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Assembling Citizenship: Sexualities Education, Micropolitics and the Becoming-Citizen

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Abstract

This article suggests that citizenship should be seen not as a status to be acquired, lost or refused by an individual. Rather it is an emergent and relational capacity produced and reproduced in everyday material interactions, across a spectrum of activities from work to lifestyle practices. We examine one example of such a material interaction: the engagements that young people have with sexualities education. To aid this endeavour, we apply a new materialist, relational framework that addresses the micropolitical interactions between humans and non-human materialities. Using data from two studies of sexualities education, we assess how the capacities produced during sexualities education interactions – such as a capacity to express specific sexual desires or to manage fertility proactively – contribute inter alia to young people's 'becoming-citizen'. Informed by this analysis, we argue that sociology may usefully apply a bottom–up model of citizenship as *becoming*, constituted materially from diverse engagements.

Keywords

affect, assemblage, becoming, citizenship, micropolitics, new materialism, sexualities education, young people

Introduction

Citizenship has been claimed as the foundation for 'modern claims to liberty, equality, rights, autonomy, self-determination, individualism, and human agency' (Nyers, 2004:

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203), bearing upon issues of social and political participation, rights, exclusion and subjugation (Bhambra, 2015; Turner, 1990). However, as a concept, it has also been criticised as 'the worn-out offspring of liberal humanism' (Shildrick, 2013: 153), and as inadequately theorised in relation to material embodiment (Bacchi and Beasley, 2002). We build upon these critiques to argue that citizenship is not a state or status to be acquired, lost or refused by an individual (Sabsay, 2012: 610). Rather, it is an *emergent capacity* of a material and relational network or assemblage of bodies, things (such as money, property), collectivities (communities, nation-states), norms and values, legal and policy frameworks, and ideas (nationality, belonging, democracy).

This perspective suggests that citizenship is produced and reproduced within the everyday material interactions in which humans are involved (Beasley and Bacchi, 2000: 350). Interactions between assembled elements create (among other things) the society-level effects often associated with 'citizenship' (Koster, 2015: 225), such as inclusion and exclusion, security and insecurity, legitimation and transgression. This perspective opens the door, theoretically and practically, to what Holland (2006: 202) has called a 'nomad citizenship' that 'includes and legitimates a wide range of group-allegiances' rather than any 'transcendent master-allegiance' (see also Shildrick, 2013). This bottom–up approach to citizenship offers an alternative to a top–down conception founded in the normative, legal and governance frameworks of nations or communities; and substitutes a citizenship macro-politics of social groups, laws and government with a *micropolitics* of localised interactions. It replaces concern with *belonging* with an open-ended *becoming* (Braidotti, 2013: 169), and suggests new possibilities for citizenship, in place of boundaries and closure (Alldred and Fox, 2015; Frieh and Smith, 2018).

In this relational model, citizenship is produced at multiple 'sites' (Barns et al., 1999: 18) of material interaction, including work, consumption, political and social participation, migration, health, social identity, sexualities and personal relations, and education (Burchell, 1995; Dudley, 1999; Mouffe, 1995; Plummer, 2001). Here we explore the social production of citizenship through materialist analysis of one site from this skein of material interactions: the engagements of young people with sexualities education,[1] using data from two studies conducted by the first author. We assess the ways in which three different *sexualities education assemblages* – constituted by the practices of teachers, school nurses and youth workers – produce sexual and non-sexual capacities in young people. Conceptual tools derived from new materialist theory[2] provide the means to conduct a 'micropolitical' analysis of interactions between sexualities educators, young people and other assembled human and non-human materialities. This analysis discloses how sexualities education contributes to young people's 'becoming-citizen', for instance, by establishing their capacities to express specific sexual desires and to manage their fertility. From this analysis, we argue that all kinds of day-to-day practices – in multiple areas of life – contribute to becoming-citizen.

