Forcey, L. R. (Eds.). (1994). *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*. Routledge.

Herdt, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Third sex, third gender: Beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history*. Zone.

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory from margin to center*. South End Press.

hooks, b. (2000). *All about love: New visions*. Harper Perennial.

Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. Oxford University Press.

Llopis, M. (2015). *Maternidades Subversivas*. Editorial Txalaparta.

Lugones, M. (2008). The coloniality of gender. *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise*, 1–17. Retrieved from https://globalstudies.trinity.duke.edu/wp-content/themes/cgsh/materials/WKO/v2d2_Lugones.pdf

Merry, S. E. (2006). Transnational human rights and local activism: Mapping the middle. *American Anthropologist, 108*(1), 38–51. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.38

Moreira, L. (2018). Queer motherhood: Challenging heteronormative rules beyond the assimilationist/radical binary. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 19*(2), 14–28.

Moyn, S. (2014). A powerless companion: Human rights in the age of neoliberalism. *Law and Contemporary Problems, 77*(4), 147–169.

Nicholson, L. (1997). The myth of the traditional family. In H. L. Nelson (Ed.), *Feminism and Families* (pp. 27–42). Routledge.

O'Reilly, A. (Eds.). (2004). *From Motherhood to mothering: the legacy of Adrienne Rich's of Woman Born*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Oyewúmì, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.
Pichardo, J. I. (2009). *Entender la diversidad familiar: Relaciones homosexuales y nuevos modelos de familia*. Ediciones Bellaterra.
Platero, L. (R.) (2014). Aplicaciones práticas queer y feministas: maternidades lésbicas en Resistencia. In B. S. Briones (Ed.), Feminismos Lesbianos y queer: representación visibilidad y políticas (pp. 105–113). Plaza y Valdes Editores.
Preciado, P. (2011). *Manifiesto Contrasexual*. Editorial Anagrama. (Original work published 2000).
Puar, J. (2013). Rethinking homonationalism. *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 45*, 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074381300007X
Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs, 5*(4), 631–660.
Rich, A. (1986). *Of woman born: Motherhood as experience and as institution*. W. W. Norton and Company (Original work published 1976).
Richardson, D. (2005). Desiring sameness? The rise of a neoliberal politics of normalization. *Antipode, 37*, 515–535. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0066-4812.2005.00509.x
Rubin, G. (1996). The traffic in women: Notes on the 'political economy' of sex. In J. W. Scott (Ed.), *Feminism and history* (pp. 105–151). Oxford University Press.
Ryan-Flood, R. (2009). *Lesbian motherhood: Gender, families and sexual citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Santos, B. S. (2006). Globalizations. *Theory, Culture & Society, 23*(2–3), 393–399. https://doi.org/10.1177/026327640602300268
Santos, A. C. (2012). The politics of sexuality in Portugal: Confronting tradition, enacting change. In S. Hines & I. Taylor (Eds.), *Sexualities: Past reflexions, future directions* (pp. 168–185). Palgrave Macmillan.
Santos, A. C. (2013). *Social movements and sexual citizenship in southern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Santos, B. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the south justice against Epistemicide*. Routledge.
Santos, A. C. (2018). Repronormativity and its others: Queering parental love in times of culturally compulsory reproduction. *Analize - Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies, 11*, 199–215.
Santos, B. S., & Rodríguez-Garavito, C. A. (2005). Law, politics, and the subaltern in counter-hegemonic globalization. In B. S. Santos & C. A. Rodríguez-Garavito (Eds.), *Law and globalization from below: Towards a cosmopolitan legality* (pp. 1–26). Cambridge University Press.
Segato, R. L. (2003). *Las estructuras elementales de la violencia: ensayos sobre género entre la antropología, el psicoanálisis y los derechos humanos*. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.

Tamale, S. (2013). Confronting the politics of nonconforming sexualities in Africa. *African Studies Review, 56*(02), 31–45. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2013.40

Taylor, Y. (2009). *Lesbian and gay parenting: Securing social and educational capital*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Trujillo, G., & Burgaleta, E. (2014). ¿Queerizando la institución familiar? Entre los discursos bio-sociales y las múltiples resistencias. *Feminismo/s, 23*, 159–179.

Warner, M. (Ed.). (1991). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory*. University of Minnesota Press.

Weeks, J., Heaphy, B., & Donovan, C. (2001). *Same sex intimacies: Families of choice and other life experiments*. Routledge.

Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. Columbia University Press.

Wittig, M. (1992). *The straight mind and other essays*. Beacon Press.

CHAPTER 8

The Sexual Politics of Healthy Families and the Making of Class Relations

Chiara Bertone

Where in short is it leading us, the procession of the sons of educated men?
—Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas, *1938*

Children growing up with same-sex parents will be all right; their lives will be as healthy and happy as those of the other children. This has proved, apparently, the most powerful and successful legitimizing tool for same-sex families to achieve social and legal recognition. Our work as critical scholars, however, is to keep questioning what this tool is doing to people's experiences and to social power relations. In Virginia Woolf's (1938) words, let us never cease from thinking: what is this happy and healthy

This article stems from a research that was supported by the University of Eastern Piedmont - FAR project.

C. Bertone (✉)
University of Eastern Piedmont, Alessandria, Italy
e-mail: chiara.bertone@uniupo.it

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_8

future that is proposed to us, and why should parents and children take part in it?

As a contribution to this thinking, the present chapter questions the healthy future envisaged for the children of same-sex parents and relates it to the individualized, classless future envisaged by neoliberalism. This exploration stems from observing how public debate and research on same-sex families, as well as their collective self-representation and claims-making activities, have developed in Italy in the last decades. It takes the form of a quest for tracing the link between two dots.

On the one hand, there is the importance of children's health as a battleground for the legitimation of same-sex parents and their ability to take care of their children: public debates on their social and legal recognition have been largely framed as a struggle over expert knowledge, a competition on scientific assessments about the outcomes of same-sex parenting upon children's psychological adjustment and well-being.

On the other hand, there is the virtual invisibility of class in representations of same-sex families: despite the fact that economic inequalities in Italy are particularly dramatic for families with children, with a huge and growing problem of child poverty, class differences in same-sex parenting experiences rarely emerge in public representations, nor are class relations widely explored in the flourishing research on them.

Tracing that link while avoiding easy shortcuts, I believe, requires different strands of literature to be put into greater dialogue, as I attempt to do in this chapter.

Exploring how the growing prominence of health in framing social struggles has deeply changed public discourse and claims-making around sexual issues, Epstein and Mamo (2017) have taken up the concept of "sexual healthism", allowing exploration of its possible individualizing, de-politicizing, essentializing and victimizing, but also legitimizing and empowering implications.

Focusing on same-sex families allows us to explore the connections between these reframing tendencies in sexual politics and those regarding the therapeutic surveillance of parents' caring skills, addressing the familization of social regulation in neoliberal politics, which is often overshadowed by a focus on individual responsibility in critical literature on sexual health.

The result of this work of drawing connections is a call for keep interrogating how healthist framings of same-sex parenting can work at

concealing class relations while reproducing them (Aamann, 2017) and which other, more emancipatory directions discourses on health and care may take.

The Advent of Sexual Healthism

Epstein and Mamo (2017) propose using the expression "sexual healthism" to read a process of growing prominence of health in the framing of sexuality issues that has intensified since the 1980s.

In times of declining public responsibility for social reproduction and privatization of healthcare systems (Leys, 2010), this process is part of a more general tendency to reframe social issues in terms of health promotion and risk prevention, declined in individualized terms as a moral imperative to pursue one's own well-being, which had been interpreted with the term "healthicization" (Conrad, 1992) or "healthism" (Crawford, 1980; Zola, 1977; for an overview, see Turrini, 2015). Detecting the sparking of "healthism ideology", Crawford (1980) points to its reductionist, individualizing and de-politicizing implications. Becoming a pan-value, health comes to epitomize ideals of good living, and its pursuit gets established as a moral obligation for individuals who are held responsible for leading a healthy lifestyle while managing risks.

Relating the rise of this ideology to the experience of the middle class in the dawn of the neoliberal era, characterized by growing uncertainties haunting the promises of individual competition, Crawford detects the de-politicizing tendencies of turning to holistic medicine and self-care practices in the 1980s. In later years, the healthist ideology would be identified, by Crawford (2006) and others, as a key contribution to the production of a neoliberal "common sense" of individualization of social conflict and privatization of care responsibilities. In fact, while the notion of "healthism" has been first conceived as a form of medicalization, thereby building on its interactionist conceptualizations (Conrad & Schneider, 2010), its uses cross paths with Foucauldian analyses of the health imperative (Lupton, 1995; Rose, 1996) exploring the related tendencies of increased individualization and surveillance in the construction of subjectivities under neoliberalism:

> Health has become a vector for the production of the self and the formation of neoliberal subjectivities that introduces the faculty of choice and free will into the everyday management of our body through risk assessment.

> Though based on individual independence, the health awareness discourse conveys a strong normativity. (Turrini, 2015, p. 22)

In Crawford's (2006) words, the increasingly pervasive health consciousness entails a "pedagogy of danger" focused on the imperative of correcting unhealthy behaviour and preventing risks, requiring persistent self-surveillance and resulting in continuous blaming for the failures to reach unattainable normative standards. This blaming has a class dimension, being a form of "elitist moralizing about what are believed to be unhealthy coping behaviours" (Crawford, 1980, p. 385). At the same time, healthism can be read as a form of class aspiration, as a way to implicitly articulate a project of social mobility in terms of personal development and achievement of moral worth (Aamann, 2017).

Claiming that the relations between the will to health as a moral imperative and sexuality have been underexplored, Epstein and Mamo (2017) give an account of how the notion of sexual health has gained prominence in recent decades in the framing of LGBT issues in the US context. They argue that, by now, it has largely come to epitomize good sexuality and happy sexual subjects, deeply changing public discourse and becoming a key legitimizing tool in claims-making strategies around sexual issues.

Their analysis shows how the success of "sexual health" is accompanied by its semantic instability, produced by its multiple uses by different subjects/publics. The proliferation of its meanings and uses and the alliances that are forged around it, between activism and expert knowledge, can hardly be reduced to consistent tendencies. Included in these tendencies are, for instance, the mobilization of discourses on sexual health in support of struggles for sexual rights and social recognition.

At the same time, Epstein and Mamo (2017) recognize some general implications of healthist framings of sexual issues, in terms of individualization, with a focus on individual solutions to social problems, and the establishment of compelling normative standards of "healthist respectability", an expression that clearly evokes the class dimension of these standards. Social responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have once more exposed, in macroscopic terms, the workings of these two implications of healthism.

Securing the Health of Children: Familization Under Neoliberalism

In issues related to same-sex parenting, the subjects whose health is under surveillance—namely, children—are not the same as those who are held responsible for securing it, namely, parents. In discussing how claims for rights are legitimized by assuring that the outcome of same-sex parental care would be healthy children, we need therefore to question the focus on individualization characterizing discussions on healthism and explore the familization of care responsibilities under neoliberalism. The fortune of theories of individualization, in fact, bears both the risk of marginalizing the individual decentring implied by notions of family as belonging, connectedness, care interdependence and obligations and the risk of underplaying the persisting power of family discourse to legitimize social inequalities (Edwards et al., 2012).

In exploring what the familization of responsibilities means, we can draw on literature that has been arguing for the limits of interpretations of neoliberalism that see the dissolution of relations of care and family ties as part of its constitutive elements. Cooper's (2017) work is an important contribution in this respect, convincingly retracing a foundational convergence between neoliberals and neoconservatives in promoting family values, though without redistribution. Looking at the fate of policies for families with dependent children as a key case, Cooper shows that the neoliberal transformations of US social policies, far from aiming at freeing individuals from family ties, actually assume and reinforce individuals' familial responsibilities and hierarchical relations within the family, as the basic way to secure free reproductive labour and social stability:

> The imperative of personal responsibility slides ineluctably into that of family responsibility when it comes to managing the inevitable problems of economic dependence (the care of children, the disabled, the elderly, or the unwaged). (Cooper, 2017, p. 71)

Family obligations, and the gender hierarchies upon which they are grounded, are at the same time naturalized and actively enforced, a combination that is constitutive of liberalism (Brown, 1995), taking specific forms in the neoliberal transformation of capitalism:

> Neoliberals (…) envisage the private paternalism of the family as a spontaneous source of welfare in the free-market order; a state of equilibrium that may be disturbed by the perverse incentives of redistributive welfare but also restored through the diminution of state paternalism (….) In the medium term, however, they readily acknowledge the reality of family failure (homologous to market failure) and the necessity of some kind of restorative intervention on the part of the state to correct such disorders. (Cooper, 2017, p. 62)

If incentives don't work, such intervention can ultimately take the form of "the much more overt forms of behavioral correction favored by social conservatives" (Cooper, 2017, p. 63). The result is a fundamental change of the US welfare state, "from a redistributive program into an immense federal apparatus for policing the private family responsibilities of the poor" (Cooper, 2017, p. 21).

Another way to understand the familization of care responsibilities can be traced back to a Foucauldian theoretical perspective. Exploring the role of psychology and therapeutic culture in the formation of modern subjectivity, Nikolas Rose (1989, 1996) detects the forms which liberalism's concurrent tendencies of privatization and responsibilization of the family take in times of neoliberal change. The critique and dismantling of public childcare services and other forms of support to family life, which get redefined as intrusive and oppressive, should not be interpreted as a drawback from responsibilization and surveillance. Rather, they mark a success in making the autonomous, private family take upon itself the desire and responsibility to maximize its members'—and most notably children's—capacities for self-realization. The family is in fact not only expected to avoid maladjustment but to reproduce, through active engagement and constant self-surveillance, this new normality of a life organized "within a project of self-betterment" (Rose, 1999). The forms under which this normality can be recognized, measured and assessed are those of psychological knowledge: an optimized, and self-optimizing, child is a healthy child.

Furedi (2004, 2008) proposes another influential analysis of the redefinition of parenting and childhood in terms of the contemporary hegemony of therapeutic culture, grounded upon emotional determinism in the understanding of well-being. Under this lens, parenting is considered in terms of its potential emotional damages upon children, with the development of a "code of mistrust" involving a growing surveillance on

parents' behaviour and emotional deficits, both under the forms of an imperative of constant self-surveillance and the need for experts' advice and support (Hoffman, 2010; for a review and discussion of these perspectives, see Brownlie, 2014).

The shift from public to family responsibility in assuring children's educational outcomes has corresponded to an increasing focus on early intervention. Framed in terms of social investment, conceiving children as human capital to be appropriately developed to contribute to the nation's economy, this focus is crucially reinforced by the influence of neuroscience and the notion of the plastic brain.

The perspective of social investment entails an orientation towards the child's future (as a productive worker) rather than towards her well-being and possibility of agency in the present. This requires a standardization of educational and evaluation models, a disqualification of informal learning in the local community and, finally, an intensification of expert surveillance on parenting, which gets redefined in terms of managing social risks, thereby preventing possible negative effects on future outcomes (Casalini, 2014).

In the last decades in Europe, with an acceleration corresponding to the welfare cuts of post-2008 austerity politics, this surveillance has taken the form of a renewed state interventionism. In the rationale grasped by Cooper (2017), state intervention is informed by class assumptions, taking the form of a concern for policing poor families: a moral agenda of intensive family intervention has been developing around the idea that bad parenting is the most significant cause not only of children's present problems but also of their future life chances and thereby, ultimately, of future social problems. The corresponding idea is that "good parenting offers a panacea for all social ills" (Dermott, 2012, p. 1). But the model of good parenting which is enforced and legitimized by expert knowledge, namely, "intensive parenting", requires forms of emotional and caring labour and consumption practices (Hays, 1998) which are hardly affordable by working-class and poor families (Dermott & Pomati, 2016).

Parenting works therefore as "a proxy for social class", with a regulatory focus on disadvantaged parents (in particular, mothers) as the way to prevent the intergenerational reproduction of personal and social ills (Gillies et al., 2016), and a strong policy investment in educating parents to good parenting practices rather than in redistribution: "The solution to economic stagnation, entrenched inequality and stalled social mobility therefore becomes a matter of training parents to take responsibility for

these huge structural problems by changing the way they intimately interact with their infants" (Macvarish, 2016, p. 31).

This class dimension in the attribution of value to parenting practices, however, does not have apparent legitimacy in societies that support the idea of equal worth (Skeggs, 2011). These class assumptions, in fact, are effectively concealed through the scientific, objectifying language of measures of brain development, cognitive performance, psychological adjustment and well-being:

> The time- and resource-intensive practices of a section of the middle class are naturalized as "stimulating" brain growth rather than understood as being the particular lifestyle made possible by being better-paid, better-educated parents with a particular anxiety to fend off downward mobility in their offspring. (Macvarish, 2016, p. 31)

Material conditions tend to fall out of this picture. In the face of growing health inequalities related to increasingly unequal life conditions and the re-commodification of healthcare systems (Leys, 2010), the issue of children's psychological health, defined in terms of adjustment to a heteronormative, respectable lifestyle, gets detached from concerns about their more general health conditions and about the material conditions shaping family lives and parents' caring practices, as well as parents' own health. By making social inequalities invisible, however, these ways of framing care responsibilities lay down the very conditions for reproducing them.

Class and the Politics of LGBTQ Parenting

After a period of relative marginalization, a general recognition of the need to reclaim class perspectives in LGBT and queer studies has been gradually gaining ground (Hennessy, 2000).

Class differences are discussed in terms of whose experiences are known and recognized in LGBT and queer research, as part of a more general attention to intersectionality. Research based on prevailingly middle- and upper-class experiences is questioned not only for making others invisible but also for setting the universal standard against which other lives are measured. Echoing critiques on the problematic empirical foundations of theories of the democratization of intimate relations failing to take account of—and thereby obscuring—the persistence of material inequalities (Jamieson, 1999), the scrutiny extends therefore to the interpretative

frameworks used in research, as long as they do not question these implicit standards. The individualized, self-reflexive subject freely choosing who to be, which has informed accounts of LGBT relationships and narratives on sexual citizenship, is in fact ascribable to a middle-class subjectivity, abstracted from the life conditions that make different choices possible. Indeed, class positioning can influence the extent to which choice itself can be a relevant element in the construction of the self.

Together with a call for greater visibility of working-class experiences, then, comes a call for problematizing privileged lives (Taylor, 2011): a call which sounds all the more urgent in times in which life conditions are becoming increasingly unequal. When empirical works meet this call, they clearly show the actual relevance of class differences, shaping gay and lesbian parenting experiences (Taylor, 2009), the relations between coming out and the self-perception of well-being and how shame is managed (McDermott, 2011; McDermott & Roen, 2016). Research on media representations of same-sex families also shows the pervasiveness of a middle-class trope, centred on classed norms about what it means to be a family, and reassuring the spectator that same-sex families do not disrupt but instead "seamlessly" fit into the middle-class ideal of the suburban home (Drew, 2016).

A further step in this critical assessment of the invisibilization of class in LGBTQ studies calls for a stronger integration of materialist and critical political economy perspectives in the understanding of sexual politics (Hennessy, 2000). Questioning the separation of sexual identity politics from a critique of capitalism that has characterized mainstream tendencies in times of neoliberal hegemony, critical analyses of neoliberal tendencies in sexual politics have since developed, with the key contribution of feminist materialism. The concept of homonormativity, deriving from this kind of analysis, has been taken up as a fruitful tool to understand the pitfalls of strategies pursuing a reductionist version of equality goals "paradoxically imagined as compatible with persistent overall inequality" (Duggan, 2003). Duggan identifies contemporary homonormativity as an expression of neoliberalism's sexual politics, working at de-politicizing sexual dissidence through consumerism and domestication into a middle-class, respectable family life.

Cooper (2017) adds interesting elements to this reading of sexual politics, connecting the increasing relevance of parenting in LGBTQ lives to the growing relevance of private wealth transmission. In the neoliberal era of US capitalism, the family gains renewed centrality not only as the key

supplier of welfare but also as an economic actor, as a result of the changing relative weight of declining salaries and private wealth. Family wealth transmission, according to Cooper, also has important implications for sexual politics, providing "a powerful stimulus to discipline oneself within the legal framework of inheritance" (Cooper, 2017, p. 161). A key aspect of demands for recognition of same-sex marriage was, in fact, access to legitimate property transmission, at a time when LGBTQ subjects appeared as a promising new niche for a strongly expanding consumer credit sector, including house mortgages. As a result, "the curious temporal logic of credit—its ability to materialize the future in the present—was here harnessed as a means of recapturing non-normative desire in the inherently regressive form of private familial debt" (Cooper, 2017, p. 315). Legitimation of parentage becomes then a central issue in sexual politics. However, wealth transmission has different relevance depending on whether one has any wealth to transmit—which is not a universal condition. Moreover, a two-parent family with its children presents a simpler situation in terms of inheritance, compared to the complexities of blended families, but the importance of this difference also depends on what is to be inherited. These considerations can help to understand the class dynamics underlying which priorities are established in the sexual politics agenda.

Critical perspectives, while revealing these dynamics, also address their concealment, analysing how certain ways of framing sexual issues make the structures of capitalism invisible and discussing how this can be undone. Researching working-class women's construction of sexual subjectivity, Skeggs (1997) shows how the moral category of respectability mediates the definition of heterosexual subjectivity, which becomes differently accessible along lines of class and race. Heterosexuality and respectability are therefore mechanisms reproducing class as well as race inequalities, but at the same time, their classed dimension is made invisible: class is a "structuring absence" for working-class women in Skeggs' research, who disidentify from a working-class positioning which is de-valued and sexualized and measure themselves against the standard of respectability.

The ways in which identity politics has entailed a class positioning while concealing it are the object of Hennessy's critique. She argues that identity politics has been striving for a middle-class model which, recalling Wendy Brown (1995, p. 60), she defines as "phantasmatic" rather than real, "a bourgeois norm of class acceptance, legal protection, and relative material comfort". Identity politics as a class ideology, however, actively conceals class differences, undermining the possibility of recognizing capitalism's

deprivations and the needs it outlaws and leaves unmet. What needs to be done then, she argues, is a critical work of historicizing identities, in order to "make visible their historical and social conditions of possibility" (Hennessy, 2000, p. 230).

These reflections prompt us to consider the invisibilization of class relations as a constitutive element of how LGBTQ issues, including same-sex parenthood, are constructed and experienced. We can detect this concealing at work in public discourse as well as in academic research, when class differences are reduced to lifestyles, or in uses of concepts like homonormativity detaching the normative dimension from class relations and the critique of neoliberal capitalism. We can also detect this concealing at work when healthist frames are used, as we will explore below by looking at the Italian context.

Sexual Politics, Parenthood and Class Relations in Italy

Starting in the 1990s and escalating in the last decade as a response to the 2008 crisis, a hard wave of austerity politics cutting social expenditure has resulted in a privatization of social, educational and health services in Italy that has effectively redistributed childcare responsibilities from the public to family networks. Together with labour market policies centred on reducing the cost of labour and workers' rights, these politics of welfare retrenchment have increased social inequality among parents and further hampered already limited social mobility (Perocco, 2018). They have also increased poverty, which in Italy is especially high among families with minors: 6.5% of families with one minor and 20% of families with three or more minors—a total amount of 1.2 million minors—live in absolute poverty, while 34% of couples with three or more minors and 14% of one-parent households live under the relative poverty line.[1] Research on health conditions has pointed to a growing disadvantage of the population with lower education (Istat, 2015, p. 64) and to higher infant mortality among lower-income populations (those living in the South and non-Italian citizens).[2] A study on health inequalities among children in Campania confirms that poverty is the main determinant of health (Cirillo et al., 2007), which means that, given the distribution of poverty in Italy,

[1] https://www.istat.it/it/files//2020/06/REPORT_POVERTA_2019.pdf
[2] https://www.istat.it/it/files//2014/01/Mortalita_-sotto_i_5_anni-.pdf

children are particularly disadvantaged in their health prospects. With exposure risk and economic consequences in the COVID-19 pandemic weighing especially on poor families, these prospects are bound to get even more dire.

