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Intimate Monsters speak back: Intimate citizenship and monstrous kinship in Southern Europe

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Opinion
General election 2015

The Tories are becoming the party of ethnic diversity - Labour has to respond

Lester Holloway

Tue 7 Apr 2015 11.31 BST

If Labour is not careful, it will have fewer BAME MPs than the Conservatives after the 2015 election. So much for being the

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Monsters – searching for synonyms

Big, massive, enormous,
gigantic, colossal.
Misfit. Odd. Eccentric. Unusual.
Peculiar. Atypical. Dangerous.
Dissident, nonconforming.
Cruel. Wrong. Mistake. Error.



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Which Monsters?

LGBTQI as those who repeatedly fail to stay obediently within the limits of the heteropatriarchal and cisgender regimes.

Bodies, practices or experiences as powerful reminders of unsuitability.

Inability and/or refusal to fulfil dominant cultural expectations ensured diversity would be visible even before it became framed as a political demand.

Inadequacy as a magnifying lens adding monstrosity to the monstrous misfit.



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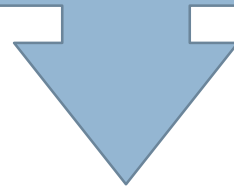


Intimate Citizenship

Citizenship as a loaded notion

Personal is political; private is public

Sexual, Reproductive and Intimate citizenship



- [A] complex sphere of ‘inmost’ relationships with self and others. [...] Intimacy exists in the doing of sex and love, obviously, but also in the doing of families, marriages, and friendships, in child bearing and child rearing, and in caring for others. (..) Bodies, feelings, identities, relationships, interactions, even communities - all are central elements in doing intimacies (Plummer 2003: 13)



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Intimate Citizenship

- Intimate citizenship looks at the decisions people have to make over the control (or not) over one's body, feelings, relationships; access (or not) to representations, relationships, public spaces, etc.; and socially grounded choices (or not) about identities, gender experiences, erotic experiences. It does not imply one model, one pattern, one way (Plummer 2003: 14).
- “the freedom and ability to construct and live selfhood and close relationships safely, securely and according to personal choice, in their dynamic, changing forms, with respect, recognition and support from state and civil society” (Roseneil, 2010: 78).



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Which intimate monsters are we discussing about?

E.g. polyamory constellations, the transgender pregnant men or the role of friends as cohabitants or co-parents.

Arguably the intimate monster is the reverse of the good intimate citizen.

Then, who is the good intimate citizen?



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FEMCIT research project



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Sasha Roseneil, Isabel Crowhurst, Ana Cristina Santos & Mariya Stoilova

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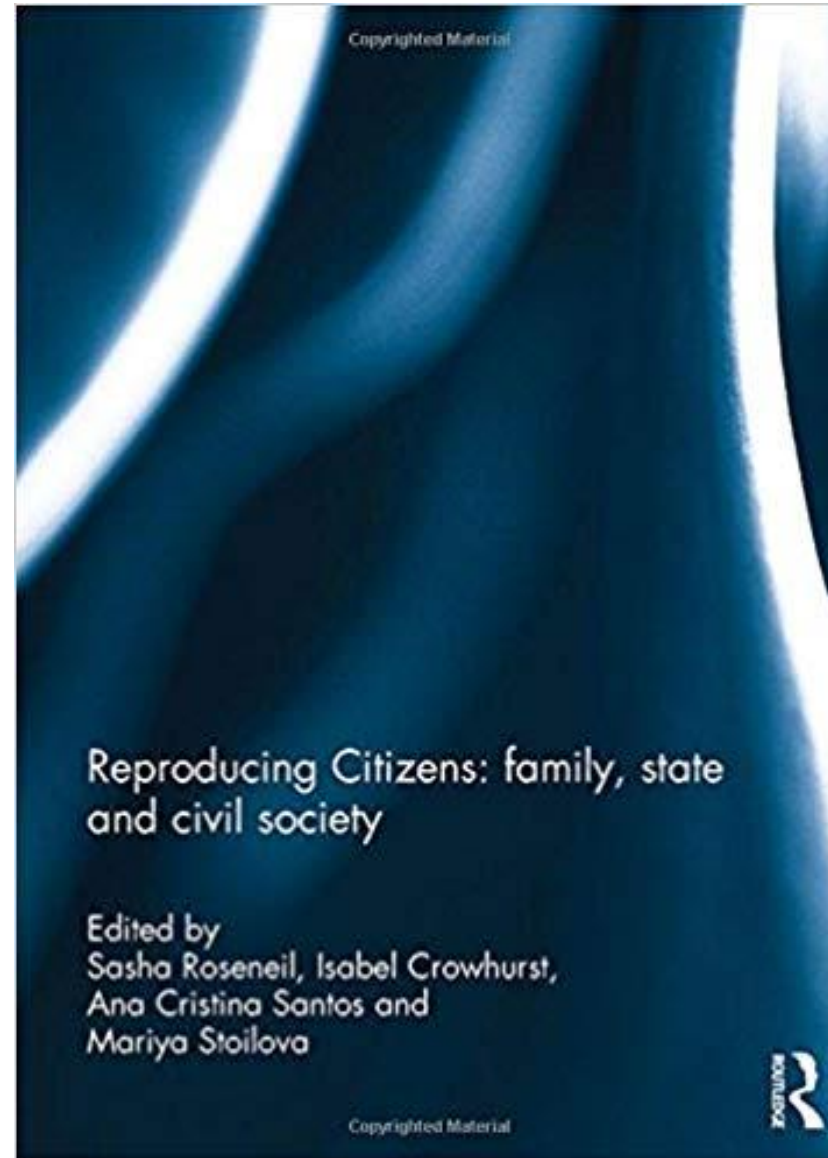


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INTIMATE research project

Between 2014 and 2019

1st crossnational study funded by the European Research Council to investigate the ways in which self-identified LGBTQ people in Southern Europe develop and sustain intimate bonds.

INTIMATE looks into three main areas of personal relations: partnering; parenting; and friendship.

80 interviews to experts

120 life stories in Portugal, Spain and Italy with self-identified LGBTQ people, aged 25-45



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Intimate Monster

- Those whose embodiments, practices and experiences escape the social and medicolegal expectations within the dominant sex-gender regime. (Santos, 2019, forthcoming)

Monstrous kinship

- A symbolic claim beyond the binary social versus biology, a cluster of arguments that sustain the (legal and sociocultural) possibility of intimate bonds beyond restrictive binary and linear biomedical categories. (Santos, 2019, forthcoming)



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INTIMATE research project

Queering partnering, namely consensual non-monogamy; LATs
Both challenge the marital duties inscribed in Portuguese law
of fidelity and cohabitation

Queering parenting: e.g. ART and Surrogacy
Nature versus nurture; reproductive work; missing language;
reuniting after rupture with family of origin

Queering friendship: e.g. friends as cohabitants; friends as
sperm/ egg donors; friends as main providers of daily care



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Intimate Monster

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The untamed monster

“I am going to write fire until it comes out of my ears, my eyes, my noseholes – everywhere. Until it’s every breath I breath. I am going to go out like a fucking meteor!” (1988: 76-77). Lorde, *A 1988 A Burst of Light: Essays*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand.



Audre Lorde



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The untamed monster

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, *like dust, I'll rise*. [...]
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise. [...]
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, *like air, I'll rise*.



Maya Angelou



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