Sexualities Education and Citizenship

'Citizenship' has been applied variously as an abstract political science construct (Heater, 2004), a legal status (Šadl and Madsen, 2016), an objective of social policy (Bottomore and Marshall, 1992; Dwyer, 2010) and an aim of rights-based activism (Richardson,

2018; Weeks et al., 2001; Wilson, 2009). Sociologically, it has been used to address public participation (Clarke, 2005; Siim, 1998; Turner, 1990), rights (Marshall, 1981; Wilson, 2009) and exclusion and subjugation (Bhambra, 2015), as well as gender and sexualities. 'Sexual citizenship' is a derivative notion concerning 'the balance of entitlement, recognition, acceptance and responsibility' (Weeks et al., 2001: 196) of different sexualities in a variety of settings (Ammaturo, 2015; Mackie, 2017; Waites, 2005); societal recognition of sexual diversity (Weeks, 1998: 35); and access to rights of sexual expression and identity (Monro, 2005: 155–162; Richardson, 2017: 211). Meanwhile, feminist and other scholars have addressed issues around reproduction and citizenship. These include the effects of gender, reproductive status and sexualities on social justice and participation in consumer and employment markets and public life (Evans, 1993: 8; Fonseca et al., 2012; Kidger, 2004), and the production of gendered inequalities in social and political life (Roseneil et al., 2013: 901–903).

Sexualities education denotes the range of pedagogical interventions with children and young people around sexualities, reproductive biology and rights, sexual health and issues concerning sexual consent and protection. Since the 1970s, it has been underpinned in the West by a humanist perspective. This is founded upon the rights of citizens to a full, happy and healthy sex life (Shtarkshall et al., 2007), and with the objective of empowerment – particularly of girls and marginalised young people (SIECUS, 2004: 19), within a context of liberalisation of attitudes and laws on sexual conduct in western countries during this period (Irvine, 2004: 19; Luker, 2007: 68). However, this humanist perspective has been criticised as masking societal efforts to control child sexualities (Monk, 1998) and replicating culture-specific bodies of knowledge on bodies and sexualities that reflect societal beliefs and biases concerning gender, sexuality and childhood (Jones, 2011).

Sexualities education curricula in western countries are delivered by specialist and non-specialist teachers, health workers such as school nurses and health educators, and community-based youth workers (UNESCO, 2015); and address sexual and reproductive biology; sexual health and personal protection; emotions and relationships; sexual rights and responsibilities; and issues of sexual identity and citizenship (UNESCO, 2009). However, globally sexualities education remains patchy, with issues around gender and rights least often included in educational curricula (Monk, 2001: 34; UNESCO, 2015: 34). In parts of the USA, this liberal model is replaced by 'abstinence-only sex education', reflecting local conservative and fundamentalist religious attitudes to sexual morality and non-normative sexualities among both legislators and populace (Santelli et al., 2017; Weaver et al., 2005: 176–177).

In the UK, sex and relationship education (SRE) provision has varied across the constituent nations; in England it has been part of the national curriculum specified for all state-maintained secondary schools since 1996. Elements of sexualities education may also be taught in primary schools as part of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Provision of SRE is currently the subject of a comprehensive revision, and will be re-launched as a statutory *relationships and sex education* (RSE) component of state and independent secondary schools curricula (*relationships education* in primary schools) from 2020. Parents will retain their current rights to withdraw their children from some or all RSE classes on grounds of culture or religion, while faith schools will be permitted

to teach sexualities education from 'within the tenets of their faith' (Long, 2018: 3). Similar revisions are underway in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The most explicit UK policy link between sexualities education and citizenship was arguably the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (TPS), established by the 1997–2010 'New Labour' government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1999). Non-normative parenting has long been blamed for social breakdown and exclusion (Armstrong, 1995; Weeks et al., 2001: 157). The objective of the TPS was to promote young people's active citizenship and participation in the workforce by reducing teenage pregnancy and parenting, and drawing teenage parents back into economic productivity and self-sufficiency through a mix of incentives and sanctions (Alldred and David, 2010: 26; Kidger, 2004; Rudoe, 2014: 294). Its 'solutions' to the social and economic exclusion of teenage parents entailed enhanced sex and relationship education in and out of schools; improved access to contraception and sexual health advice (targeting high risk groups and young men); support for teen parents with housing, health and child care; and punitive benefits sanctions against those not returning to employment, education or training (SEU, 1999: 8–9). For a critical analysis of US policies on pregnancy, race and citizenship, see Tapia (2005).