This dramatic picture of social inequality does not seem to affect research on non-heterosexual parenting (for a review, see Trappolin, 2017), as is indeed the case for much of the research on heterosexual parenting as well. Overall, issues of class are rarely addressed, with the exception of debates on surrogacy. In the debate on the 2016 civil unions act and in the following year, surrogacy has become the key issue of attacks to social and legal recognition of same-sex parenting and a strongly divisive one in Italian feminist and lesbian politics. Issues of class in discussions on surrogacy emerge in particular about two-father families, and critiques of the commodification of reproduction are mingled with victimizing representations of the exploited woman and essentializing views of motherhood (Gusmano & Motterle, 2019).

In research on LGBTQ parenting, class as a sociodemographic variable is actually discussed, mainly by acknowledging the overrepresentation of middle and upper classes in the samples. This is specifically linked to economic reasons for research on couples conceiving children through assisted reproductive technologies (ART), a very expensive path for people living in Italy due to legal regulations (Gusmano, 2018). Issues of class are also sometimes mentioned in research on same-sex parents' experiences, pointing to the middle-class roots of the model of intensive parenting that same-sex parents feel particularly compelled to live up to (Everri, 2016).

Poorer parents are altogether absent in terms of their actual experiences, but appear sometimes as phantasmatic presences, countertypes, in different ways. They can represent the implicit "backwards other", represented by lesbians and gays giving up the parenting project or having children from heterosexual relationships, against which same-sex couples having children through ART are defined as an avant-garde (Baiocco et al., 2015). They can also be evoked to represent the "homophobe other". Trappolin and Gusmeroli (2019, p. 98) detect a "partial overturning" in the focus on the agents of homophobia in public representations, when homophobia itself gets reframed in terms of urban security (for these tendencies in LGBT local policies, see Bertone & Gusmano, 2013). While in the 1990s "those who were accused were prevailingly those representing the social and symbolic order, often prominent people, and (…) homophobia was discussed mainly as a symbolic and cultural problem of

the 'majority'", media outlets in later years identify perpetrators of violent attacks as "'violent youth', 'drifters', 'Romanian clochard', 'minors', 'a gang from the suburbs', 'a group of thugs', 'misfits'" (Trappolin & Gusmeroli, 2019, p. 98).

The class dimension of the urban security frame, with its imagery of respectability ("decoro" is an Italian corresponding word) and its relations with gentrification, the intensification of valorization of urban life and the surveillance of the dangerous classes, has been amply studied in Italy (Pitch, 2013). However, improper appropriations of such a framing of homophobia are discussed in Italian LGBTQ studies in terms of constructions of ethnic differences and homonationalism (Di Feliciantonio, 2015), more than in terms of class relations.

If urban security is a frame allowing same-sex parents to position themselves on the respectable side while concealing the classed implications of this positioning, healthist frames can work in a similar way.

Peregrín et al. (2014) discuss strategies of legitimation of same-sex parenting in Spain, detecting the crucial role played by experts and scientific studies that are mobilized to prove the healthy development of children. They describe this as a defensive strategy of normalization, reacting to the agenda of the opponents that is based on the defence of the natural order of sexuality and the family. But such a strategy, they argue, bears the risk of reproducing a moral tale of good parenting with "naturalistic nuances" (p. 22).

In Italy, the body of international psychological research on the lack of negative effects of sexual orientation on parenting and the related statements of professional organizations of psychiatrists and psychologists acknowledging its results are fundamental resources upon which Italian LGB families' organizations draw for the construction of their social legitimacy and the articulation of their claims for legal recognition.[3] They are used in a struggle over scientific authority on a battlefield that also sees the bulky presence of anti-gender opposers, engaging as well in the terrain of science as a strategy of legitimation of their political agenda (Franchi & Selmi, 2018). Actually, competing frames (Brownlie, 2014) are also mobilized, with the self-representation of the main LGBTQI parents' organizations (*Famiglie Arcobaleno* and *Genitori Rainbow*) revolving around

[3] See, for instance, the dedicated section on Famiglie Arcobaleno's website: http://www.famigliearcobaleno.org/it/informazioni/studi-e-ricerche, and the relevance given to articles such as Giartosio (2015).

visibility and the displaying of the families' everyday practices and their claims-making being also framed in terms of fighting discrimination (Everri, 2016). However, psychological research on the health of children remains a key tool for the litigation strategies that have been deployed to obtain a recognition of parenting rights that law still fails to provide, including stepchild adoption (Bosisio & Long, 2020).

As already mentioned, sociological critiques argue that the current prevailing expert knowledge on child development entails a naturalization of middle-class practices as the moral standard of good parenting: indicators of parental attachment and involvement and scales of children's psychological adjustment and well-being reify and naturalize these standards, erasing a history of conflicts over definitions and over the value of different ways of caring for children.

Clarke (2008) and others (Hicks, 2005) have argued that the process of social and legal recognition of same-sex parenting should not be read in terms of objective scientific progress, the gathering of more accurate data, but as a social, collective process of depathologization led by alliances between activism and research. Clarke (2008, p. 123) also points to "the regulatory power of psychology" in supporting constructions of the dichotomy between the good lesbian mothers, those hiding their sexuality and subordinating it to their mothering role, and the bad ones, the militant, visible dykes (and, we can add, working-class, "unrespectable" mothers), openly challenging heterosexuality, a distinction upon which the judges drew in custody cases in the 1980s and 1990s. The critical argument made by Clarke is that, in the USA, the process of construction of the fit lesbian and gay parent has not involved a challenge to the definitional power of clinical knowledge.

The implications of building on such knowledge need to be problematized in Italy as well: all the more so since anti-gender actors are firmly treading on that ground, naturalizing social hierarchies through the mobilization of scientific authority (Garbagnoli & Prearo, 2018).

Moreover, seeking recognition through a healthist frame legitimizes, as we have seen, a familization of responsibilities and reduces the terrain for politicizing the actual conditions shaping parenting experiences. In particular, the pressure for living up to a model of intensive parenting as an outcome of the neoliberal demise of public responsibility accounts for much of the fatigue of LGBTQ parents, who feel that they are held to higher standards because of their uncertain social recognition (De Cordova et al., 2016, 2020; Franchi & Selmi, 2018). However, the critique of this

model does not seem to be part of their political claims. The endeavour for measuring parenting performances as part of the social investment ideology goes thereby largely unquestioned. In fact, despite embodying a social risk, privileged parents "are able to display the middle-class risk practices that are considered responsible and respectable" (Aamann & Dybbroe, 2018), but by doing so they risk undermining possibilities of coalition with parents from other stigmatized social groups. In this way, they are just displacing surveillance from themselves to other parents or, better, from a part of their constituency to parents who do not live up to standards of respectability, including other same-sex parents.

Seen from an intersectional perspective, when LGBTQ parents seek recognition through an individualized and depoliticized healthist frame, erasing class and other social inequalities and thereby issues of redistribution from their self-representations, they contribute to undermining the very conditions for emancipation of a great part of the constituency they are speaking on behalf of.

Conclusions

Reflections on intersectionality have taught us that research is never innocent when it leaves fundamental power inequalities unaddressed, since reproducing by concealing is a key working of the construction of knowledge.

By connecting the strategic use of healthist frames and the concealing of class relations in activist discourses and research, this contribution has shown that the processes of recognition of same-sex parenting need to be understood as related to the reproduction of social inequalities: the re-familization of care responsibilities, the implications of austerity politics for parents' surveillance and the lines of exclusion drawn by models of good parenting. In particular, the current social investment framing of childcare policies in Europe and the forms of knowledge it draws its legitimacy from emerge as key elements to understand the conditions set for the normalization of same-sex parenting, in the case of Italy as well, in terms of being able to secure a healthy future for their children.

On the one hand, tracing these connections requires improving empirical knowledge about the parenting practices among working-class LGBTQ people. Their experiences of being judged—and shamed (McDermott & Roen, 2016)—against standards of respectability not only for their sexual orientation or gender identity but also for their creative ways of dealing

with the accumulation of "risk factors" in their everyday struggle to get by (Stacey, 1990) should become more visible.

At the same time, as Klesse (2014), in reflecting on the need for a stronger class perspective on polyamory experiences, has pointed out, we need to sharpen our theoretical perspectives, moving beyond the description of class differences to understanding class relations both in society and in the politics of knowledge. This includes a critical assessment of how we conceptualize health and how we deal with the more or less conscious epistemic compromises entailed by engaging in the rather well-funded interdisciplinary research on sexuality framed as a health issue (Vogler, 2019).

It also requires reflexivity about our positioning in looking at class issues. In Italy some of the most advanced studies questioning normative models of care have been carried out by researchers under precarious working conditions. Setting precarity as an interpretative perspective to read the redefinition of intimate and kinship relations (Gusmano & Motterle, 2019) has allowed them to challenge respectability standards in parenting and recognize that creativity and innovation can be linked to necessity rather than choice and can have protagonists other than the middle-upper-class avant-garde. The fact that the connections between changing patterns of care and class relations are explored from precarious positions may, however, explain their limited impact on research agendas: for instance, the programmatically unrespectable ("indecoroso") urban squat residents in Bologna, called "Atlantide", from which such perspectives were developed (Acquistapace, 2022), have since been evicted.

References

Aamann, I. C. (2017). *Kampen for det sociale renommé: Forældreskab og forebyggelse i et klasseperspekiv* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Roskilde Universitet. Retrieved from http://www.forskningsdatabasen.dk/en/catalog/2393003444

Aamann, I. C., & Dybbroe, B. (2018). 'So under "cause for concern", I'll write that…' class, parenting and risk prevention in public health practices in schools: A question of moral value? *Health, Risk & Society, 20*(5–6), 259–275. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2018.1537438

Acquistapace, A. (2022). Tenetevi il matrimonio e dateci la dote, Mimesis.

Baiocco, R., Santamaria, F., Ioverno, S., Fontanesi, L., Baumgartner, E., Laghi, F., & Lingiardi, V. (2015). Lesbian mother families and gay father families in Italy:

Family functioning, dyadic satisfaction, and child well-being. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 12*(3), 202–212.
Bertone, C., & Gusmano, B. (2013). Queerying the public administration in Italy: Local challenges to a national standstill. In Y. Taylor & M. Addison (Eds.), *Queer presences and absences* (pp. 260–278). Palgrave Macmillan.
Bosisio, R., & Long, J. (2020). Famiglie omogenitoriali in Italia. Relazioni di filiazione e pratiche di responsabilità genitoriale. *Sociologia del diritto, 1*, 153–176.
Brown, W. (1995). *States of injury: Power and freedom in late modernity*. Princeton University Press.
Brownlie, J. (2014). *Ordinary relationships: A sociological study of emotions, reflexivity and culture*. Springer.
Casalini, B. (2014). The early childhood education and care policy debate in the EU. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Family Studies, 19*(1), 77–94.
Cirillo, G., Bonati, M., Campi, R., de Campora, E., & Siani, P. (2007). *Disuguaglianze nella Salute nell'infanzia e nell'adolescenza in Campania*. Giuseppe Phoebus Edizioni.
Clarke, V. (2008). From outsiders to motherhood to reinventing the family: Constructions of lesbian parenting in the psychological literature (1886-2006). *Women's Studies International Forum, 31*, 118–128.
Conrad, P. (1992). Medicalization and social control. *Annual Review of Sociology, 18*, 209–232.
Conrad, P., & Schneider, J. W. (2010). *Deviance and medicalization: From badness to sickness*. Temple University Press.
Cooper, C. (2017). *Family values: Between neoliberalism and the new social conservatism*. MIT Press.
Crawford, R. (1980). Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life. *International Journal of Health Services, 10*(3), 365–388.
Crawford, R. (2006). Health as a meaningful social practice. *Health, 10*(4), 401–420.
De Cordova, F., Sità, C., & Holloway, S. (2016). La transizione alla genitorialita nelle coppie omosessuali. In M. Everri (Ed.), *Genitori come gli altri e tra gli altri*. Essere genitori omosessuali in Italia.
De Cordova, F., Selmi, G., & Sità, C. (2020). *Legami possibili. Ricerche e strumenti per l'inclusione delle famiglie LGB*. Edizioni ETS.
Dermott, E. (2012). 'Poverty' versus 'parenting': An emergent dichotomy. *Studies in the Maternal, 4*(2). Retrieved from www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk
Dermott, E., & Pomati, M. (2016). 'Good' parenting practices: How important are poverty, education and time pressure? *Sociology, 50*(1), 125–142.
Di Feliciantonio, C. (2015). The sexual politics of neoliberalism and austerity in an 'exceptional' country: Italy. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 14*(4), 1008–1031.

Drew, C. (2016). Wholesome homosexuality: Normative childhoods in same-sex family advertisements. *Global Studies of Childhood, 6*(3), 324–335.

Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality?: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press.

Edwards, R., McCarthy, J. R., & Gillies, V. (2012). The politics of concepts: Family and its (putative) replacements. *The British Journal of Sociology, 63*(4), 730–746.

Epstein, S., & Mamo, L. (2017). The proliferation of sexual health: Diverse social problems and the legitimation of sexuality. *Social Science & Medicine, 188*, 176–190.

Everri, M. (2016). *Genitori come gli altri e tra gli altri*. Essere genitori omosessuali in Italia.

Franchi, M., & Selmi, G. (2018). Challenging the unthinkable: Gay and lesbian parents between redefinition and exclusion in Italy. *AG About Gender-Rivista internazionale di studi di genere, 7*(14), 1–21.

Furedi, F. (2004). *Therapy culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. Routledge.

Furedi, F. (2008). *Paranoid parenting: Why ignoring the experts may be best for your child*. Continuum.

Garbagnoli, S., & Prearo, M. (2018). *La crociata «anti-gender». Dal Vaticano alle manif pour tous*. Kaplan.

Gillies, V., Edwards, R., & Horsley, N. (2016). Brave new brains: Sociology, family and the politics of knowledge. *The Sociological Review, 64*(2), 219–237.

Gusmano, B. (2018). Coming out through an intersectional perspective: Narratives of bisexuality and polyamory in Italy. *Journal of Bisexuality, 18*(1), 15–34.

Gusmano, B., & Motterle, T. (2019). The micropolitics of choice in Italy: How the law affects lesbian and bisexual women's daily life. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 23*(3), 1–21.

Hays, S. (1998). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. Yale University Press.

Hennessy, R. (2000). *Profit and pleasure. Sexual identities in late capitalism*. Routledge.

Hicks, S. (2005). Is gay parenting bad for kids? Responding to the 'very idea of difference' in research on lesbian and gay parenting. *Sexualities, 8*(2), 153–168.

Hoffman, D. M. (2010). Risky investments: Parenting and the production of the 'resilient child'. *Health, Risk & Society, 12*(4), 385–394.

Istat. (2015). *Condizioni di salute e ricorso ai servizi sanitari in Italia e nell'Unione europea - Indagine Ehis 2015. Report*.

Jamieson, L. (1999). Intimacy transformed? A critical look at the 'pure relationship'. *Sociology, 33*(3), 477–494.

Klesse, C. (2014). Poly economics—Capitalism, class, and polyamory. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, 27*(2), 203–220.

Leys, C. (2010). Health, health care and capitalism. In L. Panitch & C. Leys (Eds.), *Socialist register 2010. Morbid symptoms: Health under capitalism* (pp. 1–28). The Merlin Press.

Lupton, D. (1995). *The imperative of health: Public health and the regulated body*. Sage.

Macvarish, J. (2016). *Neuroparenting*. Palgrave.

McDermott, E. (2011). The world some have won: Sexuality, class and inequality. *Sexualities, 14*(1), 63–78.

McDermott, E., & Roen, K. (2016). *Queer youth, suicide and self-harm: Troubled subjects, troubling norms*. Springer.

Peregrín, F. M. M., de la Rosa, L. D., & García, B. M. (2014). Lesbian and gay parenting: Strategies of normalization in Spain. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 11*(1), 20–30.

Perocco, F. (2018). La crescita strutturale delle disuguaglianze nell'era neoliberista. *Società e trasformazioni sociali, 6*, 55–86.

Pitch, T. (2013). Contro il decoro: l'uso politico della pubblica decenza. .

Rose, N. (1989). *Governing the soul. The shaping of the private self*. Routledge.

Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing our selves. Psychology, power, and personhood*. Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. (1999). *The power of freedom: Reframing political thought*. Cambridge University Press.

Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class & gender: Becoming respectable*. Sage.

Skeggs, B. (2011). Imagining personhood differently: Person value and autonomist working-class value practices. *The Sociological Review, 59*(3), 496–513.

Stacey, J. (1990). *Brave new families. Stories of domestic upheaval in late-twentieth-century America*. University of California Press.

Taylor, Y. (2009). *Lesbian and gay parenting: Securing social and educational capital*. Springer.

Taylor, Y. (2011). Sexualities and class. *Sexualities, 14*(1), 3–11.

Trappolin, L. (2017). Pictures of lesbian and gay parenthood in Italian sociology. A critical analysis of 30 years of research. *The Sociological Review, 7*(3), 301–323.

Trappolin, L., & Gusmeroli, P. (2019). *Raccontare l'omofobia in Italia: Genesi e sviluppi di una parola chiave*. Rosenberg & Sellier.

Turrini, M. (2015). A genealogy of "healthism": Healthy subjectivities between individual autonomy and disciplinary control. *Eä - Journal of Medical Humanities & Social Studies of Science and Technology, 7*(1), 11–27.

Vogler, S. (2019). Science, technology, and sexuality: New directions in the study of sexual knowledge. *Sociology Compass, 13*(3), 1–13.

Woolf, V. (1938). *Three guineas*. Hogarth Press.

Zola, I. K. (1977). Healthism and disabling medicalization. In I. Illich, I. K. Zola, J. McKnight, J. Caplan, & H. Shaiken (Eds.), *Disabling professions* (pp. 41–67). Marion Boyars.

CHAPTER 9

Blurring the Boundaries of Intimate Relationships: Friendship and Networks of Care in Times of Precarity

Beatrice Gusmano

> Intimacy seems to be placed on an interesting border, either as being the border or as being the borderless. (Mjöberg, 2009, p. 19)

Care is culturally defined by our understanding of inequalities (that define by whom and to whom care is legitimate or mandatory) and legally defined by the assumptions regarding the normativity of relationships. Care is therefore strictly linked with the labour market and the welfare regime, since historically the division of labour assigned women to the private sphere and men to the public one: "it is in the public realm that the boundaries of the private are drawn" (Tronto, 1987, p. 654), with the private being appointed as the sphere of intimacy. In the effort to legitimize certain relationships to the detriment of others, the normativity between the private and the public is reproduced in what I suggest calling "institutionalized relationships", that is, family, kinship and partnership:

B. Gusmano (✉)
Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy
e-mail: beatrice.gusmano@unive.it

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_9

those intimate relationships are socially and legally legitimized when they correspond to the ideal of a heteronormative and mononormative subject.

In this chapter I will present how friendship can release intimacy from the normativity imposed on it by the hierarchy of intimacy (Budgeon, 2006), complicating and blurring the boundaries of intimate relationships and proposing a renewed ethics of care. As a starting point, I want to distinguish between intimacy and intimate relationships. Intimacy is defined as a quality of a relationship involving "bodily, emotional and privileged knowledge of the other" (Jamieson et al., 2006, p. 1), while intimate relationships are those that involve a certain degree of intimacy. Therefore, we should talk about a hierarchy of intimate relationships, more than a hierarchy of intimacy, since intimacy can be read as the common denominator that pools care networks, independently from the form that each intimate relationship may take.

Going back to friendship, Roseneil (2004) employs it to reinterpret the ethics of care, bearing in mind the criticism that feminist scholars pointed out. Specifically, there are two main problems with the ethics of care: the semantic reference to the maternal relationship and the invisibilization of the ethics of justice and social equality, linked with the invisibilization of the oppressive and unequal burden of care carried out by women. In contrast with these ethics of care, Roseneil proposes a renewal of friendship as a means of giving and receiving care to/from equals without self-sacrifice and subordination, preserving the autonomy and independence of each individual involved.

In the socio-economic context of Italy, choices outside heteronormativity (Warner, 1991), mononormativity (Pieper & Bauer, 2005) and monomaternalism (Park, 2013) are not granted by laws, since Italy is a Southern European country clustered in the Mediterranean welfare regime, where care is supposed to be granted by the family, and LGBTQ[1] people are not legitimized in their desire to parent, to live outside the couple and to have more than one relationship at a time. Therefore, LGBTQ partners, mothers and friends develop relationships of deep care and material support outside the boxes of traditional institutionalized relationships: the boundaries between love, friendship and family are blurred. The purpose of this chapter is to show how collected narratives are stories of resistance in which "collective action, affective bonds, and convivial

[1] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual, queer.

social relations are favoured over institutional social arrangements" (Shepard, 2015, p. 2).

The first part of the chapter focuses on those contributions that highlight the subversive and transformative power of friendship, in terms of questioning relational normativity, blurring the boundaries of intimate relationships and redefining care. I review some of the reflections on friendship coming from sociology as well as activism, in order to show how friendship, particularly for LGBTQ people, acquires the transformative potential of questioning the traditional hierarchy of intimate relationships. In the second part, I describe the Italian socio-economic context, based on the assumption that friendship, just like any other forms of relationship, must be analysed within its context (Adams & Allan, 1989). Lastly, I take into account the language used to make friendship intelligible in the current neoliberal economic system that makes use of the romantic imaginary as a way to silence economic hardship. On the contrary, interviews prove that other forms of relationship make it possible for people to stay afloat. I describe these networks as "complicit", since they entail a subtle emotional understanding, in carrying forward a different worldview.

The Hierarchy of Intimate Relationships and the Subversive Power of Friendship

> I am sick to death of bonding through kinship and 'the family,' and I long for models of solidarity and human unity and difference rooted in friendship, work, partially shared purposes, intractable collective pain, inescapable mortality, and persistent hope. (Haraway, 1997, p. 265)

Friendship has long become a legitimate topic of sociological analysis (Adams & Allan, 1989; Eve, 2002; Pahl, 2000; Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004). Nonetheless, it remains a concept difficult to grasp, and it is stuck within the hierarchy of intimate relationships that hides the value of friendship, focusing primarily on kinship and the reproductive couple. However, by decentralizing romantic relationships, we can reveal a whole new world made up of intimate relationships that are nuanced in terms of definition and recognition, yet sturdy in terms of emotional and material support provided. From a sociological perspective, Marilyn Friedman (1993) already foresaw friendship as a source of "self-esteem [and] cultural survival of people who deviate from social norms and who suffer hostility and

ostracism from others for their deviance" (p. 219); friendship is revolutionary in its transformative power to refuse oppressive social conventions (Vernon, 2010); as Benjamin Shepard (2015) puts it, "friendship has shown the potential to destabilize (and restructure) unequal societies" (p. 11).

In order to challenge the hierarchy of intimate relationships and to bring friendship to the centre, we need to deconstruct the paradigms of heteronomativity, mononormativity and monomaternalism that structure that hierarchy.

Heteronormativity (Warner, 1991) is defined as the supposed universality of a relational model based on a couple formed by a cohabiting man and woman, whose union is registered by the state, aimed at reproduction and built on romantic love.[2] Duggan (2003) coined the term "homonormativity" to refer to same-sex couples that aspire at the same normative system, depoliticizing their sexual orientation in favour of assimilation.

Mononormativity (Pieper & Bauer, 2005) is the norm on which romantic love is based and that requires people to have only one sexual-affective relationship at a time. This relationship is meant to have primacy over any other relationship, based on the assumption that it is our partner's duty to take care of all our anxieties, aspirations and desires, thus causing a form of dependency that can lead to isolation:

> To invest in one single relationship, to rely on a single person, to build intimacy and everyday routine with a single person is something that puts us at great risk, both on an emotional and material level. (Acquistapace, 2015, p. 15)

The third concept to challenge is monomaternalism (Park, 2013), defined as an ideology in which biological dictates blend with the socially normative dichotomy of the good/bad mother:

> [Monomaternalism] resides at the intersection of patriarchy (with its insistence that women bear responsibility for biological and social reproduction), heteronormativity (with its insistence that a woman must pair with a man, rather than other women, in order to raise children successfully), capitalism (in its conception of children as private property), and Eurocentrism (in its erasure of polymaternalism in other cultures and historical periods). (Park, 2013, p. 7)

[2] For a detailed analysis of the concept, please refer to Gusmano (2009).