In this article we step away from the kind of 'cause and effect' relationship between behaviour and citizenship that underpinned the TPS and similar interventions. In the introduction, we noted the humanist foundations of 'citizenship' and questioned a view of citizenship as a state or status to be acquired, to be lost or to be rejected by an individual. By contrast, Beasley and Bacchi (2000: 344) argue that citizenship needs to be seen as foundationally embodied: it is the body and embodied interactions that materialise the operations of societal power. From a Foucauldian position, writers such as Dudley (1999), Koster (2015) and Petersen (1999) assess 'citizenship' as a disciplining of bodies and minds in arenas including health, education, housing and welfare. 'Citizens', for Bacchi and Beasley (2002: 330) are 'interacting, material, embodied subjects', whose social and political location are mediated in material interactions in social settings as disparate as surrogacy and cosmetic surgery (2002: 330); breastfeeding and disability (Beasley and Bacchi, 2000). An empirical example of such a 'bottom–up', material understanding of the production of citizenship may be found in Martín and De Laet's (2018) study of domestic waste. The authors argued that conscientious household recycling practices produces 'good citizens', though this attribution is precarious, contingent and relational rather than absolute (Martín and De Laet, 2018: 705–707).

Considered in this way, 'citizenship' needs to be seen not as referencing an attribute of an individual human, but as an *emergent capacity* of material social interactions: part of a ceaseless 'becoming' of the social world. Citizenship in this latter view is an unstable and precarious project – a process of 'becoming-citizen' – that is continually in flux and continually threatened as human bodies interact both with other people and with non-human materialities including spaces and places, objects such as passports, ballot boxes and work credentials, as well as abstract concepts such as nationality and democracy. To explore this further, we examine in this article in what ways sexualities education for young people may produce relational capacities conventionally associated with citizenship. In the following section, we develop a materialist analytical framework to aid this exploration.

A New Materialist Perspective on Sexualities Education and Citizenship

To explore how sexualities education may produce specific capacities in its recipients, and hence how it contributes to their 'becoming-citizen', we shall apply a 'new materialist' and posthuman analysis. The new materialisms are a collectivity of disparate approaches in the humanities and social science (Coole and Frost, 2010: 5; Lemke, 2015) that are posthumanist and post-anthropocentric (Braidotti, 2013: 86; St Pierre, 2014: 3), acknowledging social production as constituted by non-human forces as well as human actions. The new materialisms are materially embedded and embodied (Braidotti, 2011: 128), and relational and contingent rather than essentialist or absolute (Coole and Frost, 2010: 29).[3]

This perspective, it has been argued, supplies social theory with a means to re-immerse itself in a world produced by a range of material forces that extend from the physical and the biological to the psychological, social and cultural (Barad, 1996: 181; Braidotti, 2013: 3). Elements as disparate as organic bodies (a tiger, a human), things (a mountain, the wind), immaterial things (a thought, desire or feeling, 'discourse' or ideology) may all be regarded as constituent parts of a relational material universe. These components assemble, interact and disassemble continually, to produce the flow of events that comprise the world, history and human lives (Stewart, 2007: 4–5).

To develop a new materialist perspective on sexualities education and citizenship, we shall first consider briefly what such an approach means for understanding sexualities. While sexuality has been regarded by biological and medical scientists and by many social scientists as quintessentially an attribute of an organism, be it plant, animal or human (Fox, 2012: 111–117; Grosz and Probyn, 1995: xiii), new materialist authors have offered an alternative conceptualisation. Braidotti (2011: 148) describes sexuality as a 'complex, multi-layered force that produces encounters, resonances and relations of all sorts', while Foucault's (1998: 157) work reveals the material-semiotic character of sexualities as both embodied and discursive. Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 293) state quite bluntly that 'sexuality is everywhere': in a wide range of interactions between bodies and what affects them physically, cognitively or emotionally, from dancing or shopping to state violence or authority.

From this perspective, sexuality is not viewed as an attribute of a body (albeit one that is consistently trammelled by social forces), but instead as a series of capacities produced by a 'sexuality-assemblage' (Alldred and Fox, 2015; Fox and Alldred, 2013; Renold and Ringrose, 2013; see also Allen, 2015; Austin, 2016: 284; Cameron-Lewis, 2016; Renold and Ivinson, 2014: 372). This assemblage comprises not just human bodies but the whole range of physical, biological, social and cultural, economic, political or abstract forces with which they interact (Renold and Ringrose, 2013: 250). For example, a sexuality-assemblage accrues around an event such as an erotic kiss, which comprises not just two pairs of lips but also physiological processes, personal and cultural contexts, aspects of the setting, memories and experiences, sexual codes and norms of conduct, and potentially many other relations particular to that event (Fox and Alldred, 2013: 775).