Drawing on the Italian saying "di mamma ce n'è una sola" [mother, we only get one], I read "monomaternalism" as the regime inscribed in heteronormativity that recognizes just one mother and just one way of being an appropriate mother, that is, a heterosexual, coupled and monogamous woman. Following Brigitte Vassallo (2018), monogamy should not be read merely as a practice: it's a way of thinking, based on exclusivity and exclusion, aimed at organizing relational and private life. Shaped by monogamous thought (Vassallo, 2018), heteronormativity, mononormativity and monomaternalism reinforce each other, leading to a hierarchy of intimate relationships. It is actually a well-defined strategy that aims at strengthening not just a moral order but also an economic one (Alabao, 2018; Chiappini Castilhos, 2016; Esteban, 2015; Herrera, 2015). To explain the hierarchy of intimate relationships in the economic and patriarchal organization of relationships, I take the cue from Eleanor Wilkinson (2012), who argued for the concept of compulsory coupledom, drawing from the famous compulsory heterosexuality described by Adrienne Rich (1980). In the same line, Leo Acquistapace (2011, 2015) describes the compulsory couple as normative (two people who satisfy each other's needs), compulsory (the appropriate adult lifestyle taught since childhood), teleological (aimed at the social and economic reproduction of the nuclear family) and privileged (it gives access to privileges only to those who conform to this model).

Today how are intimacy, friendship and care experienced? Roseneil (2004) highlights the significant findings of her project CAVA[3] (care, values and the future of welfare) about friendships and non-conventional partnerships:

(a) Embeddedness in complex networks of intimacy and care: interviewees are far from being the isolated individuals of recent theorizing of individualization.
(b) Prioritizing friendship, as opposed to biological kin, particularly for the provision of care, emotional security and support in daily life.
(c) Decentring sexual/love relationships, so that sexual relationships are not deemed the sole source of support, care and intimacy.
(d) The centrality of friends and practices of self-care in the recovering from painful relational breakdowns.

[3] http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cava/research/pilots.htm#fncp

Going along with this interpretation, Shelley Budgeon (2006) summarizes the importance of friendship in three points: it offers stable reference points for everyday life; it sustains non-conventional identities through the activity of care; and it gives a sense of belonging.

In the cases of ethical non-monogamy (Gusmano, 2018a, b, 2019), lesbian or bisexual motherhood (Gusmano, 2021; Gusmano & Motterle, 2019, 2020; Moreira, 2018; Santos, 2018) or cohabitation with friends as a life choice (Gusmano, 2018c), the deviant behaviour—following Friedman's concept—is represented precisely by the choice of either living outside mononormativity or monomaternalism or not cohabiting as a couple: it's a choice that doesn't answer to the compulsory steps to becoming an adult (Arnett, 2015; Dalessandro, 2019). Actually, interviews show how deserting these compulsory steps isn't a strategy to avoid adult life responsibilities like the eternal child Peter Pan, but it represents a collective strategy to create alternatives of well-being and happiness beyond the monogamous, heteronormative, family-centred system.

Concerning the research design, this chapter stems from the project *Intimate – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe*.[4] The research aimed at rethinking citizenship, care and choice through the findings of a comparative and qualitative study designed to explore LGBT experiences of partnering (lesbian coupledom and polyamory), parenting (mothers and fathers through assisted reproduction) and friendship (transgender networks of care and living with friends in adult life) in three Southern European countries: Italy, Portugal and Spain. Overall, we carried out around 60 interviews with experts (activists, public employees, lawyers, academics) and 90 interviews with LGBTQ people concerning their biography. For this chapter, I will take into consideration the studies conducted in Italy on polyamory, lesbian/bisexual motherhood and cohabiting with friends in adult life (Table 9.1).

The people interviewed belonged to the spectrum of non-heterosexuality and were between the ages of 25 and 48, Italian and living in Rome at the time of the interview (2015–2018), White and able-bodied. In sociological terms, all of them had low economic capital and high cultural and

[4] Funded by the European Research Council and coordinated by Ana Cristina Santos, the INTIMATE project was based at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (Portugal, 2014-2019, GA n°338452). In addition to INTIMATE, I would like to acknowledge the ERC *DomEQUAL. A global approach to paid domestic work and social inequalities*, coordinated by Sabrina Marchetti and based at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy, 2016-2021, GA n°678783).

Table 9.1 Interviewees' data. For the sake of anonymity, pseudonyms and age ranges were used

Study	*Name*	*Age*	*Gender identity*	*Sexual orientation*	*Partnering status*	*Job*	*Housing*
Polyamory	Nadia	25–29	Ciswoman	Pansexual	Poly relationships	Temporary jobs in the educational system	Living in one of her mother's apartments
	Nicoletta	25–29	Ciswoman	Lesbian/ queer	Non-monogamous	Temporary jobs in the educational system	Living in a friend's flat
	Bruno	25–29	Genderfluid	Faggot	Relational anarchy	PhD	Flat owned by parents
	Morgana	30–35	Ciswoman	Bisexual	Poly relationships	Multiple administrative jobs	Living with male partner
	Rudy	30–35	Transman	Gay	Poly relationship	Short-term contract	Shared rent
Parenting through ARTs	Claudia	40–44	Ciswoman	Lesbian	Single	Full-time job	House with mortgage
	Eliana	40–44	Ciswoman	Lesbian	Civil union	Full-time job	House with mortgage
	Rebecca	40–44	Ciswoman	Bisexual	Married	Freelance	Rented flat
	Chiara	45–49	Ciswoman	Lesbian	Divorced, now coupled	Full-time job	Rented flat
	Federica	45–49	Ciswoman	Lesbian	Single	Freelance	Own flat
Friendship: living with friends in adult life	Dario	25–29	"I need to figure out a few things"	Gay	Single	Voluntary civil service	Living in a friend's flat with her
	Veronica	25–29	Ciswoman	Lesbian	"Happy single"	Student	Squat
	Edoardo	30–35	Cisman	Gay	Single	Freelance	Living with his ex-partner
	Emma	45–49	Ciswoman	Bisexual/ open	Coupled/open	Freelance	Living with her partner in a friend's flat
	Alfredo	45–49	Cisman	Gay	Coupled	Artist	Living with his friend

social capital, meaning that all of them were precarious workers with a medium/high level of education and well-integrated in their sociocultural context, as we will see in the next section.

Precarity and Friendship in Italy

> Networks of friends, which often include ex-lovers, form the context within which lesbians and gay men lead their personal lives, offering emotional continuity, companionship, pleasure and practical assistance. (Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004, pp. 137–138)

Friendship does not develop in a vacuum, but it is embedded in a specific historical, geographical and social frame (Adams & Allan, 1989). In the case of Southern Europe, friendship is shaped by the Mediterranean regime (Ferrera, 2008), a mixed welfare model that, until the economic crisis, was based on public healthcare and on retirement granted by employment. Despite retrenchment, this welfare persists due to its strong familism (Pavolini & Raitano, 2015): the limited development of policies regarding social assistance, housing and anti-poverty is supposed to be balanced by the extended family, encouraging a passage from a male breadwinner family model to a family/kinship solidarity model where the breadwinner is responsible not only for the nuclear family but also for other dependent family members (Naldini, 2003). The interesting aspect of this model is the breach toward a dimension of care which reaches beyond the narrow nuclear family, since the family/kinship solidarity model advances that responsibilities are to be shared within the extended family. Although I do not want to romanticize this model—based on gender inequality and women's unpaid care work in the private space (Pateman, 1988)—I would like to recognize its legacy: learnt from childhood, it concerns the sharing of a large part of family life with relatives well beyond the narrow nuclear family, not only in times of need but also and above all in times of conviviality. In this regard, Tatiana Motterle (2016) refers to non-heterosexual Sunday lunches portrayed by the filmmaker Ferzan Özpetek, describing them as "a perfect representation of the idea of family of choice, where reciprocal care is central, and love and friendship easily blend".

The economic harshness described by interviewees refers to the context of Italy, characterized by the economic crisis, education and culture cuts,

gentrification and precarity as a life condition. These aspects are exacerbated by living as a student in a capital such as Rome:

> Several social issues are actually real: it's hard to find a job [and] the period of education has been extended (…) in a metropolis where the rent reaches up to 5–600 euros including expenses (. …) Actually, lifetimes that are imposed by capitalism are tough: it means that people have even two, three jobs in order to survive. (Veronica)

As expressed by Veronica, the Italian labour market scenario is composed by a progressive proliferation of non-standard contracts that implies a shortcoming in citizenship and welfare rights, due to the lower or nearly non-existent possibility of access to social rights associated with these types of contracts (pension rights, paid leave for sickness, maternity, unemployment, etc.) (Murgia & Selmi, 2011). Faced with this situation of severe precariousness and lack of access to welfare, networks of friends weave solidarity bonds promoting an alternative economic system based on recognition, reciprocity and redistribution (Esteban, 2011), as happened to Federica, a lesbian single mother who was appointed by one of her friends as heiress in order to grant economic stability both to her and her son: "An extended family exists, *it really exists* [emphasis added]. You have to build it: it doesn't come by itself. It is not that relationships come this way, but I can count on relationships that are very solid, very steadfast" (Federica).

This is also the homophobic context from which LGB people choose to move away to freely claim their sexuality (Pieri, 2011). After years of homophobic bullying, Dario left his hometown in the south to move in a big city in the north to attend university, ending up as a celebrated drag queen. After several years of success, drugs and gambling, he moved to Rome where he discovered his dimension, that is, transfeminist activism:

> It was the farthest city that I could reach to attend university (. …) From my shitty life in my hometown in the south I went up to the north (. …) That context helped to free me, to be aware about my homosexuality and to freely enjoy it (. …) And then I moved to Rome [,] I started to discover transfeminist politics that is what I'm currently doing, and (…) now I can say that this is the payback, compared to the nasty business of the past. (Dario)

Feminism is a recurring topic in the narratives of interviewees who choose to put friendship before institutionalized relationships, making this bond a picklock to change the world (Cuesta Cremades & Fuster Peiró, 2010) in order to "live other intensities beyond falling in love, i.e. deep friendships, fascinations or political activism" (Alabao, 2018, p. 177). I'm referring also to those choices that make friendship central as a payback for disappointing kinship or empty couple relations (Esteban, 2011):

> Well, I don't think I'll be in another relationship for a while. But I should have thought about it already, right after the end of the first one. I feel more satisfied by my friends (. …) It's probably the only relationship we should really care about. (Edoardo)
>
> I saw my parents and I didn't like the kind of couple they represented, thus I developed other desires (…): I grew up as a person thanks to my friends… friendships that for me were also love bonds. (Emma)

Emma, who often says through the interview how friends have been a safe harbour during her difficult times, underlines how living with friends is not just a way to survive in neoliberalism but also a collective and ethic choice of sharing daily life through reciprocal support, making it a "prospect of struggle, re-appropriation, social transformation and not just a simple way to 'survive' job insecurity" (Acquistapace, 2015, p. 146).

> My generation's salvation, to say it in a very trenchant way, is networking. It becomes also a salvation, a political choice. But I don't choose it only because it's the only option instead of starving and dying in this society that exploits and oppresses you, but also because it actually represents how I feel. (Emma)

I intentionally use the word "choice" to give voice to friendship and its transformative power especially for people who do not align with conventional models. Obviously, I question the term because the neoliberal motto "yes, you can" only serves to make economic links invisible and pretends that the materiality of life depends only on us and our commitment, without taking into consideration class issues (Taylor, 2009). We are not all starting from the same conditions, and we do not all have the same tools, but what we choose is to share them: "We're talking about 17, almost 20 years of cohabitation that are not linked to sentimental relationships but that are born from job insecurity, basically, but also from shared life choices" (Alfredo).

Mari Luz Esteban (2011) talks about communities of reciprocal support, meaning those stable groups of people that choose solidarity in material, political and symbolic everyday life. This well-known experience is lived by lesbian and bisexual mothers who find support in their networks of non-heterosexual parents:

> Luca and Marcos, who are this couple of fathers, they gave us a lot of advice [:] we have them as a reference point. Apart from that, they gave us things that [their daughter] didn't use anymore (. …) They also gave us the pillow for breastfeeding that we then passed to Alfonso. (Eliana)

In this regard, non-normative communities may represent a safe harbour from which to challenge heteronormativity, mononormativity and monomaternalism: Veronica and Alfredo make reference to the squats where they experienced cohabitation among people gathered for the same political struggle; Bruno refers to the bear community he started to attend through cruising during adolescence; for Rudy, the BDSM community was the gate to self-discovery as a transman; Morgana and Nadia highlight the importance of the polyamory community in finding a bisexual space that does not properly exist in Italy; Nicoletta and Dario refer to transfeminist activism and Emma to feminism, as the frameworks that gave names to how they were already living their lives; all interviewed mothers named *Rainbow Families* as a point of reference in their path toward maternity: "This strengthens you so much because there are people who did it before you, who had such courage" (Rebecca).

It is not simply about feathering one's own nest in order to survive, but it is about building other possible landscapes and forms of ethical sharing that could really constitute alternatives to institutionalized relationships and economic harshness. In such a light, the next section will be devoted to this renewed ethics of care.

Care as an Act of Resistance

> Through activism and friendship, we strove to create such a new ethics of living. (Shepard, 2015, p. 13)

To question the hierarchy of intimate relationships also means to resignify the concept of care and for whom care is legitimate or mandatory and also to blur the boundaries between caregivers and care receivers.

Feminist ethics of care become a key concept in this redefinition within the neoliberal patriarchal system. A collection of texts from Latin America edited by Norma Mogrovejo (2016) suggests "counter-love" as a definition of these kinds of relationships, thus including all the ways of loving which question romantic love as an expression of capitalism. To this end, Marian Pessah (2016) suggests the term "amorous anarchy" whose central concept is care: "to talk about amorousness in relationships, beyond our affective sexual partner, is a wider term, more communal (. …) We want to disarm and break the system without breaking ourselves" (pp. 59–60).

From interviews, care stands out as a central theme that goes beyond all set parameters, therefore reaching partners' partner or feeling empathy for the end of a partner's relationship:

> This is a way to take care of the person I interact with: to respect her relationships. It's a way to… scatter the sense of property, possess, jealousy and territoriality. (Nicoletta)
>
> My boyfriend Alberto was very sad when Marta and I broke up (. …) It was amazing, albeit sad, to go back home… torn by tears, desperate because I broke up, and to find him comforting me. (Morgana)

Moreover, the literature suggests that LGBT people tend to remain friends after a break-up (Formby, 2017; Pahl & Spencer, 2004; Weston, 1991): they transform the shape of their relationship keeping a high level of intimacy. Therefore, the relationship changes, while intimacy persists as a central feature of the bond, as expressed by Chiara when talking about arrangements for the children with her ex-wife:

> We were already separated when we decided the school for the children. We go together to get their final grades—there is this sense of doing together things that concern children [:] like two parents who care for them and therefore they support each other, in the sense that we have a common line on their education (. …) I see certain separated couples, damn it! Children are used just like a picklock to quarrel. (Chiara)

Veronica also mentions the widespread care in the squat she lives in, care that is expressed through material support both in daily life and in extraordinary situations (Bidart, 1991):

> In our squat there is a network of care [:] in our daily lives (…) we tend to eat together and to share a lot, i.e. our finances, and there is also psychological care when inevitably each one of us has to face a difficult situation (. …) So to say, recently one of us had to undergo surgery and couldn't share that with her family, nonetheless she has been fully supported by a network of care. (Veronica)

Many interviewed people rely more on their friends than on their families, especially when their life goes against the normativity experienced within the family of origin. For example, all interviewed mothers had to go abroad to access medically assisted reproduction due to the heteronormative law regulating assisted reproductive techniques in Italy, and many of them could count on networks of friends living in the host country during pregnancy. Besides the wide network of friends, Claudia could count on Adele, a close friend who decided to support her during her motherhood as a single mother:

> Adele (…) was willing to help me with my motherhood, and was willing to stand by me to take care of my daughters, and she said, "It's not like we have to explain how… we're friends, though for me it is good to stand by you: our way of conceiving this motherhood does not need to be explained to anyone; only we know its meaning and depth" (. …) For me it was just the fundamental element, the pivot that also allowed me to go back and forth from Italy to Spain, also because she lived there. So it was not only a practical help, but also a moral and emotional support in this (…) desire that grew more and more. (Claudia)

All this overflowing care is looking for a language in order to be defined, clashing with the lack of acknowledgement and intelligibility, as expressed by Giorgia, a poly activist interviewed in the study on polyamory:

> Basically, you enter a different paradigm when you start to live relationships in this way. Therefore, you start to revalue all the dimensions of intimacy, i.e. friends, comrades, lovers. All the words take on a different meaning: they are constantly redefined. (Giorgia)

This is why we often resort to the language of family, the only one recognized in our heteronormative and mononormative society. Therefore, there are examples of people defining their friends as "brother" or "sister", although ironically very few interviewees cite their brothers or sisters

as belonging to their network of care. In the following quote, Edoardo recalls with nostalgia the time he used to live with his best friend, calling him "brother": "I basically consider Federico as my brother. [The positive aspect of living together has been], to put it simply, to have my brother always stuck to my ass" (Edoardo).

Accordingly, Alfredo refers to "sisterhood" when talking about the intensity of his relationship with his two housemates, with whom he also shares the difficulties of the artistic path.

> This is how sisterhood was born between us, with this very strong and very intense relationship (. …) So we started living together, the three of us, in a very queer way, and it was beautiful because then we started making artistic projects together. (Alfredo)

Actually, the point is not to ascribe greater value to the relationships among siblings. Those terms are used in order to be understood by the outside world, since friendship is not considered as valid as institutionalized relationships. Therefore, language is re-appropriated to convey the symbolic power of relationships, as happens to children of lesbian and bisexual mothers who are used to calling their mothers' friends aunts and uncles. In the same way, Dario employs the term "family" to define his strong bond with Erika, his lesbian feminist flatmate, when he explains how safeguarded this relationship makes him feel.

> I'm discovering another kind of family, outside of the classical one [:] this is a wonderful situation, it makes me feel free, whereas I didn't feel free, before, in my family. [Erika] knows that, if the cops come, they come for a political problem she can understand: they come for repression, (…) she'll probably even take care of organizing the protest if I get arrested (. …) If they arrested me, my mum might stop speaking to me, because she doesn't understand what I'm doing. (Dario)

Being supported in the struggle against repression contributes to redefine kinship not by blood links but by an ethic of how to live in this unequal society.

Others try to make it their own, hijacking the original term "family" in order to keep its meaning of belonging, highlighting the distance from the

traditional family: Nadia talks about polyfamily, while Alfredo refers to his "sfamily".[5]

> Polyfamily is a group of people linked by different relationships (…): there are lovers, friends, ex-lovers, people who make love and people who stopped making love (. …) When you talk about friends, they are considered the last important people of your life: that's why I talk about family (. …) It is a form of mutual assistance: not just emotional, but material and practical, as well. (Nadia)
>
> And that's the way this amazing trio was born, we call it the "sfamily" [:] I am proud of it. Because words matter (. …) Sfamily because then, before all these annoying discourses about the family even began, I put an "s" at the beginning, and I intend to enjoy this feeling of belonging: (…) we don't need to say much because we are "accomplices". (Alfredo)

Using a language that evokes mutual respect and common activism, Alfredo defines his accomplices in queer terms, as does Nicoletta when recalling her first experiences of ethical non-monogamies:

> I was lucky enough to meet people that felt what I was feeling (…): there was a deeper acknowledgement of the outcomes of this kind of practice (. …) It's a political struggle that defines how you live in the world and how you feel things. (Nicoletta)

As a matter of fact, the Merriam-Webster English dictionary defines "accomplice" as "one associated with another especially in wrongdoing". Etymologically, it comes from Latin, meaning at the same time "involved" and "folded together", and refers to a person taking part with others in non-normative actions, which is exactly what the people I interviewed mean when they talk about their non-conventional lives. I might suggest that instead of talking about love, family, friendship, and so on, relationships could be divided into two kinds: the ones where self-esteem is hurt, where each decision only gets criticism and bashing in order to generate dependence and isolation, and those which give support through complicity, even within the chaos of precarious lives, thanks to a common desire for recognition, reciprocity and redistribution.

[5] The "s-" in front of a word, in Italian, stands for a prefix meaning opposition: it serves to overturn the meaning of the word to which it was affixed.

> With [my ex-wife], before we broke up, we had begun to attend groups of families, like communes, who did co-housing (. …) What comes back is always the fact of being together, of planning, even with my friends, always these beautiful networks of solidarity: I can say that… I am alone, but if something happens to me, I pick up the phone and they arrive, right? This is what I want in my life. (Chiara)

This may be why the network metaphor is so effective: it makes it clear that friendships cannot be measured on a two-person scale and consist instead of a more complex stratification of complicit relationships.

> What suits me the most is precisely to create and experience networks, because it's the friendship networks that saved me [:] even more than a rescuing network, a network of positive existence, in which you're given back the beauty of the relationship. (Emma)
>
> We are not meant to stay alone so… we need to be able to count on each other, to create a network in order to support each other. It's essential (. …) Otherwise, you get nasty. (Edoardo)

It does not matter if the focus is partnering, parenting or friendship: narratives testify how networks of care challenge the rigid boundaries of what is socially expected from intimate relationships, showing a multidimensionality of intimacy rooted in emotional and psychological assistance, companionship, pleasure, economic and material support, beauty and imagination. Of course these networks are a fundamental but not sufficient resource that can't imply a total refusal of the traditional forms of welfare: there are dimensions of need that cannot be satisfied by networks of care, since those are based on elective communities, and are thus exclusionary in principle (Lo Iacono, 2014). But this is certainly a starting point to decentre kinship and to reveal that other bonds are possible.

Concluding Thoughts

> Recognition, reciprocity, redistribution. Three 'R's that can inspire a theory. (Esteban, 2011, p. 183)

In the Southern European context, the centrality of the couple and the family hierarchically organizes all relationships: welfare policies of the Mediterranean regime are based on the family—proving to be totally insensitive to the changes in intimate and social life. By questioning the

couple as the core of the relational system, friendships and networks of care become central in order to live a serene and non-isolated daily life within a neoliberal economic context. At the same time, not being legally recognized in these networks of care entails an exacerbation of class material conditions that is faced precisely through the establishment of networks of care that prevent institutional homophobia and homophobic violence. Questioning institutionalized relationships actually implies the redefinition of the hierarchy of intimate relationships beyond our personal way of experiencing partnering, parenting or friendship: on one hand, questioning the relational hierarchies allows us to give the same material and emotional weight to blood relatives, friends, lovers, housemates and comrades. On the other hand, it leads to a wider reflection on kinship, on what we identify as family and on the importance of friendships in our life.

Redefining care means to seriously take into consideration the significance of the networks of psychological, emotional and material support, not only because we care but also because it is a way to share and redistribute goods among more than two people in a context of precarious conditions of work, housing and health. In a society in which the mandatory paths to adulthood are a stable job, the construction of a heteronormative and monogamous family and reproduction according to the dictates of monomaternalism, the conscious choice to base one's own life on friendship and sharing in a network of scarce economic and material resources represents a challenge. "Complicity" thus becomes a way of encouraging this enterprise of carrying forward a new idea of the ethics of care, dismantling the taken-for-granted assumption of heteronormativity, mononormativity and monomaternalism inscribed in becoming adult.

References

Acquistapace, A. (2011). *Relazioni senza nome. Reti di affetti, solidarietà, intimità e cura oltre la "coppia eterosessuale obbligatoria."* [Unpublished master's thesis], Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, Italy.