A sexuality-assemblage must be analysed not in terms of human or other agency, but by considering the assembled relations' ability to *affect* or *be affected* (Deleuze, 1988:

101). Within a sexuality-assemblage, human and non-human relations affect (and are affected by) each other to produce material effects, including sexual capacities and desires, sexual identities and the many 'discourses' on sexualities. An assemblage's 'affect economy' (Clough, 2004: 15) may be understood as the forces shifting bodies and other relations 'from one mode to another, in terms of attention, arousal, interest, receptivity, stimulation, attentiveness, action, reaction, and inaction'. 'Sexuality' *is* this affect economy, which produces sexual (and other) capacities – capacities to do, feel and desire – in bodies (Allen, 2015: 122; Fox and Alldred, 2013: 769).

In terms of empirical research, this means that it is the sexuality-assemblage rather than an individual body that produces the physical and social phenomena associated with sex and sexuality. To inquire about a body's sexual capacities (what a body can do, what it cannot do, and what it can become), requires us to address it always as part of a relational assemblage. An emphasis on affect economies and capacities consequently establishes a basis for analysis of sexualities education as itself an assemblage (Alldred and Fox, 2017) that produces both novel and normative capacities in bodies, including *'non-sexual'* capacities. Crucially for the current article, we may ask: what capacities as 'citizens' does a sexuality-assemblage produce?

Such a bottom–up approach to citizenship as a capacity continually produced and reproduced through material interactions requires some specific theoretical tools to analyse the micropolitics of affect economies. Elsewhere (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 32) we have developed and re-branded two concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's description of affect micropolitics, to supply us with tools for micropolitical analysis of research data. Their concept of 'territorialisation/de-territorialisation' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 88–89) we re-constitute as 'specification/generalisation', while their terms 'molar'/'molecular' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 286–288) we designate as 'aggregative/singular'.

Specification refers to affects within an assemblage that produce *specific* capacities in a body or thing; these contrast with *generalising* affects that open up new capacities and possibilities for what a body can do. So – within the context of an established sexual relationship – a kiss may specify a body into sexual arousal and familiar sexual behaviours. Yet a similar kiss in another context – say from a new lover – may generalise a body's capacities, enabling new possibilities such as polyamory or a new life begun elsewhere; what Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 277) called 'a line of flight'.

Aggregative affects in assemblages act similarly on multiple bodies, organising or categorising them to create converging identities or capacities. In the field of sexuality, ideas and concepts such as love, monogamy, chastity or sexual liberation, prejudices and biases, and conceptual categories such as 'women', 'heterosexual' or 'perverted' all aggregate bodies. By contrast, other affects (for instance, a gift from a lover, or a smile from a stranger) produce a *non-aggregating* or *singular* outcome or capacity in just one body, with no significance beyond itself, and without aggregating consequences. Singular affects may on occasions be micropolitical drivers of generalisation, enabling bodies to resist aggregating or constraining forces, and opening up new capacities to act, feel or desire.

In the following empirical study of sexuality education assemblages, we use this ontology of assemblages, affects and capacities as the starting point for the methodology and the approach to analysis. The concepts of specification and aggregation provide the

means to analyse micropolitically how affect economies in sexualities education assemblages produce capacities as citizens.

Studies and Methods

The focus within new materialist ontology upon matter, relationality and a post-anthropocentric view of agency together necessitate substantive shifts in methodological emphasis (Barad, 2007; Coleman and Ringrose, 2013; Fox and Alldred, 2015). With the unit of analysis moving from human agents to assemblages, the concern is no longer with what bodies or respondents' subjectivities or things or social institutions *are*, but with their capacities for action and interaction (what they can do) within specific material contexts (Deleuze, 1988: 127). Interpretive and phenomenological methods such as interviews or diary and narrative accounts conventionally attend to human actions, experiences, subject-positions, biography and reflections. Some 'post-qualitative' new materialist researchers have considered interviews as irretrievably humanist and representational (Lather and St Pierre, 2013: 630), and advocated non-interview collection methods including autoethnography (Lather, 2013: 641), biography workshops (Davies et al., 2013) and creative outputs by research participants (Kuby et al., 2016; Van Ingen, 2016).