Acquistapace, A. (2015). Workshop "Relazioni e assetti politici nelle forme di intimità.". In C. Barbarulli & L. Borghi (Eds.), *Archivi dei sentimenti e culture femmini ste dagli anni Settanta a oggi* (pp. 141–146). Consiglio regionale della Toscana.

Adams, R. G., & Allan, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Placing friendship in context*. Cambridge University Press.

Alabao, N. (2018). Aprender a amar en el s. XXI: lo que nos enseñó el feminismo. In *H(amor)3* (pp. 171–186). Continta Me Tienes.

Arnett, J. J. (2015). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. Oxford University Press.

Bidart, C. (1991). L'amitié, les amis, leur histoire. Représentations et récits. *Sociétés Contemporaines, 5*, 21–24.

Budgeon, S. (2006). Friendship and formations of sociality in late modernity: The challenge of "post traditional intimacy.". *Sociological Research Online, 11*(3), 1–11.

Chiappini Castilhos, C. (2016). Tejer nuestra libertad destruyendo el tejido patriarcal. In N. Mogrovejo (Ed.), *Contra-amor, poliamor, relaciones abiertas y sexo casual* (pp. 7–11). Liburuak.

Cuesta Cremades, B., & Fuster Peiró, À. L. (2010). Habitar La Amistad, Resistir La Precariedad. Amigas En Tiempos Precarios. *Ex Aequo, 22*, 111–126.

Dalessandro, C. (2019). Manifesting maturity: Gendered sexual intimacy and becoming an adult. *Sexualities, 22*(1–2), 165–181.

Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality? Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press.

Esteban, M. L. (2011). *Crítica del pensamiento amoroso*. Bellaterra

Esteban, M. L. (2015). Relaciones amorosas y relaciones de apoyo mutuo: algunas revisiones en torno al amor, la familia y el parentesco. In *H(amor)2* (pp. 27–51). Continta Me Tienes.

Eve, M. (2002). Is friendship a sociological topic? *European Journal of Sociology, 43*(3), 386–409.

Ferrera, M. (2008). *Welfare state reform in southern Europe: Fighting poverty and social exclusion in Italy, Spain*. Routledge.

Formby, E. (2017). *Exploring LGBT spaces and communities*. Routledge.

Friedman, M. (1993). *What are friends for? Feminist perspectives on personal relationships and moral theory*. Cornell University.

Gusmano, B. (2009). Forme egemoniche di genere attivate dal/nel contesto eteronormativo. In B. Poggio (Ed.), *Ai confini del genere. Prospettive emergenti di riflessione e ricerca* (pp. 27–44). Edizioni 31.

Gusmano, B. (2018a). Oltre le frontiere dell'amore romantico: poliamore, altre intimità e non monogamie consensuali LGBT in Italia. In E. Grande & L. Pes (Eds.), *Più cuori e una capanna. Il poliamore come istituzione* (pp. 55–77). Giappichelli.

Gusmano, B. (2018b). Coming out through an intersectional perspective: Narratives of bisexuality and polyamory in Italy. *Journal of Bisexuality, 18*(1), 15–34.

Gusmano, B. (2018c). Subvertir la heteronorma a través de la amistad. Convivencia y redes de cuidado en la precariedad. *TransVersos, 14*(Special Issue on "LGBTTQI. Histórias, Memórias e Resistências"), 90–110.

Gusmano, B. (2019). The kintsugi art of care. Unraveling consent in ethical non-monogamies. *Sociological Research Online, 24*(4), 661–679.

Gusmano, B. (2021). Confronting monomaternalism in Italy. Non-heterosexual mothers accessing ARTs. In J. Mikats, S. Kink-Hampersberger, & L. Oates-Indruchová (Eds.), *Creative families: Gender and technologies of everyday life*. Palgrave.

Gusmano, B., & Motterle, T. (2019). The micropolitics of choice in Italy. How the law affects lesbian and bisexual women's daily life. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 23*(3), 336–356.

Gusmano, B., & Motterle, T. (2020). Genitorialità senza diritti: una vita fra parentesi. In F. C. de Chiara Sità & G. Selmi (Eds.), *Legami possibili. Ricerche e strumenti di intervento con le famiglie LGB* (pp. 71–107). ETS.

Haraway, D. (1997). *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and technoscience*. Routledge.

Herrera, C. (2015). Otras formas de quererse son posibles. Lo romántico es político. In *H(amor)1* (pp. 95–124). Continta Me Tienes.

Jamieson, L., Morgan, D., Crow, G., & Allan, G. (2006). Friends, neighbours and distant partners: Extending or decentring family relationships? *Sociological Research Online, 11*(3), 1–9.

Lo Iacono, C. (2014). Lavoro, affetti, 'flexiqueerity'. Per la critica dell'economia politica degli affetti queer. In C. Martucci, G. Giuliani, & M. Galetto (Eds.), *L'amore ai tempi dello tsunami: affetti, sessualità, modelli di genere in mutamento* (pp. 176–189).

Mjöberg, J. (2009). Challenging the idea of intimacy as intimate relationships: Reflections on intimacy as an analytical concept. In A. Cervantes-Carson & B. Oria (Eds.), *Intimate explorations: Reading across disciplines* (pp. 11–22). Inter-Disciplinary Press.

Mogrovejo, N. (2016). *Contra-amor, poliamor, relaciones abiertas y sexo casual: reflexiones de lesbianas del Abya Yala*. Ediciones desdeabajo.

Moreira, L. (2018). Queer motherhood: Challenging heteronormative rules beyond the assimilationist/radical binary. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 19*(2), 14–28. Retrieved from http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws

Motterle, T. (2016, March 30–31). *Lesbian couples in Rome: Queering family meals?* [Conference paper presentation]. 1st INTIMATE International Conference: Queering Partnering, Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra.

Murgia, A., & Selmi, G. (2011). Inspira e cospira. Forme di auto-organizzazione del precariato in Italia. *Sociologia del lavoro, 123*, 163–176.

Naldini, M. (2003). *Family in the Mediterranean welfare states*. Frank Cass.

Pahl, R. E. (2000). *On friendship*. Polity Press.

Pahl, R., & Spencer, L. (2004). Personal communities: Not simply families of 'fate' or 'choice'. *Current Sociology, 52*(2), 199–221. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392104041808

Park, S. M. (2013). *Mothering queerly, queering motherhood: Resisting monomaternalism in adoptive, lesbian*. Suny Press.

Pateman, C. (1988). *The sexual contract*. Polity Press.

Pavolini, E., & Raitano, M. (2015). L'Europa mediterranea fra diritti sociali e crisi economica: il welfare state ai tempi dell'austerità. *Meridian, 2*(83), 9–30.

Pessah, M. (2016). Pasajera en transito. In *Contra-amor, poliamor, relaciones abiertas y sexo casual* (pp. 57–60). Ediciones desdeabajo.

Pieper, M., & Bauer, R. (2005). Polyamory und Mono-Normativität. In L. Méritt, T. Bührmann, & N. Schefzig (Eds.), *Mehr als eine Liebe* (pp. 59–69). Polyamouröse Beziehungen.

Pieri, M. (2011). *Luoghi scelti, luoghi subiti. Un'analisi qualitativa delle relazioni tra mobilità e identità sessuale* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Trento.

Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs, 5*(4), 631–660. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173834

Roseneil, S. (2004). Why we should care about friends: An argument for queering the care imaginary in social policy. *Social Policy and Society, 3*(4), 409–419.

Roseneil, S., & Budgeon, S. (2004). Cultures of intimacy and care beyond 'the family': Personal life and social change in the early 21st century. *Current Sociology, 52*(2), 135–159.

Santos, A. C. (2018). Repronormativity and its others: Queering parental love in times of culturally compulsory reproduction. *Analize - Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies, 11*, 199–215.

Shepard, B. (2015). *Rebel friendships: "Outsider" networks and social movements*. Palgrave.

Taylor, Y. (2009). *Lesbian and gay parenting. Securing social and educational capital*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Tronto, J. C. (1987). Beyond gender difference to a theory of care. *Signs, 12*(4), 644–663.

Vassallo, B. (2018). *Pensamiento monógamo, terror poliamoroso*. La Oveja Roja.

Vernon, M. (2010). *The meaning of friendship*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Warner, M. (1991). Introduction: Fear of a queer planet. *Social Text, 29*, 3–17.

Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. Columbia University Press.

Wilkinson, E. (2012). The romantic imaginary: Compulsory coupledom and single existence. In S. Hines & Y. Taylor (Eds.), *Sexualities: Past reflections, future directions* (pp. 130–145). Palgrave. Retrieved from http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/373038/

PART III

Choice Matters

CHAPTER 10

Sharing Is Caring: Living with Friends and Heterotopic Citizenship

Ana Lúcia Santos

Introduction: Modernity, Individualization, and Friendship

The topic of friendship has been largely addressed in Western philosophy, from Plato to Derrida, engaging an array of contributors to modern thinking such as Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Carl Schmidt, and Sartre, amongst others.[1] Conceptualizations of friendship have changed over time and have included perspectives that ranged from friendship as a relationship of symmetry, with shared activities and responsibilities within a public regime, to friendship as a relationship of radical asymmetry where responsibility towards the other takes place before any

[1] For an exhaustive examination of the political history of friendship, see "The Politics of Friendship" (Derrida, 1993).

A. L. Santos (✉)
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra (CES-UC), Coimbra, Portugal
e-mail: analucia@ces.uc.pt

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_10

community is formed. Contrary to philosophers who extensively wrote on the topic, sociologists have historically paid little attention to friendship (Illouz, 2013). Mainstream sociology has focused mostly on socio-economic structures rather than on interpersonal relationships (Allan, 1998).

However, in recent decades, there has been an intensification in the processes of individualization that entails self-discovery, self-reflection, and autonomy (Roseneil, 2007). The ideological notion of individualization entails the belief that the individual is self-sufficient, a self-entrepreneur, and not dependent on mutual obligation. This view constructs the modern individual as someone who must make good decisions and place responsibility for victories or failures on themself. Opposed to this line of reasoning, everyday experience shows that, on the contrary, individuals are, in the words of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002), self-*in*sufficient and dependent on others, including worldwide networks and institutions. Care and interdependency theories, largely connected to feminist, sociological, and psychosocial studies, criticize what is perceived as neoliberalist theories of individualization, calling for a focus on practices of care and interdependency instead. Jeffrey Weeks (2007) shares this focus on the relational nature of human beings, and by using an ethics of interdependence, Weeks stresses that:

> (…) despite the multiplicity of social worlds and cultural patterns, the variety of relationships and different types of family, a common normative consensus does exist around the importance of values of reciprocity, care and mutual responsibility. (p. 178)

Because friendship as a relationship encompasses values founded on what Weeks describes, it is considered a culturally idealized form of relating to others (Friedman, 1993, p. 210) and has triggered increasing sociological attention in the twenty-first century.

But before entering into the conceptualization of friendship, we need to make an account of the process of individualization in modernity. Ulrick Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2002) distinguish two different paths in its development (in Anglo-Saxonic countries): in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (designated first modernity or industrial society), individualization was initiated by bourgeoisies who aimed to accumulate capital and throw down feudal domination; in late modernity, individualization results as a product of the labour market and is performed by

everyone. This account will allow us to understand friendship as a choice when it came into scene hand in hand with an industrial society and its importance in contemporary society, where individuals victims of institutionalized individualism, paradoxically, become dependent on each other again.

Eva Illouz (2013) claims that the making of capitalism went side by side with the making of an intensely specialized emotional culture: "market-based cultural repertoires shape and inform interpersonal and emotional relationships" (p. 5). In this regard, an account of the modulation of friendship by commercial society[2] was made by Allan Silver (1990). The author explains that before market/capitalist societies, personal relationships were instrumental and contractual. Friendship is a social relation that depends on a social structure, gender relations, and economic exchange, and as such, before commercial societies, friendship was part of economic social power (Illouz, 2015), and its purpose was to help friends defeat enemies (Illouz, 2015; Silver, 1990). Instrumentality in personal relations was formulated by the Scottish Enlightenment: in the eighteenth century, sociologists including Adam Smith, David Hume, F. Hutcheson, and A. Fergus addressed the distinction between the instrumental and the personal, in which friendship would be possible under the advent of commercial society (Silver, 1990, p. 1480). Related to the instrumental account, Adam Smith wrote on the *necessitudo* character of friendship. *Necessitudo* is a sort of attachment described by the Romans as the mutual accommodation that produces friendship, that is to say, a relationship occasioned by necessity. According to Silver's interpretation of Smith, the commercial society substituted *necessitudo* with a morally superior form of friendship, one based on "natural sympathy", free from the coercion of necessity (Silver, 1990, p. 1481).

Associated with the loss of traditional ties and the emergence of greater levels of uncertainty, choice is one of the aspects that constitute how people organize modern relationships (Budgeon, 2006, p. 3). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) use the term *homo options* for the fact that the contemporary subject is characterized by choice—everything must be decided. Individualization is not a choice, but what each one does with their self is: "individuals must be able to plan for the long term and adapt

[2] Commercial society was a term coined by the philosopher Adam Smith in his book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, first published in 1776, to designate what would be later known as capitalist society (Silver, 1990, p. 1479).

to change; they must organize and improvise, set goals, recognize obstacles, accept defeats and attempt new starts. They need initiative, tenacity, flexibility and tolerance of frustration" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 4). However, as said before, despite individualization and the multi-option character of individuals, they still depend on other people. The authors even categorize individualization as a "paradoxical compulsion" because, on one hand, it presupposes that each person breaks familial/community ties and constructs their biography (that previously were predefined), and, on the other hand, it presupposes that this same individual constantly deals with others (networks, the labour market, the welfare state) (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

Michel de Montaigne was probably one of the first theorists to give the input of choice in relation to friendship. The philosopher declared friendship as the highest degree of perfection in society, one that could only be achieved outside the family, scholarship, or the workplace, where free will could be exercised (de Montaigne, 2009). In this regard, a relationship between a parent and a child could never be one of friendship because its nature imposes a relationship based on respect. Social relations would be situated in the level of "mere humdrum acquaintances" (Dallmayr, 1999, p. 106). The roles within the family are socially ascribed (Friedman, 1993, p. 209). In the same logic, sociologist Shelley Budgeon (2006) speaks about the moral significance of friendship that "emerges from its voluntary nature and unlike socially ascribed relationships the commitment shared by friends is freely given" (p. 7). Also, Marilyn Friedman (1993) theorizes on friendship as a quasi-voluntary relationship: "Friendship, in our culture, is a notably voluntary relationship: as adults, we choose our friends; and, together with our friends, we generate relationships that, more than most other close personal ties, reflect our choices and desires" (p. 207). It is voluntary in the sense that there is no external coercion to be a person's friend, and because friendship, unlike family or kin, is not a socially ascribed relationship, it has no socially defined purposes or functions (Budgeon, 2006; Friedman, 1993). Friedman supports the voluntary character of friendship on aspects that are morally grounded, such as loyalty, support, care, and intimacy.

To summarize, there was a shift in the paradigm of friendship relations before and after late modernity. Before capitalism, relationships were seen as instrumental, and they were part of economic power. The beginning of the industrial society seemed to bring a sense of individualization freed from relations based on necessity, once the labour market could provide

individuals with self-sufficiency. If everyday experience shows that individuals are merged in several networks and are more dependent than independent, neoliberal theories of individualization are subverted, but the voluntary character of friendship remains. This leads to a fundamental premise that constitutes a turning point regarding other forms of a relationship considered in literature until the 1990s—friendship is a relationship that has to actively be sustained, contrary to kinship, which confers an ascribed status (Friedman, 1993). When engaged in a friendship, there is a mutual commitment to be attentive and responsive to the friend's needs or desires (Friedman, 1993), and there is an ongoing process necessary to maintain the relationship. In Eva Illouz's (2015) terms, when comparing friendship to love, "in friendship there is no event of falling in love, there is no epiphany, there is no original event. Friendship is a process" [video]. Similarly, Jamieson writes about the process of building a close connection between people, that is, the process of intimacy, which does not oblige physical contact (Jamieson, 2011). Because of its constructive character, it may be difficult to trace the moment when one becomes a friend of another; indeed that moment may not even exist, making it not clear to identify if one is a friend or not.

In her article devoted to friendship, Sasha Roseneil explains and unpacks some of the reasons why people should care about friends (Roseneil, 2004). By considering friendship a "relationship of increasing social significance in the contemporary world" (Roseneil, 2004, p. 411), and of special importance for lesbian and gay men, the author investigated how friendship matters to people, especially those who are living outside conventional families. Many LGBTQ+ people suffer marginalization within their families of origin, besides the daily LGBTQphobia in the wider social context, and they rely on their friends to find emotional and practical support. The results showed that people are centring their lives more on friends and less on couple relations: "people are substituting the ties of friendship for those of blood" (Roseneil, 2004, p. 403). Friendship and non-family relationships are challenging the hierarchy of intimacy, contrary to the tendency of most studies, in which sexual partners and family of origin assume main importance over friendship (Budgeon, 2006). To some extent, also that question triggered Budgeon when writing about friendship in late modernity: what is the role and meaning of friendship to the lives of people not "conventionally partnered", that is, outside conventional norms of intimacy?

This chapter stems from work conducted in the INTIMATE research project that looked into friendship as a key area of intimate citizenship alongside partnering and parenting.[3] The specific qualitative data that informs this chapter draws on biographic narrative interviews with self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people and semi-structured interviews with experts on related topics: LGBTQI activism, gender studies, and architecture. Eligibility required participants to be over 18 years old and to be cohabiting with a friend at the moment of the interview. All interviews were conducted in Lisbon in 2017–2018.

Living with Friends in Contemporary Lisbon

In modern life, relationships are constituted and organized by uncertainty and choice (Budgeon, 2006, p. 3). With transformations regarding technology, the economy, and globalization, relationships are more flexible and less permanent (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, pp. 697–698). The loss of traditional ties is giving place to more fluid social forms, and friendship emerges as a significant bond in people's lives. Those ties are particularly vital for people in risky or vulnerable positions, especially for minorities who suffer everyday discrimination and economically precarious people who depend on others for emotional or material support.

Based on the assumption that queer people engage in particular types of friendship networks which are different from those within the heteronorm, blurring boundaries between lovers and friends and setting aside hierarchies of conjugality (Roseneil, 2004), I was expecting to find participants cohabiting with friends based on personal choice (i.e. someone who freely chooses to live with a particular person), either to "escape" from home (family of origin) or to avoid the normative scripts of conjugality and intimacy. However, I was aware of the traditional Portuguese context of familism in Portugal, where deep proximity subsists between family members that count on each other from an instrumental and affective point of view and kinship is built as an important factor in the configuration of the social networks (Portugal, 2011).

[3] INTIMATE was an international research project coordinated by Dr Ana Cristina Santos and developed at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, between 2014 and 2019. The project has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013)/ERC Grant Agreement "INTIMATE – Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe" [338452]. Part of the research leading to this article has also received funding from Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P./MCTES (reference no. PTDC/SOC-ASO/4911/2021).

In this sense, this study aimed at exploring the reasons why LGBTQ people choose to live with friends, instead of living with their family of origin, or partners, or even alone. One piece of evidence that emerged was that, actually, people do not choose to live with others and they would rather live alone, but social transformations and economic constraints do not permit them to do so.

The particular context of Portugal as a Southern European country, with its familist tradition and economic precarity, makes this case study an interesting one in which to explore the ways, if any, in which social and economic transformations occurring in contemporary Lisbon influence friendship patterns of those living outside the heteronorm.

The Portuguese capital city is facing a tremendous social and economic transformation due to a growing tourism gentrification process (Mendes, 2017). Housing buildings in the centre are being used for exclusive touristic short stays, and permanent residents are being displaced from those buildings to give way to temporary residents (tourists) (Gago, 2018). With the rise of touristic residences, economic and social consequences immediately affect the local population: rent prices rise; dwelling houses are being replaced by guesthouses; locals are being displaced from the centre; living alone is economically unviable; and living with others is becoming an economic effort as well. On the strength of massive tourism, property owners prefer to make use of their properties as tourist accommodation because economically it turns out to be a much more profitable business for them than long-term rents. Related to this, a relatively recent phenomenon emerged in Lisbon which the Left Bloc party called "real-estate bullying" (Esquerda.net, 2018). Real-estate bullying refers to actions by property owners to evict the tenants from the houses. Strategies vary from works in the building, cuts in electricity or water, floods, or other incidents that prevent the full enjoyment of the house. This type of bullying is taking place because of increasing tourism accompanied by rising rents, making it challenging for people to afford a house in Lisbon.

Even though the empirical data used in this chapter do not report experiences of direct house bullying, they do report precarious housing conditions which people are facing in Lisbon. For example, at the moment of the interview, Maria was looking for a new house because she had to leave the place where she has been living for the past four years since the owner was going to sell it to an estate agency. Although the main problem is money-related, other obstacles overlap when looking for a new house. Maria was facing difficulties in finding an affordable house, but the

problem did not derive exclusively from expensive prices but also bureaucracies. In most cases, property owners are no longer responsible for the lease contracts. This role is now assumed by estate agencies that demand several documents from future tenants such as an employment contract, the last two months' salary, and a tax declaration. For people in precarious employment situations, these criteria may be difficult to meet, as was the case for Maria:

> It is impossible. I don't have an employment contract, Mafalda [her flatmate] has a part-time job. Although I don't have a contract, I have a salary that allows me to have a house, but I don't have any proof of it. Last year I was not in Portugal and where I was I wasn't obliged to declare taxes because I didn't stay there enough time, and now it is this situation of us being kicked out from the centre. (Maria, cisgender lesbian, 25–29 yo)

The rental houses Maria and Mafalda were discovering cost around 300 euros per room in places that they must share with up to four people. The only solution they have is to move to a cheaper area of the city. Maria seemed very well informed and aware of the problem Lisbon is facing, and she explained how the house rents do not meet the European Union criteria:

> The European Union criteria are that the rent must be 35% of your monthly salary. If you take into consideration that the national minimum wage is 530 euros, the rents should be much lower. And this is a major problem because what's going to happen, people are going to Almada [a city on the south riverside of Tagus], the centre is getting empty, you have like, I think presently 12,000 people are living in the centre that is the touristic centre but you have 100,000 tourists entering every day. In other words, they are kicking us in the ass to transform this into an amusement park. (Maria, cisgender lesbian, 25–29 yo)

With more tourists than inhabitants circulating in the centre, Lisbon is facing striking social and economic transformations. Job precariousness plus massive tourism associated with rent increases gives young people no hope to start living by themselves in central Lisbon. This situation relates to the late emancipation young adults have been experiencing in Southern European countries (Mìnguez, 2003; Montoro-Gurich & Garcia-Vivar, 2019). Late emancipation means that young adults take a long time to leave the house of the family of origin, which usually happens after

marriage or economic independence. In those countries, the state fails to provide young people with the economic independence they need to start a new life, and their family members assume this burden, creating an economic dependency for the younger generations and feeding the familism tradition. In a context where the labour market is unstable and house rents are too high to be affordable even for those who have a full-time job, LGBTQ people may rely on peers to "construct" life outside the cultural tradition.

Patrícia Pedrosa, an architect interviewed for this study, explains how this context affects young adults' perspectives of life:

> The financial crises bring the youngest generation the awareness that they will never have the capacity to buy a house, even renting can be difficult. There are no stable jobs, so even those who don't have the tradition of having studied in another city and never had the experience of sharing a house in the university context, realise that it is the only emancipation strategy.

As the desire to keep living in Lisbon is implanted, flat-sharing appears to be one strategy of emancipation when living alone is out of reach and going back to the parental home is not an option, not only because, after leaving the family home, people do not want to take a step back but also because that same home may be a space of discrimination regarding sexual orientation or gender identity. According to the annual report of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Portugal) for the year 2019 regarding discrimination against LGBTQI+ people in Portugal, 13.33% of the respondents reported having suffered discrimination from family members, especially from parents (10.37%) (ILGA Portugal, 2020, p. 17).

Participants in the study revealed that the idealized form of habitation was living alone, although all of them were in a situation of cohabitation at the moment of the interview and the previsions were to stay in that situation for the foreseeable future. While experiences of sharing houses began at university, none was a student anymore. Most of them had moved in with unknown people with whom they became friends after cohabiting. Others moved in with someone that was already a friend.

As stated earlier on in the chapter, friendship is a relationship constructed through time. In the specific case of the cohabiting with friends study, most participants were strangers until they moved in together and then started building up that relationship. Categorically, there are a few

conditions for the establishment of friendship: its fullest realization happens in the conditions of support, affection, positive regard, equality, and trust (Friedman, 1993, p. 211). When people live together, they construct and consolidate these aspects, negotiate house-related responsibilities, spend time together, and take care of each other—and all of these activities influence emotional intimacy, for better and for worse.

In the remaining part of this section, we will gain more in-depth knowledge of the experiences of young LGBQ adults who live with friends in Lisbon, the reasons that led them to this mode of cohabitation, and how they manage daily life.

Ray is a non-binary person who lives with a cisgender heterosexual woman named Stef. Ray found a room for rent on a Facebook page and went to see the space and the persons living in there, Stef and Catarina. Ray immediately moved in with them, but shortly after, together with Stef they looked for another house for just the two of them, and they have been living together since then. Ray came out to Stef as polyamorous and non-binary, and Stef's reaction varied from shock to questioning and then acceptance and support. They have now a supportive relationship, as Ray describes it:

> Just the fact that I can go home and have someone to talk about this type of things and someone who really wants to have a sit and have dinner and also share their life, it is such a huge relief, because it is like a family, it is this feeling of *home away from home*, because we are always looking for the homecoming, and home is our emotional support. (Ray, non-binary pansexual, 25–29 yo)

When they come home, they share their day and the personal and professional problems and give emotional support to each other. Despite identity differences, Ray found meaningful emotional support in Stef. There was a moment when Stef asked Ray which pronoun they would prefer her to use. Gender pronouns are an important aspect of identity affirmation for non-binary and trans people. Pronouns work as an extension of names, and in Portugal, names are gendered (Santos & Santos, 2017), and each pronoun corresponds to a gender. When someone does not identify with the assigned sex at birth, they may choose another pronoun that better reflects their gender identity. So by asking for the preferred pronoun, Stef is demonstrating a sense of respect towards Ray's self-identification. She also knows some of Ray's partners with whom she is very friendly. There

is this effort to be respectful, to be close, and to mature complicity. "Friendship inspires us to let down our defences, to reveal our deeper selves, and we do this voluntarily only if we trust the friend not to take advantage of a knowledge of our vulnerabilities" (Friedman 1993, p. 211). Ray now fully trusts Stef and this feeling is reciprocal, as Stef trusts Ray to take care of her dog:

> I love her [the dog] very much. I feel that dog like mine, even because I've been living with her for two years and it is very pleasant. If Stef does not have time or if she is not able, or if she is going to be home late, I walk the dog. I give her food, I pet her, I give her whatever she needs. The new toys, it was me who gave them to her. Crystal is a fantastic dog, and it is a huge added value to the house, and to our relationship.

The embodied sociality of animals (McKeithen, 2017) seems to be an aspect that strengthens relationships, including friendships. Since the second half of the twentieth century, animals have become part of the house, penetrating intimate space and enabling the establishment of more than human families (Power, 2008). Animals are redefining the scope and meaning of the family environment, and to cohabit with someone who has an animal seems to escalate to a certain kind of co-parenting activity, as happens in Ray's experience. Another interviewee reported a similar situation. Carina has a dog and her flatmate co-cares for it. She expressed how important it is for her to live with someone who cares about her dog: "She takes care of the dog, she puts water in his bowl (…) for me, that's the most important thing, Frederica taking care of Charlie, cause if I knew she was mean to it I wouldn't tolerate that" (Carina, cisgender woman, bisexual, 25–29 yo).

Will McKeithen (2017) in her work on the "crazy cat ladies" proposes the home of the cat lady together with the cat as a queer ecology, that is, a home where intimacies amongst multiple forms of beings take place. The author asserts, "the crazy cat lady occupies a queer periphery. She not only loves cats too much, but she also loves them more than humans, instead of a husband, and literally in place of heteronormative domesticity" (p. 3). Pets are breaking the boundaries between human/animal and indoors/outdoors, and they are becoming part of the family (Haraway, 2008). Although homes are crafted as anthropocentric, non-humans produce domestic life (McKeithen, 2017, p. 3), and we found in Ray and Carina's discourses that the presence of a dog contributes to modelling their

friendship and the domestic partnership, by sharing love and care whenever it is needed. By challenging the expected cohabitation model, one which is normatively heterosexual and fulfilling the couple norm (Roseneil et al., 2020), cohabitation between friends, the same way as cohabitation between a "crazy cat lady" and her cat, queers the ecology of home, in which the domestic place becomes a heterotopic place (Foucault, 1984), detached from the meaning for which the house was designed.

Besides sharing responsibilities and taking care of the pets, another central aspect of friendship is taking care of each other. Jasmin, a non-binary person living with a cisgender male friend, has a chronic health condition that from time to time inhibits them from being physically active. Their flatmate help was essential to overcome bad days:

> I had a very complicated phase of hard work and he had those considerations like if I asked him he would make me breakfast in the morning and bring me a coffee for me to be able to get up. Also if I see him in trouble I always take care to make him some food. There is this type of kindness of asking each other if we are OK. (Jasmin, 30–34 yo, non-binary, pansexual)

Traditionally, care is a gendered concept (Poole & Isaacs, 1997) associated with womanhood; women are socially expected to take care of others, be it their children or other's children, their elderly parents, disabled family members, or others. Critical feminist perspectives have been working on dismantling this stereotype towards a more inclusive and transgressive notion of care, for instance, evidencing trans people as care providers (Santos, 2020). Laura Kessler coined the term "transgressive care" to designate practices of care within the familiar context that can essentially be emancipatory when they work as practices of resistance as, for instance, was the case of Black enslaved women when they reconquered their freedom and transformed intimacy and reproduction, of which they were previously deprived, into practices of political resistance (Kessler, 2005, p. 14). The same works for queer people; when they are discriminated against by the state concerning citizenship rights, their family constitutions become a political site of resistance (Kessler, 2009, pp. 181–82). When considering friendship, transgression may shift to a forward level, since as Roseneil reminds us, "friendship is a significantly different relationship from that of mothering, lacking controlling institutions and firm cultural expectations and conventions" (Roseneil, 2004, p. 414). It becomes valuable to recognize the transformative potential of care inside

family structures but also outside of them, when the state and the family fail to provide welfare or when people choose non-normative paths for their life and friends or the community.

Although the preferable way of living was living alone, sharing a house with others was revealed as vital in cases like Jasmin's or Ray or Carina. Whether through taking care of each other or pets, symmetric reciprocity and instrumental aid turned out to be well-being-related aspects which were only possible due to the presence of others in the house.

Another factor that emerged as crucial for a good environment when sharing a house was ideologies. Still with Jasmin, they explained how their political engagement contributed to providing comfort to the domestic partner and consequently to their relationship:

> I am non-monogamous and politically engaged in many issues and I think that living with Mike brought him names and discourses for him to live his relationships. Many times I feel that for him it is good to live with someone who doesn't judge him nor his relationships, and he can understand them now (. …) We have a relationship of tremendous affection and support.

Contrary to the trend of victimization of trans and non-binary people, Jasmin emerges not only as a care receiver but also as an agent of care (Santos, 2018).

According to Friedman (1993), friendship has no socially defined purpose, but it surely contributes to individual well-being: "Through shared affection and mutual support, which contributes to self-esteem, friendship enables the cultural survival of people who deviate from social norms and who suffer hostility and ostracism from others for their deviance" (p. 219). My study suggests that it is extremely significant for LGBTQ people to share their intimate space with people who are politicized, open-minded, and non-judgemental. The story of Carina is exemplary in this regard. It was only after moving in with Frederica, a feminist college friend, that Carina came out as bisexual. Carina had been raped a couple of months before the interview. She explained that the political awareness of her flatmate Frederica and her critical feminist perspective contributed to sharpening Carina's interpretation of what had happened and to remove the sense of guilt she had somehow internalized:

> I had a huge meltdown and I was for like an hour laid down on the floor, crying, and she was there helping me, cuddling me, saying that we are

> strong and we will get over it. She didn't make any judgment because she has feminist ethics, and that was something really cool about her (. …) She is a feminist person and I felt I was not going to have to battle to deconstruct things and be judged and suffer slut-shaming and prejudice. I already have such a boring work and life is so mean, I don't want to come home and have to deal with those battles. It is your home; you are supposed to be there in your comfort.

Carina needs to live with someone who does not judge her. She explained she decided to live with Frederica because Frederica was a feminist and would not raise problems at home because Carina was bisexual. Eventually, living with Frederica enabled Carina to consolidate her bisexual and feminist identity. As we learn from Graham Allan (1998), the processes of friendship contribute to the sense of the self in terms of identity and self-validation. Carina was dealing with internal conflicts about her sexuality, and those same conflicts were dissipated while her sexual identity was consolidated in new structures of socialization with her feminist friend at home.

The voluntary character of friendship contrasts with socially ascribed relationships such as the familial. The voluntary choice implied in friendship sustains the relation by "shared interests and values, mutual affection, and possibilities for generating reciprocal respect and esteem" (Friedman, 1993, p. 248), and this is especially relevant for marginalized people, as can be learned from the excerpts.

Hitherto I have described the voluntarist and caring character of friendship while simultaneously bringing daily experiences of young LGBQ adults who cohabit with friends in Lisbon. I have demonstrated that friendly relationships within a shared house can arise through necessity, which in turn is created by what seemed to save us from dependency—capitalism. In the next section, I will give an account of how the architecture of the houses that were built to host traditional middle-class Portuguese families are being reconfigured to host non-normative and non-kinship constellations under the Foucaultian concept of heterotopia.

Heterotopic Friendship

The term heterotopia has its origins in medicine and refers to an error of place of a certain tissue (García Alonso, 2014; Johnson, 2016). Lebert developed a study on dermoid cysts in 1852, entitled "Des kystes

dermoïdes et de l'hétérotopie plastique en general", where he gives an account on tissues or organs that may develop in a spontaneous and autogenous way in bodily places where they are not supposed to exist, due to an "aberration of nutrition" (Lebert, 1853, p. 224). That is the case, for instance, of tumours. Since the very beginning, the idea of heterotopia is connected with the freakish, the unusual, and something strange to the geography, be it corporal or societal. Foucault's first reference to the word heterotopia was in 1966, in the preface of a text that was later translated into "The Order of Things", referring to a classification of animals found in a Chinese Encyclopaedia by the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (Johnson, 2016, p. 1):

> (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies. (Foucault, 1984, p. xv)

This "strange" classification, as Foucault categorizes it, is a heterotopia because just like tumours or cysts, they are incoherent categories that are part of the same body/classification and create unusual juxtapositions. It consists of a taxonomy of another system of thought that confronts us with our limitation of thinking (Foucault, 1994, p. xv), and it inspired Foucault to theorize about a place in which several incompatible sites could juxtapose. The cemetery is one example of heterotopia provided by Foucault, and it "illustrates how heterotopias change their function at different stages in history and reflect wider attitudes in society" (Johnson, 2016, p. 11).

If we apply this idea to households, they also change their functions during history, and even the same building may have different functions over time: to host a traditional nuclear family; to host people who live with friends; to host tourists; to host a doctor's office; or any other business. Heterotopias are spaces that depend on the social circumstances, and what is considered a heterotopia for one is a place for the "other" in certain circumstances and may be converted into a place for oneself in other circumstances (García Alonso, 2014). By relating the notion of heterotopia to households where non-related people live, we accept them as heterotopic places.

As explained by Pedrosa, people mostly live in houses designed by architects or constructors that are originated from a succession of models repeated through time and sustained by a specific family type. In Lisbon, some houses were made for families with high economic power, presenting a room with a small bathroom for the house cleaner next to the kitchen. This is a solution that dates from the nineteenth century and which extends until the mid of the twentieth century, as it was a regular practice to have domestic employees, and so the design of the house remained unchanged over time (Silva, 2016). Usually, house models implement a clear separation between the private and the common area, and sometimes they may be more than two rooms, one of them to work as an office room, especially when the then called head of the family—traditionally the male breadwinner—held a high office position. According to Pedrosa's analysis, those types of houses are now a solution for non-related people who have different financial resources, as each room has a different size or peculiarity and may have a different price accordingly.

What can be observed in contemporary Lisbon is friends cohabiting in houses that were designed for traditional families, and this is the moment one enters heterotopia. The moment when it was socially expected that one would be living with a romantic partner, starting a traditional family and buying a house (Roseneil et al., 2020), becomes actually the moment in which one is moving from house to house instead, sharing the space with strangers or friends for variable periods of time, living a precarious life without legal recognition of that specific model of domestic partnership, and leaning on each other for survival.[4] This phenomenon is what we might call heterotopic citizenship or, in Ruth Lister's words, "citizenship on the margins" (Lister, 1998).

This leads me to my final argument in this chapter. I want to suggest that the house that hosts friends is the house of failure, the house of those

[4] There is, however, a common economy law (Assembleia da República, 2001, Law 6/2001, May 11th), which is analogous to the de facto union law in some aspects. People eligible for the common economy are those who live together for more than two years and who share resources and mutual aid. It is applicable for two or more people living together. They benefit from a legal regime of vacations, holidays, and faults, applicable by individual contract effect equal to that of the spouses (although, when the common economy comprises more than two persons, the rights may only be exercised, in each occurrence by one of them); protection of the house of common dwelling; and lease transmission by death. None of the interviewees was benefiting or knew anyone benefiting from this law, and some of them did not know about it.

who fail to meet the heterosexual adult life script, where traditional time is rejected—a criterion needed in order for heterotopia to take place (Foucault, 1984). By realizing the heterotopic character of the house that hosts friends but should be hosting a nuclear family, and by using heterotopia as a tool of analysis, we understand the multiplicity of signification and possibilities that may exist in the same place. It is a space where deviations happen. It is not a place which is accessible nor even desirable for everyone, but it is where the most affectionate relations may happen and where new forms of social practices occur. Friendship has socially disrupted possibilities; it has the "potential to support unconventional values and deviant lives, themselves a source of needed change in our imperfect social practices" (Friedman, 1993, p. 217).

Conclusions

Changes occurring in private (job precariousness) and public spheres (housing market, gentrification, and tourism) urge informal ties of solidarity. The impact of economic and social transformations on friendship is undeniable. Tourism aligned with precariousness influences the way people occupy spaces, beginning at the place called home, which all of a sudden is expropriated from its original purpose. Homes are now heterotopic places where non-related people develop an intimate relationship. When non-related people share the house on a daily basis of mutual support, respect, and care, they will eventually end up in a relation of friendship. Living with friends is a way for LGBTQ people to overcome everyday prejudice related to non-normative sexualities and to deal with the obstacle of paying for a house. Friends are the legislators of their relationship based on voluntarism. As friendship presupposes mutual exchange, the survival resources it provides, the learnings, and benefits are not unilateral but exchangeable. Friendship networks may be considered constitutive of new forms of families (Weeks, 2007). Family is no longer about biologically fixed boundaries, co-residence, and marriage, but it is a process in constant formation instead: "It is less important whether we are in a family than whether we do family-type things" (Weeks, 2007, p. 181). At the same time, this process of doing family-type things may be preconized by a more than human household (Power, 2008). The new patterns of intimacy and commitment are based on choice and equality, as the excerpts of the interviews confirmed. Finally, the paradox of capitalist individualism ends up being an engine that patterns new forms of friendship based on

the equality it has always presupposed, but also recovering the ancient instrumental character, as individuals depend on each other to survive the system.

This chapter was intended to demonstrate why and how LGBQ people live with friends in contemporary Lisbon. I provided a resume of diverse conceptualizations of friendship from feudalism to contemporaneity to accomplish the paradox of capitalism that claims to provide individuals with self-independency and self-sufficiency but which is leading to dependency and self-insufficiency instead. The fact that in Portugal people experience late emancipation is intrinsically linked to the inability to be financially independent. I provided an account of late emancipation and familism in this Southern European country and its correlation to the willingness or the necessity for LGBQ people to develop strategies of emancipation away from marriage and family of origin. It was not possible to proceed without mentioning the gentrification process which Lisbon has been undergoing, alongside mass tourism and the increase in house rents that make it impossible to afford a house. Throughout the interviews, we could understand the reasons leading people to share a house with other people, who may be unknown to them in the beginning, but end up becoming friends, because sharing a house is caring about the other. Care is assumed to be a vital aspect in this sharing, be it taking care of each other, emotionally or practically, or taking care of each other's pets as if they were their own. The transformative potential of care transformed those "houses of failure" into spaces of survival. In the last section, I linked this potential for resistance to the Foucaultian notion of heterotopia. The displacement of the primary function of Lisbon central houses (to host a normative family) into new configurations (e.g. two friends living with a dog) allows us to see through the windows onto the caring way the new inhabitants—heterotopic citizens—construct relationships based on interdependency and asymmetry, without legal recognition and protection, making their intimate space a site of political resistance.

References

Allan, G. (1998). Friendship, sociology and social structure. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*(5), 685–702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407598155007

Assembleia da República. (2001). *Lei n.º 6/2001 - Adopta Medidas de Protecção Das Pessoas Que Vivam Em Economia Comum*. Retrieved from https://juventude.gov.pt/Cidadania/DireitosDeveres/Documents/Lei6_2001.pdf

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. Sage.

Budgeon, S. (2006). Friendship and formations of sociality in late modernity: The challenge of 'post traditional intimacy'. *Sociological Research Online, 11*(3), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1248

Dallmayr, F. (1999). Derrida and friendship. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, 2*(4), 105–130.

Derrida, J. (1993). The politics of friendship. *American Imago, 50*(3), 353–391. Retrieved from http://www.istud.it/newsletter/san/derrida.pdf

Esquerda.net. (2018, February 28). *AM de Lisboa Aprova Criação de Linha SOS Despejo Contra 'Bullying Imobiliário'*. Esquerda.net. Retrieved from https://www.esquerda.net/artigo/am-de-lisboa-aprova-criacao-de-linha-sos-despejo-contra-bullying-imobiliario/53488

Foucault, M. (1984). Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias. *Architecture / Mouvement/ Continuité*. Retrieved from http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf

Foucault, M. (1994). *The order of things: An archeology of the human sciences*. Random House. Retrieved from https://monoskop.org/images/a/a2/Foucault_Michel_The_Order_of_Things_1994.pdf

Friedman, M. (1993). *What are friends for? Feminist perspectives on personal relationships and moral theory*. Cornell University Press.

Gago, A. (2018). O Aluguer de Curta Duração e a Gentrificação Turística Em Alfama, *Lisboa* [Unpublished master dissertation]. Universidade de Lisboa. Retrieved from https://repositorio.ul.pt/handle/10451/32753

García Alonso, M. (2014). Los Territorios de Los Otros: Memoria y Heterotopía. *Cuicuilco, 21*(61), 333–352. Retrieved from http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/351/35135452015.pdf

Haraway, D. (2008). *When species meet*. University of Minnesota Press.

ILGA Portugal. (2020). *Relatório Anual 2019 – Discriminação Contra Pessoas LGBTI+*. Retrieved from https://ilga-portugal.pt/ficheiros/pdfs/observatorio/ILGA_Relatorio_Discriminacao_2019.pdf

Illouz, E. (2013). *Cold intimacies: The making of emotional capitalism*. Policy Press.

Illouz, E. (2015, April 28). *Love, friendship and capital – Inaugural lecture at Hebrew University of Jerusalem* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVrOeXxLQHs

Jamieson, L. (2011). Intimacy as a concept: Explaining social change in the context of globalisation or another form of ethnocentricism? *Sociological Research Online, 16*(4), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2497

Johnson, P. (2016). Brief history of the concept of heterotopia (revised). *Heterotopian Studies*, 1–14. Retrieved from http://www.heterotopiastudies.com/annotated-bibliography-of-foucaults-texts-on-heterotopia/

Kessler, L. T. (2005). Transgressive caregiving. *Florida State University Law Review, 33*(1) Retrieved from https://ir.law.fsu.edu/lr/vol33/iss1/1

Kessler, L. T. (2009). The politics of care. *Wisconsin Journal of Law, Gender & Society, 32*(2), 169–199. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-011-9266-3

Lebert. (1853). Des Kystes Dermoides et de l'Hétérotopie Plastique En Général. *Gazette Médicale de Paris, 3*(8), 222–225.

Lister, R. (1998). Citizenship on the margins: Citizenship, social work and social action. *European Journal of Social Work, 1*(1), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691459808414719

McKeithen, W. (2017). Queer ecologies of home: Heteronormativity, speciesism, and the strange intimacies of crazy cat ladies. *Gender, Place & Culture, 24*(1), 122–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2016.1276888

Mendes, L. (2017). Gentrificação Turística Em Lisboa: Neoliberalismo, Financeirização e Urbanismo Austeritário Em Tempos de Pós-Crise Capitalista 2008-2009. *Cadernos Metrópole, 19*(39), 479–512. Retrieved from http://www.cfpor.pt/moodle30/pluginfile.php/6737/mod_resource/content/2/gentrificacaoemlx2236-9996-cm-19-39-0479.pdf

Mìnguez, A. (2003). The late Emancipation of Spanish Youth: Keys for understanding. *Electronic Journal of Sociology*. Retrieved from https://www.sociology.org/ejs-archives/vol7.1/minguez.html

Montaigne, M. (2009). *Da Amizade e Outros Ensaios*. Sociedade Editora de Livros de Bolso.

Montoro-Gurich, C., & Garcia-Vivar, C. (2019). The family in Europe: Structure, intergenerational solidarity, and new challenges to family health. *Journal of Family Nursing, 25*(2), 170–189. https://doi.org/10.1177/1074840719841404

Poole, M., & Isaacs, D. (1997). Caring: A gendered concept. *Women's Studies International Forum, 20*(4), 529–536. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(97)00041-1

Portugal, S. (2011). Dádiva, Família e Redes Sociais. *Imprensa Da Universidade de Coimbra, 2011*, 39–53. https://doi.org/10.14195/978-989-26-0222-6_3

Power, E. (2008). Furry families: Making a human-dog family through home. *Social and Cultural Geography, 9*(5), 535–555. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360802217790

Roseneil, S. (2004). Why we should care about friends: An argument for queering the care imaginary in social policy. *Social Policy and Society, 3*(4), 409–419. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746404002039

Roseneil, S. (2007). Queer individualization: The transformation of personal life in the early 21st century. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 15*(2–3), 84–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740701482952

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Hellesund, T., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2020). *The tenacity of the couple norm – Intimate citizenship regimes in a changing Europe*. UCL Press. Retrieved from https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/166273

Santos, A. C. (2018). Heróis No Armário: Homens Trans* e Pessoas Não Binárias Prestadoras de Cuidado. *Ex Aequo, 38*, 33–47.

Santos, A. C. (2020). From villain to hero: Trans men and non-binary persons as care providers in southern Europe. *International Journal of Care and Caring*. https://doi.org/10.1332/239788220x16051223899742

Santos, A. L., & Santos, A. C. (2017). O Nome Que Não Ousa Dizer Da Intimidade – Um Estudo Exploratório Sobre Nomeação. *Antropologia Portuguesa, 34*, 7–27. https://doi.org/10.14195/2182-7982_34_1

Silva, R. (2016). *A Casa Como Reflexo Da Sociedade. . Lisboa No Século XX*. Universidade de Lisboa.

Silver, A. (1990). Friendship in commercial society: Eighteenth-century social theory and modern sociology. *American Journal of Sociology, 95*(6), 1474–1504.