Other new materialist researchers (e.g. Allen, 2015; Coffey, 2013; Fox and Alldred, 2015; Fox and Bale, 2018; Mulcahy, 2016; Ringrose and Coleman, 2013) are less critical of interviews. They acknowledge that to research a social world that is both material and *semiotic* (Barad, 2007: 151–152; Haraway, 1997: 146; Van Der Tuin, 2008) requires tools that can attend both to the non-human *and* the meaning-making affectivity that humans contribute to assemblages through thoughts, feelings, memories, aspirations and imagination. To this end, interviews supply a valuable tool to capture such affects and capacities, as do other methods including ethnography, surveys and even social experiments.

However, a new materialist analysis will be largely uninterested in humanistic aspects of interview data such as 'experience' and 'subjectivity'. The objects of study must be turned decisively from these traditional concerns of qualitative study, towards posthuman efforts to disclose the relations within assemblages, the kinds of affective flows that occur between these relations (Renold and Mellor, 2013: 26) and the capacities these flows produce in the assembled human and non-human relations (Fox and Alldred, 2017). We develop such an analytic approach below.

The aim of this article is to explore how the affects within sexualities education practices produce 'becoming-citizen' capacities. To address this, we re-analysed datasets from two qualitative studies conducted by the first author. The first was the two-year Sex and Relationship Education Policy Action Research (SREPAR) ethnographic study of the processes and pressures surrounding sex and relationship education (SRE) in the state secondary schools of a single local education authority in the top decile for teenage conception rates. This study was funded by the UK Department of Education and Skills and Stoke on Trent local education authority (LEA), as part of a strategy to use SRE to reduce teenage pregnancy (Alldred and David, 2007). It included semi-structured interviews with teachers with responsibility for SRE in all 17 schools and with 15 school nurses serving the secondary schools and their feeder primary schools, and ethnographic data on the delivery and management of SRE in schools.

The second dataset derives from the 'Sites of Good Practice' study of youth workers' approaches to sexual health or sex education-related work with young people (Alldred, 2018). This was a follow-up from the first study, and aimed to compare and contrast youth work approaches with those of the teachers and nurses studied previously. Twelve youth workers were recruited from [anonymised]: all of whom were engaged in sexual health work with young people. Interviews were semi-structured and responsive, in order to gain a broad sense of their work and their approach to it. Ethical approvals for both studies were granted by the Brunel University London ethics committee.

In line with the different agenda of a new materialist relational analytics described a moment ago, the analytic methodology undertaken diverged substantively from a conventional qualitative data analysis.[4] To disclose the relations, affects, capacities and micropolitics within the assemblages we studied, we undertook analysis of sexualities education and citizenship as follows. First, for each of the three professional groups (teachers, school nurses, youth workers) we began analysis by analysing the interview and contextual data to identify the range of material-semiotic *relations* (e.g. bodies, things, concepts, organisations) that assemble around each professional group's material practices in relation to sexualities education with school students or young people. Scrutiny of these data also supplied insights into the *affective movements* that draw these particular relations into assemblage (e.g. a teaching affect that transmits factual information to school students). Together these relations and affects constitute the three differing *sexualities education assemblages* (Alldred and Fox, 2017). Finally, we assessed the micropolitics of the three sexualities education assemblages in terms of specifications and aggregations – as defined in the previous section. This in turn supplied the means to gain insight into the kinds of *capacities* that the three different interactions may produce in young people, and specifically those conventionally associated with 'citizenship'.[5]

Micropolitical Analysis: From Sexualities Education to Becoming-Citizen

Fieldwork, interviews and documentary analysis (e.g. contemporaneous policy statements on sexualities education) from the SREPAR study revealed that teachers played a significant part in shaping sexualities education in the schools studied, both as educators and as school-level co-ordinators of sex and relationship education (SRE) and the wider personal, social and health education (PSHE) component of the curriculum. Government guidance to UK state schools (DfEE, 2000) located SRE within a 'values framework', to help school students deal with 'difficult moral and social questions'; to 'support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development'; and teach the 'importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations'. Underpinning this framework were concerns about teenage pregnancy and parenting, and the importance of forming stable sexual relationships (Alldred and David, 2007: 34, 40).

In the schools studied, SRE took place within the context of the wider educational environment of the school, and a national educational context of a defined curriculum of academic subjects. The latter underpinned an 'achievement agenda' that aimed to improve educational aspirations and engagement as a means to reduce social exclusion.

This context, the study found, had severe knock-on effects upon the delivery of SRE, especially in schools with high levels of academic achievement. As a non-examined subject – and one that (like PE and manual crafts) addressed bodies rather than minds – it was low status, and had to compete with academic subjects for timetable space, staff training and materials. For many teachers in the study, SRE was an unwelcome add-on to their subject specialism, and an area where they lacked educational expertise. Some (particularly older and male teachers) considered that teaching about intimate and personal matters around sexualities could impact negatively upon their day-to-day relationships with school students and parents.

These contextual data enable us to locate teachers' engagement with SRE within a sexualities education assemblage comprising at least the following relations (in no particular order):

> teacher; school students; parents; information; minds; lusty bodies; curriculum; workload; colleagues; 'achievement agenda'; classroom; tabloid newspapers; public outrage; resources; models of education and development; teachers' attitudes and sexualities.

The data also provide evidence of the powerful 'educational' affective flow that assembled these relations. This affect enables the flow of information, knowledge and/or values from policy-makers to SRE curriculum to teacher to school student. Micropolitically, this affect economy establishes both a *specification* of young people's capacities – in terms of a particular teacher-led perspective on sex and sexualities, and an *aggregation* that locates young people's sexualities within a top–down moral framework. These capacities are explicitly concerned with giving young people relevant knowledge and emotional understanding to make positive choices concerning sex, relationships and personal and sexual engagements with others. However, the micropolitical specifications and aggregations produced by this sexualities education assemblage link implicitly to aspects of a liberal-humanist conception of 'citizenship'. These include capacities to make reasoned decisions based on sound evidence, and adequate and appropriate knowledge to enable young people to manage their social relationships within a culturally appropriate moral framework. These capacities can in turn assure two other components associated with citizenship: social inclusion and activity within the workforce.

Turning to the school nurses, this group considered themselves as sexual health experts, with a major part to play in campaigns to reduce teenage pregnancy rates and prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Most nurses in the study had responsibility for a secondary school and four primary schools, typically teaching groups of pupils between 11 and 14 years, and offering drop-in sessions for individual consultations. Their role was supplying up-to-date, accessible medical information that empowered school students to make informed decisions, without moral judgement. Unlike teachers, they felt confident about their skills, communication and use of teaching aids and reported positive school student responses to a 'no-nonsense' teaching style (for instance, a competitive 'condom test' to engage boys when teaching about safer sex). The sexualities education assemblage in which school nurses are relations may be summarised as (in no particular order):

school nurse; school students; diseases; bodies; other health professionals; biomedical model of sexual health; medical information; teenage pregnancy reduction agenda; STIs; condoms; teaching staff; school spaces; school rules.

These relations were assembled by a 'health promotion' affect that educated young people's minds and bodies into safer, healthy practices, and efforts to reduce rates of teenage pregnancy and parenting that underpinned SRE at that time. Micropolitically, the affects in this assemblage *specify* school students' capacities: this time by placing sex and sexualities within a health register, and *aggregate* young people to practise sex rationally, safely and healthily, according to health promotion principles.

However, analysis revealed a second powerful affective movement in this assemblage. Whether nurses conducted whole classroom sessions or individual consultations, they described young people as their clients, and their provision as young person-, rather than school-centred. This client-focus ascribed agency and decision-making capabilities to young people possessing legitimate needs for health and sexual health information, with health-focused sexualities education as the means to enable them to make informed life choices. This professional/client relationship introduced a *singular* non-aggregating affect that acknowledges school students as sexual decision-makers in their own right.

This health-oriented sexualities education assemblage delivered on the then Government's teenage pregnancy reduction strategy, by specifying and aggregating young people's capacities within a biomedical model of sex and reproduction that promoted healthy, safer and – if possible – non-procreative sex. However, the second, professional/client affective movement runs counter to this narrowing of capacities, by establishing 'citizenship' capacities in young people as responsible decision-makers concerning life choices, able to apply knowledge and skills to protect oneself and others from deleterious effects of social engagement and interaction.

The youth workers in the Sites of Good Practice study provided sexual health and relationships work in youth groups and schools, and one-to-one work with young people. Both practices were framed as supporting young people's well-being, and reflected general youth work principles of voluntarism, participation, equality and social justice. Youth workers increasingly were being invited into schools to contribute to SRE, recognising their expertise in engaging with young people on a range of topics. In the study, youth workers provided sex-positive accounts, addressing the positive contributions sex might make to relationships or well-being, alongside the risks to health or self-esteem. Their task was to encourage young people to talk about sex and relationships, to take responsibility for their relationships, consent and sexual health, and raise awareness of the range of decisions and choices open to young people concerning sexual relationships.