Weeks, J. (2007). Moments of intimacy. In J. Weeks (Ed.), *The world we have won: The remaking of erotic and intimate life*. Routledge.

CHAPTER 11

Affective Trans Relationships: Towards a Deleuzian Approach to Friendship Theory

Zowie Davy

Introduction

Over many years, friendship theory has been produced in quite particular ways in various disciplinary traditions. Deeper knowledge about the parameters of what constitutes friendship-bonding has been taken up time and again to demonstrate this abstract notion. From friendhip theory's early philosophical understandings (see Walker,1979), to today's psycho-social hypotheses and studies that deductively measure then find evidence to support or them, seem to suggest that at school friendship is based on hierarchized types of relationship (Berndt, 2002; Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Mathur & Berndt, 2006). For instance, "high-quality friendship" is often characterized by high levels of "prosocial behaviour" and "low levels of conflict" (Berndt, 2002, p. 7), without explaining what constitutes prosocial or the types of conflict and for whom. As such, to view friendship as a teleological thing—intentional, by design, or purposefulness—misses the complexity of relationships that people have with other bodies (both

Z. Davy (✉)
Centre for LGBTQ Research, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK
e-mail: zowie.davy@dmu.ac.uk

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_11

human and nonhuman) in global and local settings. Friendships, as we have seen in this collection, are produced through complex genealogies and diverse spatial and temporal locations. To try to universalize "friendship" without acknowledging the different choices and lived experiences through time and space, the roles, and the desires that are produced in an ongoing way within friendship relationships obscures the constant movements that we have as friends. Rather than choice, I utilize the concept of desire from Deleuze and Guattari (2004) that they suggest is not inherent, archetypal, or phylogenetic but produced in specific and ever-shifting (friendship) assemblages. Desires circulate in a multiplicity of ways in competition with each other. Human and nonhuman affects produce unconscious desires that motivate changes and inventions. For without the capacity to exceed the given, the subject is trapped in repetition in predetermined rather than co-produced friendships. This is especially observed when a friendship challenges the territorializing overcoding of the social field through deterritorializations and nomadic lines of flight that flourish, producing multiple rhizomic connections to our friends and beyond (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

Of concern to me is the mainstreaming of what are classified or represented as psychosocially "good" and psychosocially "bad" friendships as a moral code for good and bad social practices and particularly how it is related to forms of attachment. Examples of this can be found in the literature on peer pressure within friendship groups that lead to valued or devalued behaviour (Iwamoto & Smiler, 2013; Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). To abstract friendship in this way becomes too focused on "moral" characteristics that are constituted as good or bad practices within a friendship. Anti-moralists, such as Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Deleuze, with whom I agree, would suggest that while things can be objectively good or bad, they are not contingent upon a moralizing consciousness. They are good and bad because human and nonhuman bodies act upon another and produce good or bad affectations that either increase or decrease the power to act, or as Deleuze and Guattari (2004) would suggest, it is good when the affects open a line of flight that was previously blocked. So, for example, an act of prohibition may produce good affects for some and bad affects for others, which for Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Deleuze does not mean that they are inherently good or bad but can lead us to observe if our action affects positively or negatively, which then leads us to the question of relational ethics within that friendship. If a friend acts and that increases the capacity to act out our desires, then this is objectively good and supports

a deterritorializing line of flight, but if that act decreases our power to act out our desire, this is bad and blocks us, as Deleuze and Guattari (2004, p. 284) say

> (…) we know nothing of a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body.

Prohibition at a different time and in a different space could in fact produce the opposite affect or a different affect altogether, which highlights the lack of any transcendental morality in the prohibitive act.

We have all heard the anecdote that goes something like: I am your friend, and I am doing/saying this for your own good. But is this a "moral" or an ethical act? Nietzsche (1997, p. 28) claims that the will to systematize life only through one's own moral values shows a lack of integrity because

> [o]ne would have to occupy a position outside life, and on the other hand to know [life] as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be allowed even to touch upon the problem of the value of life.

Therefore, the ethics behind the doing/saying is the important factor for Nietzsche insofar as whether it is done to dominate or done to open up potential possibilities. Moreover, much literature has tended to understand friendship as a constant type of relationship without any ebbs and flows of *affectus*. Deleuze (1988) describes *affectus* as "the passage from one state to another" (p. 49) in his practical empiricism, and this can account for subjective modulation and the materiality of change (Fox & Alldred, 2014).

We also learn from both Deleuze and Nietzsche that humans are incomplete, adapting in the face of their desires, and that life is in a constant state of struggle. Friendship for Nietzsche is in a constant state of struggle to find equilibrium between what Miner (2010) interprets as three qualities that place a hierarchy of friendships into higher and lower orders like Aristotle's categorizations. These are finding a balance between loving the self and being dissatisfied with the self, openness towards the friend alongside being reserved at certain junctures within the

relationship, and a need to understand when solitude and companionship should be pursued. It is when these are equilibrated that a higher-order friendship can be achieved. While perhaps within friendships Nietzsche did desire these factors, highlighted in Miner's interpretation, others may want to produce their friendship upon different lines of flight, and he could not deny this if he was true to his perspectivalist theory. Miner's (2010) conceptualization of friendship in this rigid way seems contrary to other aspects of Nietzsche's writing as he acknowledges. Despite this, I would suggest that Nietzsche (2002) places much more emphasis on the will to truth in his writings and on the capacity to act, as key ethical grounds upon which friendship is produced.

I think my reading of Deleuze then returning to Nietzsche has affected my interpretation insofar as we ought not to categorize friendship in a hierarchical typology based on morality. This is because friendship is always in a process of becoming. Indeed, Nietzsche said to a friend that although they are on distinct voyages they lend a hand to each other to keep going on these journeys, not letting each other capsize, and because of this they are not suppressing alternative possibilities in their lives (Miner, 2010), and it is this that produces a friendship bond. Friendship-bonding will inevitably run into some struggles, love, questioning, warmth, antagonism, and opposition but with a view that the nomadic pursuit of truth, and the mutual capacity to act and choose (desire), produces their friendship bond. The intensities that co-constitute the bond can flee, elude, flow, leak, and disappear into the distance.

Life and friendship then have nomadic characters (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Deleuze and Guattari's nomadism is framed as a resistance to micro-fascisms in everyday lives. Little "friendship" scholarship has highlighted this. I would suggest that what is required is the deployment of new reconfigurations of friendship desires and affect in order to avoid the common hierarchized forms found in much (philosophical and psychosocial) literature. I draw on the understanding that Nietzsche has about friendship between different people who affect through varying (oppositional) intensities a conduit to the truth of desire. Truth, however, is not a will to power that merely wants power over life—a self-determination at the expense of other possibilities or other people—but being true to our desires that move us towards new possibilities for the *physis* and *psyche* and their movement (Deleuze, 1988). I do this by looking at some empirical data that focuses on friendships derived from parents of trans and

gender-exploring children. I attempt this affective/ing understanding of friendship through a Deleuzian framework, which emphasizes the multi-dimensionality of desire in the search for truths.

Friendship Bonds

Bonding has many meanings: to join to something else, especially by means of an adhesive substance, heat, or pressure. In relation to friendship bonds, it is widely understood as a process of attachment that develops between romantic or platonic partners or friends and manifests from emotions, such as affection, trust, or reciprocity, among other things. The latter type of bond(ing) evokes an Aristotelian unanimity that is produced because of particular sets of characteristics and/or virtues that help to form some key functions within a friendship until, I presume, we are no longer. Friendship bonds, however, do not end with death. The life led before death can and indeed does produce affective intensities after the organism dies (see Martin, 2019). Despite this, Aristotle divides friendships into utility friendships, pleasure friendships, and virtue friendships (Fortenbaugh, 1975). Virtue friendships, he suggests, are the best form of friendship; they take the longest to develop and, as he points out, are rare because good people are somewhat rare, compared to people we might find useful or pleasant. This is primarily an argument about the gradation of morality "inherent" in the primary function of each type of friendship and represents an order of rank among multiple drives or impulses which Aristotle does not (wish to) acknowledge in his friendship theorem. Nietzsche (2001) suggests in *The Gay Science* that our drives can barely be named by anyone nor can they be ranked because they are assembled continuously from the beginning in different people and in different spatial and temporal situations. As such, this unanimity in Aristotle's hierarchy as an agreement between friends that they are virtuous, of use, or pleasurable reifies a hierarchy of good and bad people rather than based on varying intensities of nomadic human drives and desires. Moreover, in this axiom the friends would have to agree/think that the other friend in the relationship has the same quality. This forecloses any changes in the relationship or any ruptures, arguments, or oppositions along the path about the nature of the friendship or any new possibilities.

Friendship may not always have a virtuous, pleasure-seeking, or utilitarian type of friendship bond and is an assemblage of each person's drives and productive properties in any one situation. Therefore, a hierarchy

cannot account for friendships that are situated within complex genealogies in different spatial and temporal locations. Thus, I would like to suggest that friendship ought not to be hierarchized within these simple axioms. Any friendship and the bond that is produced (in a nomadic way), I am sure, has and will have levels of discord, arguments, or even, at a minimal level, disagreements about politics, actions, and desires, and there will be laughter, tears, and fears, and some give and take, all of which produce different affective intensities and are affected by the varying, migrating bonds. In light of this then, I would argue that friendship bonds are produced differently through space and time, through ongoing interactions on multiple levels, some of which are abstract, such as in the naming of the constituent parts, and some of which are material through bodies (both human and nonhuman) at the molecular level that are not completely apprehensible.

A conjugated friendship bond is unquantifiable and unable to be known qualitatively in all its complexity and therefore is dissimilar to how Aristotle would like us to believe. Nonetheless, as human bodies we try to apprehend aspects that we imagine and experience as being intensely important to that bond. For instance, many would suggest that trust, loyalty, affection, honesty, support, acceptance, and connections with someone's likes and dislikes could all contribute to forming a friendship bond. While not talking directly about friends or friendship (bonds), the beginning of a bond in Deleuzian-Guattarian terms would consolidate through many intercalary events rather than, for example, from a linear sequence (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Bonds are not necessarily built up cumulatively but are produced rhizomatically; we cannot impose a form upon it, but we can enunciate an increasingly rich, consistent matter that produces (increasingly) intense forces. Any differences in (political) beliefs, choices, and desires do not necessarily mar the friendship bonds that, for example, hold together a group of young people, but they, alongside each friend, coproduce it differently at each event. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) write that "there must be an arrangement of intervals, a distribution of inequalities (…) there is a superposition of disparate rhythms, an articulation from within an interrythmicity" (p. 363) that materializes (momentarily) at the event, only then to move on to the next one. The matters in these heterogeneities produce a new bond together in a particular reconfiguration (for a time and in a space). They produce a bond that is affected and affects in ongoing, unanticipated, and unpredictable—rhizomatic—ways through

time and through new events. Understanding friendship bonds in this way challenges the essentialism in earlier versions of friendship theory.

In spite of the potential for life to bring sorrow, anger, joy, and celebration, through these events producing material affects, it can also produce what Gadelha (2018, p. 19) calls "weirdo" recognition as a byproduct of a critical consciousness—an awareness of one's own desire—that generates sympathy and support for other ways of life and the potential for making trouble. This in turn affects the reconfigured friendship bond and which can make trouble for perceived and actual limit-situations (Freire, 2000). The process by which this recognition is produced is through the notion of desire. Desire for Deleuze and Guattari (1984) is a productive force from the varying, vying, winning drive that desires, in our case, a type of friendship bond contingent on interrythmic intensities from bodies (human and nonhuman). In trans and gender-diverse people and their friends, bonding is a fleeing, eluding, flowing, leaking, and disappearing conjugation of interrythmic intensities that has a lot of potential for disrupting limit-situations (Freire, 2000) through their problem-posing, their generation of new ideas-desires in the classroom, for example, leading to new possibilities, based on a relational ethics rather than a moralizing hierarchy.

Trans and Sexual Minority Friendship Groups

Trans people's friendship with other trans people illustrated by Hines (2007) functions as a supportive frame or network to discuss and work through temporal and spatial barriers or between those who are experiencing similar psychosocial issues derived from their gender (dis)identifications. Similarly, previous research about gay men and lesbians has argued that the sexual orientation aspect of their lives provides the opportunity for forming many of their friendships which affects the political, sexual, and familial aspects of society (Muraco, 2006; Nardi, 1992; Nardi & Sherrod, 1994; Stanley, 1996). Indeed, sexuality, gender, and community politics tend to be key factors in producing friendship-families in which people can demonstrate their true desires when they cannot or fear to do so within their family of origin or in previous friendship networks because of a fear of rejection or violence. Trans friendship groups have been shown to also act as "familial" support for those who are rejected by their families or because family members do not or will not understand aspects of their lives (Hines, 2007). These relationships serve as new friendship-family

relations or as Weston (1991) has argued as a "family of choice" with these friends they can test their desires and where their "often inchoate, intuitive, unarticulated vision of the possibilities of a self-yet-to-become finds expression" (Rubin, 1985, p. 13). While this is important work, more families are supporting their young trans and gender-diverse children now (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Kuvalanka et al., 2018); however we know little about these supportive environments and their effect on friendship. We can hypothesize nonetheless that the supportive interrythmic events that trans youth and their parents experience will be affected and affect their friendships.

Galupo and colleagues (Galupo et al., 2014a, b) have more recently suggested that trans and sexuality minority research about friendship has tended to focus on the benefits of in-group relationships and the barriers between heterosexual and trans, gender-diverse, and sexual minority people. They go on to suggest that there has generally been a lack of focus on the complexity of friends' relationships and an intersectionality framework is suited to consider trans and gender-diverse friendships more deeply (Galupo et al., 2014a). Intersectionality theory was developed by Crenshaw (1989, 2017), who argued that there were multiple social forces, identifications, and ideological instruments through which power and disadvantage are expressed and legitimized. The dimensions of inequality and power in the gendered lives of Black and minority ethnic people from various socio-economic backgrounds were particularly focused on in intersectionality research because research was generally whitewashed. Several other researchers have called for intersectionality to be employed in explorations of the cultural meanings surrounding trans and gender-diverse people's friendships (Hines, 2010; Monro & Richardson, 2010). For example, they demonstrate how trans and gender-diverse people with different socio-economic, racial, sexual, and gendered experiences can be explored considering the power that is produced through privileging cisgender, White, economically buoyant lives, and their standardized notions of friendship.

Galupo et al.'s (2014a) intersectionality work on friendship provides interesting data, illustrating the complexity of friendship bonds and what they mean for trans and gender-diverse people. The findings add to our understanding about friendship in "in-groups" and "out-groups", but I would suggest that organizing them arbitrarily as benefits and barriers, in the end, does not support the claims of intersectional complexity that they were aiming for. We may better understand friendship in its complex

reconfigurations through a Deleuzian framework that does not place too much emphasis on minoritarian and majoritarian identity markers of difference that are ranked and rated by the researcher as an important and powerful constant homogenous majority system versus a set of minority subsystems. Deleuze and Guattari allow us to think through this and perhaps understand the "translocational positionalities" and "situated accomplishments" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1983, p. 62) and other ways of existing as friends, such as becoming-minoritarian-friends, which I will explore more in the section on becoming minoritarian below. My intention in this chapter is to introduce considerations of circulating and embodied affect. Not as an a priori theoretical positioning about children's friendship but to show what has come to matter in the lives of parents of trans and gender-diverse children and their friendships.

Methodology

The study[1] on which this chapter is based addresses the following research theme: What do parents who support their trans and gender-diverse children within school cultures say about friendships? Friendship was a key theme that seemed to have much force within a wider project that was looking at parents' involvement in changing school cultures for their children whose gender identification was different to that assigned at birth (Davy & Cordoba, 2020). The interview tool was developed with a range of open questions that would help us understand the relationships between parents, schools, and the structuration of sexes/genders. We asked about the experiences of parents in relation to school staff members, the advocacy work they did within the school, and their perceptions about how the school was supportive, or not, while supporting their trans and gender-diverse children within a range of school cultures. The research tool also enabled us to explore parents' perceptions of the limit-situations imposed/allowed in schools; the school culture in relation to gender roles, identities, and expressions; and the school systems in place affecting them and their children's freedom to determine their own gender roles, expressions, and identities.

[1] *The Limits of School Culture on Parents and Guardians with Gender Variant Children: A Qualitative Study* was supported by an institutional grant from De Montfort University, UK, and was ethically approved by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The research took place between January 2017 and September 2018 across the UK.

Sampling

We decided to recruit from social networks and support groups due to the relatively small cohort size of supportive parents of trans and gender-diverse children in the UK.[2] We sent posters and participant information sheets to virtual and support networks in the UK: *Mermaids*, *Gendered Intelligence*, *Transgender Alliance*, and smaller support groups in Hull, Leeds, and Leicester, in the UK, who pledged their support to disseminate the recruitment materials. The materials requested that parents of trans and gender-diverse children contact the author if they were supporting their children and would like to tell us their experiences of providing this support within school cultures.

Interview data were collected by the author from 23 parents of trans and gender-diverse children across the UK. Parents identified as men (n = 4), women (n = 17), and trans (n = 2), six of whom were interviewed as couples. One adolescent trans child sat in on one interview and, within it, clarified some points raised. Ethnically, parents interviewed were White British (n = 19), Afro-Caribbean British (n = 1), Anglo-Asian British (n = 1), and White Polish (n = 2). Parents came from rural and urban villages, towns, and cities in England, Scotland, Wales, and an Island territory. The schools that their children attend(ed) range(d) from reception/nursery school to high school. One participant was home-schooling their adolescent child due to concerns about mental ill health. This parent said that this was not connected to their child's trans identity; however, in retrospect home-schooling may have been beneficial.

Analytical Process

While this research was conducted in the UK, the Deleuzian analysis I offer has relevance for southern European contexts and beyond. I suggest that Deleuze's (and Guattari's) work emphasizes that, in our case, friendship bonds are produced differently through space and time, through ongoing interactions on multiple levels providing more complexity to personal and political assemblages that are produced in diverse geographical spaces. Additionally, each researcher must acknowledge the way they

[2] I acknowledge the potential bias of recruiting participants from social networks and that more isolated parents were less likely to participate. This is a potential limitation of the study.

co-produce friendship bonds, by exploring the development of the research assemblage. In light of this, each recorded interview took place either in the parents' home or via Skype and was conducted by the author. The interviews lasted between 60 and 120 min. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interview data were managed using NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd). Descriptive codes were developed, and then I looked for what seemed to me to be "affectus"—the passage from one state to another—in their narratives. These analytical steps were thought through by looking at the notes taken immediately after the interviews, which recorded times that participants showed heightened emotions, such as hurt, laughter, anger, and bewilderment, and the responses offered.

Two themes emerged about friendship: (1) Friendship affects and lines of flight, which shows how friendships advance ways of existing through producing lines of flight. These lines of flights are something "sticky" and something vital to "how we are touched by what we are near" (Ahmed, 2010, pp. 29–30) and are involved in the organizing of parents' and their children's capacity to act. (2) Becoming minoritarian, which demonstrates how friendship groups are moving constituting fuzzy, nondenumerable, non-axiomizable series and are multiplicities of resistance, escape and flux. In the next section, I turn to the analysis where we can observe multiple movements within friendship groups, which sometimes block and sometimes open up lines of flight.

Friendship Affects and (Blocking) Lines of Flight

Friends, peer pressure, and social prohibitions against sex/gender metamorphosis affect each person in different ways. I have demonstrated this before in relation to bodily aesthetics (Davy, 2011), trans politics (Davy, 2019), and trans sexualities (Davy, 2020; Davy & Steinbock, 2012). Similarly, for trans and gender-diverse children within school cultures, affects are produced in different ways in relation to friendship. Social interactions create resonances that cannot be adequately represented by a single structural formula because they all differ in the distribution of affects. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) suggest that fear can, however, (re) territorialize us to well-scripted social norms of the standard measure, such as the instrumental forces from the binary sex/gender system, despite it being a kind of fiction that represents no one in particular.

> Well it was as if I had a different child. When we look back there were some problems, but now realize that it was at the time when his body was developing into something he didn't understand because all his male friends were developing one way and unfortunately he was developing in a different way and he couldn't work that out. And then he started to lose his, well everything really, his confidence and we couldn't work out what it was. (Leticia, parent of an adolescent boy)

Leticia's child had a particularly difficult time at school due to his body developing characteristics that seemed alien to him, and it later transpired in the interview because of people beyond his friendship group policing his gender identification at school. Nonetheless, it seems also that the bodies of his friends were unintentionally affecting his body at the molecular level, blocking his movements. In a more intentional manner, Carole's daughter experienced a disjuncture with some of her friends who stepped back from her, motivating the drive/desire to understand their reasons:

> Some of the [friends who are] boys have taken a step back, so [name] is just understanding where they are coming from and has found that a bit difficult, because she doesn't just want to be with just the girls. And at the start of the summer holidays [name] started off at a bit of a low mood, because she felt that she didn't have any close friends. So, she was in between the two really, they have been very good at accepting it, but she has not really felt that she could get close to them. [She] had a lot of support from [friend's name] and [friend's name], they have been very supportive. (Carole, parent of an adolescent girl)

The affects of her stepped-back friends seemed to have marred her embodied actions rather than exchanging actions and passions and composing a more powerful series of bodies. Following Anna-Marie's daughter coming out as a different gender to that assigned to her, she said

> There were times when she didn't want to go to school. Her attendance was quite low, she was worried about her friends, not the rest of the world, but her friends, and they supported her so well that she improved. Children nowadays are much more open. I was quite worried that they would not be so positive [. ...] The change was enormous. She was so relieved and stopped not going to school, a huge difference. For her it was whether her friends were fine and once they accepted it she could cope much better. So that was great. (Anna-Marie, parent of a preadolescent girl)

The anxiety was channelled through the affect of the real possibility of losing her friends rather than how her transition may be perceived by wider society. According to this parent, this led her daughter to retreat from this line of flight with her friends for a time, whereas the line of flight that carries her from her birth-assigned sex was still open to multiple possibilities beyond school. Nonetheless, Anna-Marie added that when her daughter did manage to go to school and her friendship group signalled to her that they were going to be supportive, her desire to return to school increased. The friends who were in solidarity with her affectively played their part in producing a new assemblage. The (memories of) the previous friendships were disassembled only to be reassembled when the friends met, through all their desires for creating new lines of flight. Friendship I am assuming in this instance, however, took on an unknowable new form with each friend.

Rosalind also illustrated that her child's emotional state was impacted through the intensities of friendship:

> She has so many friendships and things. I think that she feels very happy and fortunate and pleased that she can be who she really is, and people are ok with that. As I say, she has some really lovely friends and I am hoping that they will last the distance with her. (Rosalind, parent of a preadolescent girl)

Friends lasting the distance with her daughter was understood by Rosalind in a similar way to how Nietzsche described lending a hand to each other on these journeys, not letting each other capsize, not suppressing alternative possibilities in their lives. Rosalind added:

> So, we supported her with that, and transition and she has been fantastic since. In terms of ups and downs at home, but in terms of going to school, she loves going, she loves going to see her friends, very, very happy there. (Rosalind, parent of a preadolescent girl)
>
> There was one incredible friend though who knew about all this before we did and [name] came out to this pupil beforehand and they have been exceptional. (Perry, parent of an adolescent boy)

The friends on these journeys are becoming desensitized to the generalized sense of shame and guilt circulating through the social field imposed on, and when you connect with, non-normative bodies. While we do not know how this ontological shift has occurred, when I asked Carole: do

you think that pupils are much more knowledgeable about sex/gender diversity nowadays? She responded:

> Yes, I think they are partly more knowledgeable but partly it is what it is. They are so much more open to difference, whether it is gender or ability or sexuality and this kind of stuff for young people it is kind of "whatever," it is not an issue. (Carole, parent of an adolescent girl)

Friendship then, according to these parents, emerges or retreats from the desire of each friend participating in (solidarity) movements with their trans and gender-diverse children. Nonetheless, these movements also imply often in this research that there are ongoing metamorphoses of the sex/gender system and wider social field that they are producing. The formations of new act(ivist)s that challenge with their enunciation "whatever" are attempts at the elimination of state- and peer-imposed territorializations of normed sexed/gendered bodies. These lines of flight are both destructive of overcoded systems of sex/gender and productive, enabling new ideas, ideals, and discourses to permeate the social space and social hierarchies at school, at least in these specific space/time configurations. In the next section, I demonstrate how becoming minoritarian affects these new ideas, ideals, and discourses.