The relations in this sexualities education assemblage may be represented as follows (in no particular order):

youth worker; young people; UK youth work principles; information; services and resources; autonomy and agency; learning opportunities; informal education; responsibility; sexual subjects; schools and teachers.

Unlike the assemblages around teachers and nurses' SRE work, here the principal affect in the assemblage was not around information transmission, but instead sought to support and resource young people to make active decisions about sex and sexualities. It was powerfully shaped by a professional ethos based upon a commitment to young people as partners in learning and decision making, and to helping young people develop their own values (National Youth Agency, 2004). Youth workers in the study engaged with young people as sexual subjects who were potentially sexually active, with desires, fantasies and experiences. Sexuality was a subject for discussion, not only to minimise risks such as STIs or pregnancy, but as a means to enhance positive experiences and relationships, in both present and future selves.

Consequently, the affect economy in these youth work assemblages was both *generalising* and *singular* (non-aggregating) and produced a different and potentially wider range of capacities in young people than those discussed previously, including sexual autonomy, sexual responsibility and a respect for sexual diversity. In these assemblages, young people might gain capacities to be materially affective, opening up possibilities for current and future sexual expression. These micropolitical movements in the sexualities education assemblage also produce capacities conventionally associated with 'citizenship', including autonomy, self-governance, social responsibility and respect for difference and diversity.

Discussion

Analysis of the various micropolitics of these three sexualities education assemblages has revealed their profoundly different effects on students' capacities, not only for the 'target' capacities concerning sexualities, procreation and parenting, but also for 'non-sexual' capacities often ascribed to 'citizenship', including use of evidence and moral frameworks to make choices; social responsibility, autonomy and self-governance.[6]

Earlier we noted that, in new materialist ontology, the social world is continuously produced and reproduced as assemblages of human and non-human relations generate, constrain and enable capacities and desires. We used this relational ontology to theorise sexuality as an affective flow within assemblages of bodies, things, ideas and social institutions, productive of all kinds of capacities to do, interact and desire. We may see citizenship similarly, as the material flux of affects between humans, things, social collectivities and ideas. This flux produces capacities in *all* these elements – not only in what a human body can do, feel, think and desire. It produces the capacities of organisations such as schools, health services and governments; of social institutions (the law, marriage and the family); of abstractions and social constructs such as monogamy, nationality and democracy; and of things (from condoms and dating apps to passports and work tools).

'Citizenship' is consequently a flow that permeates the entirety of the social space in a liberal democracy. Within such an understanding, the material relations within SRE that engender capacities in young people such as safer sex, responsibility in sexual relationships and recognition of sexual diversity permeate beyond the immediate contexts of a classroom activity or a group discussion, and beyond their subsequent sexual encoun-

ters. They produce impacts (often highly normative) upon their wider capacities as participants in a society and a culture.

This micropolitical perspective opens up a research agenda to explore both 'sexual citizenship' and citizenship more broadly. Sexual citizenship should not be regarded as an outcome of society-level initiatives such as those discussed in this article to reduce teenage pregnancy or encourage safer sexual practices. Nor is it an act of human agency or activism that asserts sexual choices or a transgression of sexual norms. Rather it is the becoming of all shapes and sizes of sexuality-assemblages, encompassing normative sexualities; those that have been the sites of struggles for social justice and 'citizenship' rights (Monro, 2005: 153–166); and pregnant and parenting teens. More generally, citizenship emerges continually from the material engagements between bodies and other physical, social and cultural relations. Citizenship is not a neat process whereby bodies are either assimilated into a cultural milieu or cast out as transgressive, to plough their own counter-cultural furrow (Ryan-Flood, 2009: 186; Taylor, 2011: 588). This assessment extends far beyond the confines of pre-teen and teenage education, to all members of a society or culture.