Becoming Minoritarian

The biological, material, affective, social, semiotic, political, and pedagogical forces, which affect these children and their parents and that they affect, highlight that the events that the human and nonhuman bodies instantiate are affective becomings. The affective becoming that these encounters produce momentarily apprehends the body but does not determine it for all time. Braidotti (2006, p. 79) calls this "becoming minoritarian". Becoming minoritarian, she suggests, is a desire through and upon which undervalued people are re-conceptualizing their subjectivities through processes of becoming that are embodied, relational, and on the move. They are becoming un-undervalued within school cultures while also "using" the enforced shame as a productive desire for human connection and effectively writing "a minoritarian memory experience into existence" (Stafford, 2012, p. 311).

While among their peers some children were still finding it difficult to express themselves within school cultures, their relatively isolated attempts

at producing new ways of thinking about sex/gender have not stopped them from trying. Paul's two children questioned teachers and peers about their utterances concerning the possibilities of gender diversity. This did, however, lead to affects that made them

> feel quite lonely. It's not that they cannot make friends but the people they are surrounded by, their beliefs and views that they are holding are really not nice. (Paul, parent of two gender expansive children)

The attempt to fit into groups of friends was similarly difficult sometimes, when the group's production of friendship, in this instance, did not fit the desire of Audrey's son:

> He has a little group of friends, but they are all girls and he tried to mix in with the boys, he was in a school band, but they were going down the park, smoking a bit of weed and [name] thought that he had to do that to be one of the boys, but doesn't do that anymore. (Audrey, parent of an adolescent boy)

Audrey's child's friendships are not grounded in a rigid and binary structure of gender, with determinative pressures from peers. There is no conflict but movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight within a given social field that provide him the desire and direction for change. His preference for minoritarian movements was a form of contemporaneous resistance to the present situation defined in opposition to majoritarian forms of subjectification in the boys' friendship group. Friendship groups then "operate through series, through an evaluation of the 'last' term" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 310).

Contemporary school cultures in the UK are shifting with visible signs of becoming minoritarian where groups are forming series of "weirdos" (Gadelha, 2018, p. 19). Nicola's child was at school a few years before the interview, and it seems like their becoming minoritarian was more difficult at least at their school. Nonetheless, the freedom affects when going to college produced the power to disrupt and transform normed systems. The transformation produced new desires about what is fair and just:

> It was going into the first year at college and it was during that first couple of months there and meeting lots of new people and talking to different people and different ideas they then started to have conversations about defining yourself like non-binary and very much talking about sexuality and

> gender at the same time. And then they said that they are non-binary sexuality and non-binary gender and they like the fact when people do not know whether they are a boy or a girl. It was much more accepting at college that it ever was at school. I don't think that they were confident to tell people at school but at college they were and willing to stand up for friends as well. (Nicola, parent of a genderqueer adolescent)

It seems from most of the parents that their children at school however were developing new social logics about sex/gender and sexuality:

> There are other kids there who are an alternative bunch of queer friends both in the school and outside. (Simone, parent of adolescent genderqueer child)
>
> Whilst he was at school with his peers and his friends, he has got a really good friendship group which he had since he was a small child, I think he felt able to express himself at school before he expressed himself to us […] his closest friend at school is gender fluid and identifies as "they" pronouns [. ...] Some of his friendship group are gay and I think they are just a nice friendship group and I think he felt comfortable with them. (Hilary and Colin, parents of an adolescent boy)

The friendships embedded in this series accord a systematic priority to minoritarian becomings over majoritarian being (see Patton, 2008). Each friend in the series desires lines of flight over forms of majoritarian subjectivication. These friends' deterritorializations, while pursuing practical (political) orientations, are not however teleological. They are nonetheless making themselves felt within the majority system through their proximity amounting to a new people (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

Concluding Remarks

Savin-Williams (2005) argued that collecting data from sexual and gender minorities can prompt those who have had particularly troubled experiences to respond to research calls, resulting in a skewed idea about the situation of sexual and gender minority people. Hartman (2011) also argued that there is selection bias in locating research participants using networks and support groups, because respondents tend to be those who have experienced discrimination. I have attempted to emphasize neither positive nor negative experiences but highlight how friendships are produced through complex genealogies in diverse spatial and temporal

locations. This analysis does not universalize "friendship" but acknowledges different friendship desires through time and in different geographic and political spaces. I also suggest that friendship roles and the desires that are produced are ongoing and always becoming friendship relationships.

The friendships that are co-produced by trans and gender-diverse children and their friends, I argued, affect social logics, according to their parents. However, I am in full agreement with critics, such as Brandelli Costa (2019), who have argued that the reliance on parental observations to assess the experiences of trans and gender-diverse youth distorts the realities of their experiences. Nonetheless, I wanted to observe the affects that these friendships have on parents and their ability to support their children. I looked at these affects through a Deleuzian lens to enunciate how these friendships are, according to the parents, affective and becoming minoritarian and thus producing new ways to think about friends and friendship bonds. Some groups of friends at school are desensitizing the negativity surrounding trans and gender-diverse bodies in the classroom producing new friendships in new space/time. We do however still need to understand how friendship is being produced beyond the identitarian markers of difference in more depth and complexity with the children themselves. We need to do this with the caveat that friendship is non-axiomizable and non-ontologically hierarchical beyond our own personal desires; they are ontologically good, bad, and other because of their ability to (dis)allow bodies to act, through the production of the never-ending processes of becoming friends.

References

Ahmed, S. (2010). Happy objects. In M. Gregg & G. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 29–52). Duke University Press.

Anthias, F., & Yuval-Davis, N. (1983). Contextualizing feminism – Gender, ethnic and class divisions. *Feminist Review, 15*(1), 62–75.

Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11*(1), 7–10.

Berndt, T. J., & Keefe, K. (1995). Friends' influence on adolescents' adjustment to school. *Child Development, 66*(5), 1312–1329.

Braidotti, R. (2006). The becoming minoritarian of Europe. In I. Buchanan & A. Parr (Eds.), *Deleuze and the contemporary world* (pp. 79–94). Edinburgh University Press.

Brandelli Costa, A. (2019). Formal comment on: Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLoS One, 14*(3), e0212578. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0212578

Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*, 139–168.

Crenshaw, K. W. (2017). *On intersectionality: Essential writings*. The New Press.

Davy, Z. (2011). *Recognizing transsexuals: Personal, political and medicolegal embodiment*. Ashgate.

Davy, Z. (2019). Genderqueer(ing): 'On this side of the world against which it protests'. *Sexualities, 22*(1–2), 80–96.

Davy, Z. (2020). Freedom affects in trans erotica. In Z. Davy, A. C. Santos, C. Bertone, R. Thoresen, & S. E. Weiringa (Eds.), *Sage handbook of global sexualities* (pp. 969–991). Sage.

Davy, Z., & Cordoba, S. (2020). School cultures and trans and gender-diverse children: Parents' perspectives. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies, 16*(4), 349–367.

Davy, Z., & Steinbock, E. (2012). 'Sexing up' bodily aesthetics: Notes towards theorizing trans sexuality. In S. Hines & Y. Taylor (Eds.), *Sexualities: Past reflections and future directions* (pp. 266–285). Palgrave Macmillan.

Deleuze, G. (1988). *Spinoza: Practical philosophy*. City Lights.

Deleuze, G. (2006). *Two regimes of madness: Texts and interviews 1975–1995* (A. Hodges & M. Taormina, Trans.). Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1984). *Anti-oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (R. Hurley, M. Seem & H. R. Lane, Trans.). Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2004). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Continuum.

Fortenbaugh, W. W. (1975). Aristotle's analysis of friendship: Function and analogy, resemblance, and focal meaning. *Phronesis, 20*(1), 51–62.

Fox, N. J., & Alldred, P. (2014). New materialist social inquiry: Designs, methods and the research-assemblage. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 18*(4), 399–414.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th Anniversary ed.) (M. Bregman Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Gadelha, K. B. (2018). Friendship, affect, and capitalism. In N. Banerjea, D. Dasgupta, R. K. Dasgupta, & J. M. Grant (Eds.), *Friendship as social justice activism: Critical solidarities in a global perspective* (pp. 9–21). Seagull Books.

Galupo, M. P., Bauerband, L. A., Gonzalez, K. A., Hagen, D. B., Hether, S. D., & Krum, T. E. (2014a). Transgender friendship experiences: Benefits and barriers of friendships across gender identity and sexual orientation. *Feminism & Psychology, 24*(2), 193–215.

Galupo, M. P., Henise, S. B., & Davis, K. S. (2014b). Transgender microaggressions in the context of friendship: Patterns of experience across friends' sexual

orientation and gender identity. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 1*(4), 461–470.

Hartman, J. E. (2011). Finding a needle in a haystack: Methods for sampling in the bisexual community. *Journal of Bisexuality, 11*(1), 64–74.

Hines, S. (2007). *TransForming gender: Transgender practices of identity, intimacy and care*. Policy Press.

Hines, S. (2010). Sexing gender; gendering sex: Towards an intersectional analysis of transgender. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines, & M. Casey (Eds.), *Theorizing intersectionality and sexuality* (pp. 140–162). Palgrave Macmillan.

Iwamoto, D. K., & Smiler, A. P. (2013). Alcohol makes you macho and helps you make friends: The role of masculine norms and peer pressure in adolescent boys' and girls' alcohol use. *Substance Use & Misuse, 48*(5), 371–378.

Kuvalanka, K. A., Allen, S. H., Munroe, C., Goldberg, A. E., & Weiner, J. L. (2018). The experiences of sexual minority mothers with trans children. *Family Relations, 67*(1), 70–87.

Martin, J. (2019). Deleuze and the freedom of the machines. In D. Olkowski & E. Pirovolaki (Eds.), *Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of freedom* (pp. 3–15). Routledge.

Mathur, R., & Berndt, T. J. (2006). Relations of friends' activities to friendship quality. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 26*(3), 365–388.

Miner, R. C. (2010). Nietzsche on friendship. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies, 40*, 47–69.

Monro, S., & Richardson, D. (2010). Intersectionality and sexuality: The case of sexuality and transgender equalities work in UK local government. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines, & M. Casey (Eds.), *Theorizing intersectionality and sexuality* (pp. 99–118). Palgrave Macmillan.

Muraco, A. (2006). Intentional families: Fictive kin ties between cross-gender, different sexual orientation friends. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68*(5), 1313–1325.

Nardi, P. M. (1992). That's what friends are for: Friends as family in the gay and lesbian community. In K. Plummer (Ed.), *Modern homosexualities: Fragments of lesbian and gay experience* (pp. 108–120). Routledge.

Nardi, P. M., & Sherrod, D. (1994). Friendship in the lives of gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 11*(2), 185–199.

Nelson, R. M., & DeBacker, T. K. (2008). Achievement motivation in adolescents: The role of peer climate and best friends. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 76*(2), 170–189.

Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Twilight of the idols. Or, how to philosophize with the hammer* (R. Polt & T. Strong, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company.

Nietzsche, F. (2001). *The gay science: With a prelude in German rhymes and an appendix of songs* (J. Nauckhoff, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2002). *Beyond good and evil: Prelude to a philosophy of the future*. Cambridge University Press.
Patton, P. (2008). Becoming-democratic. In I. Buchanan & N. Thoburn (Eds.), *Deleuze and politics* (pp. 178–195). Edinburgh University Press.
Rubin, L. B. (1985). *Just friends: The role of friendship in our lives*. Harper & Row.
Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). *The new gay teenager*. Harvard University Press.
Stafford, A. (2012). Departing shame: Feinberg and queer/transgender counter-cultural remembering. *Journal of Gender Studies, 21*(3), 301–312.
Stanley, J. L. (1996). The lesbian's experience of friendship. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships* (pp. 39–59). New York University Press.
Walker, A. D. M. (1979). Aristotle's account of friendship in the Nicomachean ethics. *Phronesis, 24*(2), 180–196.
Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbian, gay kinship*. Columbia University Press.

CHAPTER 12

Italian Queer Transfeminism Towards a Gender Strike

Elia A. G. Arfini

In this chapter, I will review a number of trajectories and projects stemming from the transfeminist movement, with particular attention to Italy and Southern Europe, in order to highlight what I believe to be the defining posture of transfeminist epistemologies, that is, the capacity to provide a structural analysis of gender violence and gender binarism that allows for a multidimensional, intersectional mobilization. This structural reading is achieved primarily by adopting a materialist analysis of the construction of gendered and sexual subjectivity. The iconic political practice that mobilizes the results of this reading is a call for a gender strike; this strategy of mobilization, I argue, highlights the collective potentials and individual limits of the capacity to choose. In the following paragraphs, after an introduction to the field and its genealogy, I will offer a reading of examples of activism in relation to academic labour and gender labour. I argue that the following cases of transfeminist readings and practices fruitfully question "two domains too often understood to operate autonomously: the psychic realm of desire and the material realm of accumulation and

E. A. G. Arfini (✉)
Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Milan, Milan, Italy
e-mail: elia.arfini@unimi.it

A. C. Santos (ed.), *LGBTQ+ Intimacies in Southern Europe*,
Citizenship, Gender and Diversity,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13508-8_12

exchange" (Wesling, 2012, p. 108). At the intersection of these two realms rests the issue of choice, central to any sociological attempt to understand the relationship between agency and structure or aspirations and opportunities (Giddens, 1984). In the following cases, the issue of choice emerges in different ways. First, it appears in the deliberate, agentic choices made by activists to define the field by adopting a performative use of language; this is achieved with the adoption of localized terms (vs the adoption of Anglo-American queer jargon) and with the very act of self-naming one's political agenda as transfeminist. Secondly, the issue of choice emerges in the struggles for bodily autonomy and self-determination, which are central in the genealogy of Marxist feminism; this field will be an important antecedent in the development of the trajectory that proceeded from the Marxist feminism reproductive labour strike to the transfeminist gender strike. Thirdly, it emerges in the contemporary critique of academic labour put forward by transfeminist scholars who choose to interrupt the exploitation of queer embodied value by the academic industry. Ultimately, the issue of choice tests the limits of the refusal of care work, gender labour and the interruption of social reproduction that is implied in the figure of the gender strike. If our possibility to choose is always patterned by the gender structure (Risman, 2004), can we choose to strike from gender?

The Subjects of Transfeminism

Originating from the Spanish context (Solá & Urko, 2013), transfeminist networks gained pervasive international circulation after the publication and translation in several languages of the "Manifiesto para la Insurrección Transfeminista" (Red PutaBolloNegraTransFeminista, 2010), authored by the network "PutaBolloNegraTransFeminista" in 2009 and circulated from the platform of transcultural artistic collective "ideadestroyingmuros".[1] The multiple contexts behind the collective authoring of the manifesto shared the Catalonian culture of a radical politics of sexuality characterized by a marked diversity of subjectivities converging in the struggle. Not only women—be they cis or trans—but

[1] "Ideadestroyingmuros" describe themselves as a "transcultural collective of poetical militancy and uneducative activism" and keep an updated blog at http://ideadestroyingmuros.blogspot.com/.

sex workers, people with functional diversity,[2] butches, fags and transgender and non-binary people of different races and citizenship status participated in a variety of feminist political practices. The vexed question of the proper subject of feminism is addressed in the document as follows:

> We have outgrown "women" as the political subject of feminism, as it is in itself exclusive: it leaves out the dykes, trans, the whores, the ones who wear veils, the ones who earn little and don't go to the university, the ones who yell, the immigrants without legal resident papers and the fags. (Red PutaBolloNegraTransFeminista, 2010, n.p.)

Debates about the proper subject of feminism have stirred the movement since its inception and continue to be relevant today. At times of expansion of feminist debates towards post-feminism (Banet-Weiser, 2018) and femonationalism (Farris, 2017), feminism risks being brought into the fold of the conservative right (Farris & Rottenberg, 2017; for an Italian case, see Arfini et al., 2019), neoliberal agendas (Rottenberg, 2018) or trans-exclusionary campaigns (Pearce et al., 2020). The exclusionary effects of a vision of feminism based on ontological identity politics are addressed here not by a reformist action of inclusion of further identities but by the deconstruction of the very idea of identity-based political subjectivity. It is clear that the "the ones who yell" (ibid.) could never consolidate into an identity, but together they surely could build tactics of creative confrontation in the public sphere, for example. Likewise, evoking those who "don't go to university" does not clearly identify a population and yet can point towards the issue of grassroots knowledge production and epistemological authority outside the academic industrial complex.

Subjectivities in the text appear to be framed according to a primacy of embodied experience. For example, to point out a frame resonance with intersectional anti-racist feminism, "the ones who wear veils" (ibid.) is preferred over the mention of Muslim women; likewise "the ones who earn little" (ibid.) may point to a experiential base that cross-cuts more conventional sociological stratification labels such as the working class, the cognitive and creative precarious workers or the precariat (Savage et al., 2013). Finally, at the performative level, the text deploys the classic queer

[2] I adopt the use of this term from the Spanish context (Romañach & Lobato, 2005), where it is preferred to the most common elsewhere "people with disability". Functional diversity highlights the neutral difference of bodies, without reference to their negative social interpretation.

strategy of the reappropriation of homophobic insults and sexist slurs. Just like the term queer has been performatively mobilized to reclaim and resignify what was once originally a slur (Seidman, 1996, p. 414), here the texts call for the mobilization of "the whores" and "the fags". It is important here to note how such terms are always used in their localized form, thus differing in each language translation, a result of the choice not to use the universal term "queer".

One powerful effect of transfeminism, indeed, is the possibility it brings of localizing and—I would argue—provincializing the Anglophone term "queer". The circulation and reception of queer lexicon and ideas in non-Anglophone contexts is yet to be systemically inquired into (Downing & Gillett, 2011). In the Italian context, the introduction of the term was met with scepticism from several parts of the LGBT movement (as well as from within academia). I was able to keep track of the lines of resistance first hand during the dozens of public presentations of "Canone Inverso" (Arfini & Lo Iacono, 2012), the first anthology of foundational Anglo-American queer texts to appear in Italian translation. The free labour of several comrades who volunteered to translate the original articles and of the curators made it possible for the first time to test the context of reception and decoding practices of a larger sample of LGBT readers. For some, queer theory was perceived to be a disembodied, elitist and hyper-theoretical product of American intellectual imperialism. For others, the term was too strongly associated with theories produced by the standpoint of gay male subjectivity. It is worth noting here that, despite being responsible for the very aetiology of the term queer theory, the work of Teresa de Lauretis on lesbian desire did not enjoy a robust circulation in feminist and lesbian feminist Italian networks. Likewise, contributions such as those of Ann Cvetkovich on butch-femme sexuality or of Jack Halberstam (1998) on female masculinities have been introduced 12 years later in translation (Halberstam, 2010). As a result, queer theory in Italy has been indeed initially associated more with thinkers such as Leo Bersani, Lee Edelman or Eve K. Sedgwick. I would also argue that this association has also been strengthened by the reputation of the figure of Mario Mieli,[3]

[3] Mario Mieli's persona and style of militancy, as well as his theoretical, literary and theatrical writings, were deemed controversial and outrageous at his time and beyond. A leading gay activist in the nascent Italian movement, he is best known for his major theoretical work, "Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Gay Critique" (1980), which draws upon Marx and psychoanalysis to address the relationship between heteronormativity and capitalism. The most recent English edition of his work (Mieli, 2018) is prefaced by Tim Dean.

who, after the introduction of queer theory into the Italian context, enjoyed a revival of popularity as a thinker who could at this point be understood as proto-queer. The anticipatory lead of Mieli was pinned on his celebration of the perverse polymorphous and on his pioneering attempt to link queer struggle with anti-capitalist struggle. Later, the term queer began circulating more outside of the field of theoretical knowledge production and into popular culture, by virtue of its function as an umbrella term but at the same time losing its performative potential of a derogatory term in non-translation. As Serena Bassi (2017) notes, the term queer remains always partially foreign to local political cultures. This is why queer movements in Italy[4] have often preferred to adopt a localized lexicon, such as "frocia" or "trans-frocio-lella", allowing the queering of language not to be lost in translation. They have also responded to other southern localizations, such as the ones proposed by the "Manifiesto para la Insurrección Transfeminista", a document which enjoyed robust circulation within Italian queer collectives. It could be argued that the deliberate choice of non-Anglo-American activists to adopt a localized lexicon contributes to the formation of a field populated by different localizations, each diverse and yet tied by their choice to invest in the creation of a unique language and by their practices of translation from south to south, from margin to margin.

Southern transfeminism thus mobilizes a broad array of deviant sexual subjects, in a different way from its Anglo-American counterpart. Indeed, Anglo-American feminisms has a longer infamous history of exclusion of trans women from women-only spaces, which they would allegedly invade (Stone, 1991), and likewise of sanctioning trans masculine people as traitors and partakers in patriarchal privilege (Salamon, 2008). In contrast with these aberrations of feminism, amongst the earliest call for transfeminism in the Anglophone area is indeed a manifesto where transfeminism is defined as "a movement by and for trans women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond" (Koyama, 2003, p. 244).

Even if it mobilizes a wider variety of subjects, transfeminism does maintain a specific focus on transgender issues. For example, in 2009 hundreds of Southern collectives joined the Spanish-initiated Stop Trans

[4] Likewise Spanish queer movements use the term "transmaricabollo" or in French "transpedèguine".

Pathologization (STP) campaign.[5] Most active between 2009 and 2018, STP campaigned for trans specific struggles, such as the removal of the classification of gender diversity from mental disorder diagnostic manuals, the institution for universal trans health care based on an informed consent model, legal gender recognition and the prevention and combat of transphobic violence. These are all issues that can be understood as feminist and that can be informed by feminist genealogies, not just because they express the need of a particular group of women (they actually also express the need of non-hegemonic masculinities and of non-binary people) but more structurally because they tackle issues of bodily autonomy and self-determination, health and sexual citizenship.

These are precisely the issues that have been crucial to feminism and the struggles that have achieved the largest mobilization in feminist social movements. Struggles in the same arena are not entirely won in the feminist field, either. For example, campaigns on reproductive rights were fundamental in mobilizing Italian feminists against the backlash on access to abortion. I argue that the transfeminist reading on reproductive citizenship (Roseneil et al., 2013) is heavily influenced by the recuperation of Marxist feminist theory and of strategies of the Wages for Housework movement. The strategy of the strike, in particular, was first proposed as a call to mobilization against unpaid reproductive labour and will later become central again in contemporary transfeminist mobilizations.

Genealogies of Queer Transfeminist Materialism

In order to reconstruct the genealogy of the trajectory from reproductive labour strike to gender strike, I will first provide a brief summary of the Wages for Housework campaign, started in Italy in 1972 (Dalla Costa, 1972). Before looking at its transnational resonance, it is worth recalling the peculiar historical circumstances of the Italian case. Indeed, Italian second-wave feminism formed around an anti-integrationist stance critical of the emancipatory equality politics of existing institutional groups. In the context of generalized social conflict and unrest initiated in 1968, feminists organized towards the construction of an autonomous political subject within the larger countercultural uprising of the student movement and of the extra-parliamentary left. The strand of Italian feminism

[5] The platform materials, available at www.stp2012.info, are translated into Spanish, English, French, German, Italian, Turkish and Portuguese.

that soon became hegemonic and remained so for a long time, focused its politics on the reconfiguration of the symbolic order. Influenced by French feminisms (in particular by the writings of Luce Irigaray and by the "Politique et Psychanalyse" group and its leader Antoinette Fouque), Italian feminism eventually consolidated into what is known as the "pensiero della differenza sessuale" [thought of sexual difference] (Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1990). Groups, intentionally kept small, focused on the practice of unconscious, a sort of group analysis inspired by clinical analysis, practised among women on a horizontal basis, thus without therapist–client roles (Melandri, 1997, 2000). Another important practice was that of "affidamento" (a term that can be loosely translated as "entrustment"), a model of female mentorship in which younger women can be empowered by an older "symbolic mother". This strand of feminism was thus strongly dependent on separatism and on the valorization of a feminine symbolic, philosophy, artistic canon and ethics of care (Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1990).

In the same years, Marxist feminist analyses focused instead on the role of reproductive labour in the capitalist system (Hartmann, 1979). The labour force, they argued, is the central value upon which capital accumulation depends. In order for the labour force to be produced and reproduced, a number of tasks need to be ensured, that is, human reproduction, but also cleaning, cooking and care of children and elders. This labour is provided by women and it is not remunerated. Thus, in order not only to transform women's condition, but to dismantle the capitalist system, it is necessary to reframe reproductive work as productive work. Demanding a salary for the work of reproduction became the political perspective that organized Italian Marxist feminism since the early 1970s (Dalla Costa & James, 1973). Albeit not reaching the same level of consensus as sexual difference feminism at the time, their campaign anticipated a number of important points relevant to contemporary transfeminist mobilization. In the 1970s, the Wages for Housework (WFH) movement in Italy had its strongest presence in the cities of Padua, Ravenna, Ferrara, Naples and Rome, but acted in concert with a transnational network that reached overseas to the UK, the USA and Canada and mobilized not only working-class White housewives but a variety of subjects, including sex workers and lesbians. The WFH campaign was based on the parallel between waged labour and housework, that is, on the necessity to recognize reproductive work as work. In her influential document authored in 1975 and

translated in the Neapolitan feminist chapter of the network in 1976, Silvia Federici writes:

> They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work. / They call it frigidity. We call it absenteeism. / Every miscarriage is a work accident (….) / Neuroses, suicides, desexualisation: occupational diseases of the housewife. (Federici, 1975, p. 1)

While this might appear to be a strategy of reduction to economics, the WFH theoretical effort was actually careful in pointing out the affective implications of reproductive work. In order to maintain reproductive labour unpaid, a strong emotional investment is necessary to naturalize this work as a "labour of love". The naturalization of unpaid reproductive labour ensures that women's work is privatized and remains far removed from any possibility of a public, collective, organized possibility of negotiation and conflict. Emotions, desires, aspirations and ultimately one's deeper sense of sexual identity support the recruitment of women into their reproductive roles.

I argue that this is the core epistemological move of this strand of feminism and the one that will prove to be most influential for contemporary transfeminist understandings of labour, including gender labour and the feminization of work and its tactics, including that of the strike. In 1974 on International Women's Day in Mestre, Italy, Mariarosa Dalla Costa delivered a speech entitled "A General Strike" (Dalla Costa, 1975), arguing that no strike before has ever been a truly general strike but, instead, a strike for male workers only. The strike as a tool for political mobilization and as a figuration to expose the material condition of exploitation of gendered labour will indeed be central for the WFH movement and will become central again to contemporary transfeminist movements. One peculiar, contemporary arena in which Italian transfeminist movements address the issue of labour and its gendered component and confront it with the call for a strike is the critique of academic labour.

Activism and Academia

Just as reproductive work has been naturalized as a "labour of love", academic labour too may be romanticized as the fulfilment of a personal vocation over which the subject has little choice, as well as an occupation that puts to work one's deepest sense of identity, personal ethics and ideas of

social justice. The Italian transfeminist movement, within the context of the "SomMovimento NazioAnale" network, addressed this construction and confronted the issue by using the tactic of the strike.

"SomMovimento NazioAnale" is a network of activists and queer collectives that began to meet in 2012 and promoted a variety of initiatives, both in the public space (protests and performative actions) and in squatted or self-managed spaces (assemblies, workshops, summer camps) in order to develop a transfeminist critique of austerity, homonationalism and anti-gender fundamentalism and heteronationalism (Drucker, 2016), that is, the promotion of anti-LGBTI prejudice in defence of national identities perceived as threatened.

Among the earliest reflections of the "SomMovimento NazioAnale" network, activists formed a working group on activism and academia. The composition of participants included many precarious researchers. It is worth noting that this discussion on academic labour takes place in a country, such as Italy, in which institutional recognition of the study of sexual cultures and gender, no matter from which disciplinary angle, has been superficial. At the undergraduate and graduate levels alike, the curricular positioning of gender and sexuality studies has little visibility, and trans studies are completely invisible. Given that there are no tenure lines dedicated to the field, scholars in gender, queer or trans studies struggle to secure their positions in the academic industry, which is already plagued by chronic underfunding and the perils of the neoliberalization of higher education.

The preliminary standpoint and shared experience from which the discussion started was at the intersection between queerness and precarious cognitive work and on the experience of labour exploitation and precarization. An account of these reflections is given in a collective piece of writing that, albeit published in an academic journal, is a report of the then-ongoing discussion within "SomMovimento NazioAnale" (Acquistapace et al., 2015). Here it is argued that the position of queer precarious scholars exposes subjects to unique forms of vulnerability within the already poisonous academic work environment. One is the risk of exploitation of privileged access to the field: on the one hand, professionally inquiring the political field of one's own mobilization can provide material and temporal resources to sustain one's activism. On the other hand, however, it can also bias one's experience of activism, for example, by steering one's engagement towards issues of mobilization which are more palatable to the academic industry. In fact, the most troubling aspect of this "double

presence" as activists and scholars is ultimately the extractive mechanism that appropriates knowledge created within grassroots movements to produce value for the academic industry. This extraction of value has certainly been a form of friction between the positions, because this value is not redistributed to knowledge producers embedded in the movements, which are often also precarious queer scholars. Locally, this tension reached a particularly high level during an academic conference on queer studies, held in 2017 in L'Aquila by the CIRQUE (Interuniversity Centre for Queer Research). Here, transfeminist scholars confronted with epistemic and administrative violence from the conference organization and leading panellists expressed their dissent by deserting the official panel where they were supposed to be and instead gathered in an autonomous transfeminist session. They framed this action as a strike:

> We interrupted the pedagogic labour, the emotional labour and the educational labour toward the dominant classes (….) We interrupted the exhausting work of networking that is supposed to be important in maybe getting us a job one day, maybe just another underpaid job (….) We refused to comply with the imperative of "being visible", and instead we gave visibility to the invisible work that we re-produce all the time (….) We stopped competing with each other to get the recognition of our work and we made space to exchange/share recognition among peers in a horizontal way, and to share knowledges embodied in our lives. (Transfeminist strykers from the CIRQUE Conference, 2017)

These conflicts are not unique and may indeed be confronted by any form of empirical research on social movement organizations that struggles with the tension between research *on* movements and research *for* movements (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014). However, some of the frictions between queer activism and academia are heightened not only by the general turn to neoliberal politics of evaluation and chronic public underfunding that intensifies knowledge extraction but also by the subject matter itself. As we mentioned, in Italy, the field of gender and sexuality studies has largely failed to achieve an autonomous disciplinary status. Local scholars in the field pursue their research from within departments of canonical disciplines (i.e. sociology, history, philosophy and literature) and are thus subjected to evaluation standards that do not favour interdisciplinary work. Moreover, with the intensification of anti-gender attacks on educational projects of all orders, the institutionalization of gender studies

in higher education has become even more fragile. Thus, the defence of gender studies in the academic industry has often implied renouncing the possibility of radical critique in favour of the search for legitimization. As a consequence, this conjuncture has aggravated the already present problem of the normalization of queer knowledge in order to fit evaluation standards, disciplinary methodologies, citation economies, authorial conventions and generally the call to scientific objectivity. However:

> While this is doubtlessly a problem, it is not necessarily the most important one. We are far more concerned by how it is that this process transforms people themselves: (re)constructing their subjectivities, sapping their energy, sucking life from social movements (….) Most of all, it produces a model of subjectivity that is precisely the opposite of what we need in order to create radical change and enact social justice. (Acquistapace et al., 2015, pp. 66–67)

On the one hand, this critique offers a materialist analysis of the current turn to neoliberal, market-driven governance of contemporary universities and, at the same time, highlights the affective consequences, that is, the construction of an aspirational subjectivity based on free labour and competition for visibility. This forms the subjectivity of the intellectual as an entrepreneur of oneself within a political economy of promise (Fiorilli, 2014) that is based on the constant postponement of recognition. However, unlike many contributions in the field of critical university studies (Izak et al., 2017), the main aim of this critique is not simply to reform the managerialism of neoliberal universities that restricts university work (Taylor, 2014); this standpoint does not stop at internal critique but rather points towards radical counter-hegemonic knowledge practices outside the borders of academia.

I argue that this mobilization is a paradigmatic example of how transfeminist readings are able to trace both the emotional and the material implication of labour and its gendered aspects and how the iconic practice of the strike can render visible both the conditions of exploitation and the choices of those who struggle against them. While this case referred to a specific field and labour sector, the same epistemology and strategy of mobilization is applied to very structure of gender production itself, as we will see in the following section.

Diversity Management and Queer Value

As anticipated, the genealogy of Marxist feminist interpretations of reproductive work acted as a precursor of transfeminist positions on queer readings of labour and value. Earlier in this chapter, we saw how the WFH campaign made the labour done within the household by women visible and pointed out how the cost of such labour is obscured by the production of a feminine gender consistent with the capacities put to work, that is, turning it into a "labour of love". Later, we saw how transfeminist scholars critiqued the academic "labour of love" in its gendered and emotional components. Now, we will finally address what I argue to be the pivotal point of transfeminist critique, that is, understanding the very production of gender—any gender—as a form of labour.

Understating gender as a form of labour implies that by producing gender one produces value. The value produced by this labour is accrued in different ways for different genders. Traditionally, as we have seen, the gender produced by cis heterosexual women has been put to work in the household. Under post-Fordism and the new spirit of the capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999), those characteristics commonly associated with the production of this gender and with care work have begun to be valorised outside the household and beyond women, in a variety of job sectors and in particular in those associated with precarious, service and cognitive work. Flexible availability translates into chronic overtime, lack of regulation, legal protection and social security; undefined job descriptions call for qualities typically associated with feminine relational and emotional skills: multitasking, networking, conflict resolution, the capacity to care, mediate or seduce. This dynamic has been called the feminization of labour (Marazzi, 2011; Morini 2010; Nannicini, 2002). This meaning of the feminization of work draws from the Italian post-workerist or neo-workerist tradition and broadens the sociological notion beyond the recognition of a generalized increase in the numbers of women in the workforce and an expansion of sectors, such as the tertiary, with a predominantly female workforce.

Producing a gender is a compulsory performance based on repetition (Butler, 1990) for anyone, including non-normative gendered subjectivities. The valorization of womanhood in the household remains a phenomenal source of extraction: house care work, either unpaid or outsourced along racial lines, is still done predominantly by women. Within Europe, in Italy, women spend the highest amount of time doing domestic work

according to a gender care gap that begins from age 11 to 14 (Dotti Sani, 2018).

However, alongside the feminization of labour, diversity management is increasingly extracting value from non-normative genders (Ahmed, 2012; Ferguson, 2018). In the context of the co-optation of the lesbian/gay mainstream in a neoliberal era of homonormativity, queer liberation is increasingly understood as being dependent on inclusion in the labour market and acquisition of purchasing power (D'Emilio, 1983; Floyd, 2009). As consumers of gay tourism, gentrified house propriety, sex industry and recreational services, homosexual citizens strive for respectability and national belonging, confining queer liberation to a "demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2003, p. 50). This dynamic is perhaps more evident from the consumer's side, but transfeminist readings provided a critique from the perspective of the necessary precedent to consumer power, that is, labour market inclusion:

> We are being subjected and we subject [to diversity management] because it is believe we are more creative, more forthcoming, better suited to listen and mediate, because we allegedly smile more and present better, but also because we need social recognition. As gay, lesbians, transsexuals, queers, people with a relational status that can't be captured under any model of kinship consistent with any understating of "family", it is believed that we don't have any relationships that distract us from our dedication to the job, and at the same time we are asked to extract surplus value from our relational networks and give it away to the company (. …) We are supposed to be grateful and faithful to the company that exploits us because it graciously "concedes" us some of the rights the an homophobic state denies us, while at the same time earning a "friendly" image on our skins. (somMovimentonazioAnale, 2014)

Again with a foundational epistemological move that traces the constitutive elements of subject formation in both their material and emotional aspects, labour market inclusion is understood by this transfeminist movement as the construction of a subjectivity and the promise of recognition otherwise denied. The cost of this recognition, however, comes with the intensification of precarization and exploitation, even of the most intimate aspects of life. Just like Marxist feminists reclaimed a salary for housework in order to make the gratuity of care labour visible, transfeminists devised a price list of unpaid gendered emotional labour (Mura et al., 2016),

which included items such as "showing off eccentric queer fashion clothing in order to be crowned PR queen of the city" to "pretend to be a secular nun when in an interview they ask you if you plan to have children" (somMovimentonazioAnale, 2014a). Coherently, to organize the struggle at the point of production and bring conflict in an unmediated way, direct actions in the transfeminist field took up the form of gender strike, queering transnational collective elaborations on striking at times of unpaid and/or precarious labour (Transnational Social Strike Platform, 2018), aiming at interrupting modes of production usually seen as private, insuppressible, individual or immaterial, such as emotional labour and social reproduction.

The refusal of work and interruption of social reproduction has also been central to the mobilization against gender violence promoted by "Non Una Di Meno". This movement participated in the International Women's Strike of March 8, 2017,[6] and, later, through the cooperation of local collectives spread throughout the Italian national territory, produced a national "Feminist plan against male violence against women and against gender violence". The massive document addresses a number of topics (health, reproductive rights, economic violence, media representation, racism and migration, legislative reform, ecology, feminist pedagogy, lifelong learning, spaces for feminist self-defence, anti-violence centre autonomous management, mapping and data collection) and for each provides a theoretical analysis as well as indications for immediate political claims and practical interventions.

The transfeminist epistemology of the plan also emerges clearly in the structural analysis of violence:

> It is necessary to expose the violence inherent to the social obligation that dictates to reproduce binary genders only – man/woman – in order to sustain compulsory heterosexuality. This violence, that we define violence of genders, imposes identifying with a universally given masculinity or femininity, namely with the gender assigned at birth, and to conform to the social role programmed for it. By understanding gender and a socially and historically constructed notion, not necessarily linked to biological sex, it is thus possible to make visible the common matrix of that violence that affects,

[6] This mobilization acted in concert to the new wave of global struggles initiated by the Argentinian "Ni Una Menos" movement in 2017 and influenced also by the 2016 strikes and demonstrations by women in Poland protesting against proposed legislation for a ban on abortion.

> together, women and all subjectivities that do not conform to such a binary norm. (Non Una Di Meno, 2017, p. 7)

This is a vision of gender-based violence that accounts for both the empirical violence of men against women and for the systemic violence of the gender binary itself.

Conclusions: Towards a Gender Strike

The subjects of transfeminism emerged politically as a coalition of those who inhabit the margins of the gender binary structure, due to their inability or refusal to choose to conform to it. Marxist feminists in the 1970s made the seemingly impossible call to withdraw from participating in the core function of the gender binary structure, by calling for a strike from housework. Contemporary transfeminist scholars called for a strike from another "labour of love", that is, academic labour. Ultimately, queer transfeminist critiques coalesced around the call for a gender strike, understood as a way to interrupt both the extraction of value resulting from the production of genders (as in the case of feminized work or of diversity management) and the violence inherent to the social obligation to reproduce binary genders. Just as the WFH campaign aimed at denaturalizing care work by demanding a wage for housework as a way to mobilize against compulsory, unpaid housework, the figuration of a gender strike rests on the understanding of the creation of gender itself as work and may promise to liberate our doing of gender from its violent consequences, from its oppressive effects and from the alienation of its value. Doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) in the context of our daily lives is a choice constrained by a binary structure within which we may feel we have little room for autonomy and self-determination, to the point that withdrawing from doing gender may actually seem impossible. However, by adopting a structural analysis of gender, we can argue that the responsibility of doing gender does not bear on the individual but rather on the social structure. It is thus crucial that the transfeminist movement continues to be sustained in its creative elaborations of tactics that will allow it to bring the iconic practice of the gender strike in the public space. Interrupting the production of gender cannot be an individual choice; it needs to be the result of collective choice and an act sustained by a collective mobilization, such as the strike. And if we understand the relationship between social structure and human agency as recursive, we could hope that the

collective choice of striking from gender will bring changes at the structural level and make doing gender less a source of oppression and violence and more that of solidarity and justice, pleasure and creativity.

References

Acquistapace, A., Busi, B., Fiorilli, O., Peroni, C., Patrick, D., & SomMovimento NazioAnale, A. (2015). Transfeminist scholars on the verge of a nervous break down. *Revista Feminismos, 3*(1), 62–70.

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.

Arfini, E. A., & Lo Iacono, C. (2012). *Canone inverso. Antologia di teoria queer*. ETS.

Arfini, E., Ghigi, R., & Magaraggia, S. (2019). Can feminism be right? A content analysis of discourses about women by female Italian right-wing politicians. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia, 60*(4), 693–719.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny*. Duke University Press.

Bassi, S. (2017). The future is a foreign country: Translation and temporal critique in the Italian it gets better project. In B. J. Baer & K. Kaindl (Eds.), *Queering translation, translating the queer: Theory, practice, activism* (pp. 58–71). Routledge.

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (1999). *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Gallimard.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Dalla Costa, M. (1972). *Potere femminile e sovversione sociale*. Marsilio.

Dalla Costa, M. (1975). A general strike. In W. Edmond & S. Fleming (Eds.), *All work and no pay: Women, housework, and the wages due*. Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press.

Dalla Costa, M., & James, S. (1973). *The power of women and the subversion of the community*. Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press.

D'Emilio, J. (1983). Capitalism and gay identity. In A. Snitow, C. Stansell, & S. Thompson (Eds.), *Powers of desire: The politics of sexuality* (pp. 131–141). New Feminist Library.

Dotti Sani, G. M. (2018). *Time use in domestic settings throughout the life course: the Italian case*. Springer.

Downing, L., & Gillett, R. (Eds.). (2011). *Queer in Europe*. Ashgate.

Drucker, P. (2016, August 31). *Homonationalism, Heteronationalism and LGBTI Rights in the EU* [Public Seminar]. Retrieved from https://publicseminar.org/2016/08/homonationalism-heteronationalism-and-lgbti-rights-in-the-eu/

Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality? Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press.
Farris, S. R. (2017). *In the name of women's rights: The rise of femonationalism*. Duke University Press.
Farris, S., & Rottenberg, C. (2017). Introduction: Righting feminism. *New formations: a Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics, 91*(1), 5–15.
Federici, S. (1975). *Wages against housework*. Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press.
Ferguson, R. A. (2018). *One-dimensional queer*. Polity Press.
Fiorilli, O. (2014). Butler ai tempi dell'economia della promessa (di riconoscimento). *Effimera*. Retrieved from http://archivio.commonware.org/index.php/gallery//534-butler-economia-promessa
Floyd, K. (2009). *The reification of desire: Toward a queer Marxism*. University of Minnesota Press.
Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. University of California Press.
Haiven, M., & Khasnabish, A. (2014). *The radical imagination: Social movement research in the age of austerity*. Fernwood Publishing.
Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. Duke University Press.
Halberstam, J. (2010). *Maschilità senza uomini*. ETS.
Hartmann, H. I. (1979). The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism: Towards a more progressive union. *Capital & Class, 3*(2), 1–33.
Izak, M., Kostera, M., & Zawadzki, M. (Eds.). (2017). *The future of university education*. Springer.
Koyama, E. (2003). The Transfeminist manifesto. In R. Dicker & A. Piepmeier (Eds.), *Catching a wave: Reclaiming feminism for the 21st century* (pp. 244–259). Northeastern University Press.
Marazzi, C. (2011). *Capital and affects: The politics of the language economy*. MIT Press.
Melandri, L. (1997). *L'infamia originaria*. Edizioni L'Erba Voglio.
Melandri, L. (2000). *Una visceralità indicibile: la pratica dell'inconscio nel movimento delle donne degli anni Settanta*. Franco Angeli.
Mieli, M. (1980). *Homosexuality and liberation: Elements of a gay critique*. Gay Men's Press.
Mieli, M. (2018). *Towards a gay communism: Elements of a homosexual critique*. Pluto Press.
Milan Women's Bookstore Collective. (1990). *Sexual difference: A theory of social-symbolic practice* (P. Cicogna & T. de Lauretis. Trans.). Indiana University Press.
Morini, C. (2010). *Per amore o per forza. Femminilizzazione del lavoro e biopolitiche del corpo*. Ombrecorte.

Mura, B., Peroni, C., & Veneri, C. (2016). Gender Strike! Il Tariffario del lavoro gratuito. In F. Zappino (Ed.), *Il genere tra neoliberismo e neofondamentalismo*. Ombre Corte.

Nannicini, A. (2002). *Le parole per farlo. Donne al lavoro nel postfordismo*. Derive Approdi.

Non Una Di Meno. (2017). *Piano femminista contro la violenza maschile e di genere*. Retrieved from https://nonunadimeno.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/abbiamo_un_piano.pdf

Pearce, R., Erikainen, S., & Vincent, B. (2020). TERF wars: An introduction. *The Sociological Review, 68*(4), 677–698.

Red PutaBolloNegraTransFeminista. (2010). *Manifiesto para la insurreccion insurrección TransFeminista*. Retrieved from http://ideadestroyingmuros.blogspot.com/2010/01/manifesto-per-uninsurrezione.html

Risman, B. J. (2004). Gender as a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism. *Gender & Society, 18*(4), 429–450.

Romañach, J., & Lobato, M. (2005). Diversidad funcional, nuevo término para la lucha por la dignidad en la diversidad del ser humano. *Foro de vida independiente, 5*, 1–8.

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (2013). Citizenship and reproduction/reproducing citizens. *Citizenship Studies, 17*, 8.

Rottenberg, C. (2018). *The rise of neoliberal feminism*. Oxford University Press.

Salamon, G. (2008). Transfeminism and the future of gender. In J. W. Scott (Ed.), *Women's studies on the edge* (pp. 115–136). Duke University Press.

Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., Roux, B. L., Friedman, S., & Miles, A. (2013). A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC's great British class survey experiment. *Sociology, 47*(2), 219–250.

Seidman, S. (1996). *Queer theory/sociology*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Solá, M., & Urko, E. (Eds.). (2013). *Transfeminismos: Epistemes, fricciones y flujos*. Editorial Txalaparta.

somMovimentonazioAnale. (2014). *Sciopero sociale: scioper dai generi/dei generi*. Retrieved from https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2014/11/13/sciopero-sociale-sciopero-dai-generi-dei-generi/

somMovimentonazioAnale. (2014a). *Tariffario del lavoro gratuito*. Retrieved from https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2014/11/11/tariffario-del-lavoro-non-pagato/

Stone, S. (1991). The empire strikes Back: A posttranssexual manifesto. In K. Straub & J. Epstein (Eds.), *Body guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity* (pp. 280–304). Routledge.

Taylor, Y. (Ed.). (2014). *The entrepreneurial university: Engaging publics, intersecting impacts*. Palgrave.

Transfeminist strykers from the CIRQUE Conference. (2017). *STRIKE! A statement from the transfeminist strikers of the Cirque Conference* (L'Aquila, March 31st–April 2nd, 2017). Retrieved from https://sommovimentonazioanale.noblogs.org/post/2017/05/26/strike-a-statement-from-the-transfeminist-strikers-of-the-cirque-conference-laquila-march-31st-april-2nd-2017/

Transnational Social Strike Platform. (2018). *Actions/strikes/statements.* Retrieved from https://www.transnational-strike.info/category/actionsstrikesstatements/

Wesling, M. (2012). Queer value. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 18*(1), 107–125.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society, 1*(2), 125–151.