If we can unravel the micropolitics of sexualities education assemblages to understand the capacities they variously produce, the same analytical procedure may be used to re-design these and other assemblages, in order both to foster positive sexual and other capacities in participants, and to open up possibilities for becoming-citizen. This latter kind of intervention is, of course, what liberal democracies have been trying to do for centuries through the blunt tools of education, policy and law. However, a micropolitics of assemblages supplies a more sophisticated and detailed analysis from which to manage the internal cogs of becoming-citizen. It can enable a critical imagination to use the tools of engagement and activism within specific social settings in ways that can foster an emergent nomadic citizenship of becoming and lines of flight. As we write this, the long-awaited revisions to UK relationship education and sex education curricula are being finalised, following wide consultations with stakeholder groups and academics (Long, 2018). However, the micropolitical approach we advocate here suggests moving far beyond conventional educational engagements, to design life-long interventions and developmental engagements around the public and private dimensions of sexualities, relationships and reproduction that can open up possibilities for becoming-citizen. Engaging with the complex sexuality-assemblages of contemporary societies (Fox and Alldred, 2013) – from relations within multi-generational families, to the use of pornography, to intersectionalities between gender, sexualities, race, age – can encourage and enable sexual becoming. Becoming-citizen may incorporate sexual lines of flight; safer, diverse and responsible participation in the sexual and social world; and promote a culture in which sexual expression, pregnancy and parenting are no longer evaluated normatively.

This article has undertaken micropolitical analysis of one small area of social life – sexualities education, to reveal how differing professional practices produce a variety of capacities that affect how bodies participate in a social context. Sexuality is an aspect of life that has been analysed extensively for its significance for citizenship as 'belonging' (Plummer, 2001: 238; Richardson, 2017: 212; Weeks, 1998: 36); we have re-thought citizenship here as 'becoming'. However, the wider literature on citizenship addresses many

diverse areas of social interaction – such as work, consumption, health, legality and illegality, political representation and social stratifications. We have argued that citizenship (or its absence) is not a property or attribute of a body, but the emergent capacities of assembled bodies, things, concepts and social institutions. The materialist and micropolitical analysis that we have applied here to sexualities education has the potential to be used productively to explore these other areas of social life and social interactions, and may similarly inform radical possibilities for becoming-citizen.[7]

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Notes

1. We use the terminology 'sexualities education' to apply to the range of engagements with young people around gender, sexualities, reproduction and associated topics. 'Sex and relationship education' (SRE) has been the term used for sexualities education in UK schools and colleges, while a re-made curriculum in 'Relationships and Sex Education' will shortly be introduced within secondary schools and 'Relationships Education' in primary schools (Long, 2018).
2. Deleuze and Guattari theorised assemblage micropolitics in terms of two processes. Territorialisation and de-territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 88–89) describe the ways in which affects constrain or enable the capacities of humans and other matter within assemblages. They also differentiated between 'molar' affects that act similarly on multiple relations, and 'molecular' affects that act on a single relation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 286–288). Later in the article we describe how we adapt these concepts for application in social research (see also Fox and Alldred, 2017: 32).
3. These approaches include Barad's (1996) 'onto-epistemology'; the materialist feminisms of Braidotti (2006), Clough (2008) and Grosz (1994); Latour's (2005) actor-network theory-inspired 'sociology of associations'; DeLanda's (2006) assemblage approach; non-representational theory (Thrift, 2007); and the 'vital materialism' of Bennett (2010) and Deleuze and Guattari (1988).
4. Those used to the conventional 'quote sandwich' of humanist qualitative reports may find our analysis dry and bereft of the human connection that quotations supply. An analogy with quantitative analysis is relevant: readers generally accept tables, descriptive statistics and *p*-values as proxy summaries of reams of raw data. Our representations of assemblages are similarly proxies for the raw data generated in the studies reported.
5. For a broader discussion of the development of new materialist methodologies and methods, see Fox and Alldred (2015, 2018).
6. We do not wish to imply by this that the sexualities education assemblages we have discussed here are the only contributors to young people's citizenship, or even to their 'sexual citizenship'. What a young body can do – sexually and otherwise – will be a consequence of all the events, actions and interactions that together constitute a life, from sexual encounters or engagements with sexualised media and pornography (Fox and Bale, 2018); interactions with peers, teachers and employers; participation in work and civil society, and so forth. There will be myriad specifications, aggregations, generalisations and dis-aggregations of capacities – some of which produce 'the sexual', others producing the phenomena conventionally described as 'citizenship', and some of which produce both.

7. For example, the growing use of zero-hours contracts and the ‘gig economy’ might be explored micropolitically to address how work contributes to becoming-citizen. Conditional cash transfers to encourage health and other behaviours may similarly be examined (Fox and Klein, forthcoming).

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