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Doing and feeling research in public: queer organizing for public education and justice¹

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Grounded in activism – fighting the implementation of Department of Defense-run schools in a public schools system; organizing to fight the largest national teacher education accreditation agency's removal of sexual orientation and social justice from its accreditation standards; and protesting a state's decision to hold a public meeting for teacher educators at a private Christian college that 'condemns' homosexuality – this article highlights how education is being re-formed through appeals to 'private choice' and at the same time select public issues are devalued by being called private and outside the bounds of normative 'professional' attention. This reframing, a hallmark of contemporary neoliberalism, has specific ramifications for queers, as analysis of these cases indicate. Using collaborative participatory research that attends to emotions, the authors argue that feelings are political and problematizing, and useful – they can trigger tactics. With the goal of offering examples of tactics tried, the paper archives evidence – original texts including pledges, letters, flyers, and emails – of queer organizing in education.

Keywords: queer; professionalism; teacher education; participatory research; feelings

We – two queer teacher educators in Chicago – participate in discussions and resistances addressing pressing political issues for educators and communities. Starting in 2005, we challenged the implementation of Department of Defense-run schools in the Chicago Public Schools System; in 2006, we organized our colleagues to fight the largest national teacher education accreditation agency's removal of sexual orientation and social justice from its accreditation standards; and in 2007, we protested our state's decision to hold a public meeting for teacher educators at a private Christian college that 'condemns' homosexuality.² While theorizing our participation in these movements for educational justice, an interesting contraction emerged: Public education is being re-formed through appeals to 'private choice' and at the same time select public issues, especially those that address the invisibility and rejection of queers and our lives within education, are devalued by being called private.

The effects on queers of the recasting of institutions and issues as public or private cannot be understood in isolation from struggles for justice and equity by other communities. Framing issues as private is a political act that aims to remove women, people of color, and the disabled – and the bodies and labor attached to them – from

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economic and political contexts. For example, childcare is considered a private issue, as are maternity benefits, *domestic* violence, and in-home personal assistance for disabled people. ‘Personal responsibility’ has been offered by everyone from Booker T. Washington to Bill Clinton as the answer to problems – from poverty to illness – experienced by low-income Americans of color. While particular lives and experiences are erased as private, other issues are labeled public, but tied to sensibilities and discourses – the free market, in particular – that mask social effects and culpabilities; an example of this is the move to ‘choice’ in public education. In this article, we argue that reframing the public sphere through *personal responsibility* and an imagined *private* world is a hallmark of contemporary neoliberalism – a ‘vision of competition, inequality, market “discipline,” public austerity, and “law and order”’ (Duggan 2003, 10) – that has particular ramifications for queers and others on the margins. In this shift, queer lives and rights are produced as ‘confrontational and threatening ... and [yet, also] too ridiculous, trivial and inappropriate *for* [addressing within] public institutions’ (Duggan 2003, 40).³ Acts like touching and kissing, when embodied and enacted by queers in public educational spaces, are construed as wildly disruptive: ‘flaunting it’ as one of us was told by our associate dean. Yet, while present in public realms – schools, for example – queer lives are always cast as private; and therefore *public* and *private* form a binary through which queers are erased and oppression is reinforced.

This paper, grounded in activism, documents our collaborative⁴ *participatory research* – an internationally recognized and practiced research methodology with connections to social justice movements and popular education through which ‘ordinary’ people aim to understand what affects their lives (Lewis, 2006; Park 2006, 83) – on the effects of privatized public education on queers. Through this model, which prioritizes linking our professional work to our quotidian selves, we hope to encourage other scholars to act without waiting for ‘expertise’ or institutional permission.

Toward that goal, throughout this paper, we *archive* original texts – letters, flyers, emails, petitions, and pledges – that offer evidence of our varied work for change.

An archive is not simply a repository; it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory, and a complex record of queer activity. (Halberstam 2005, 170)

In crafting responses to the situations we recorded here, we devised tactics on the fly, looking for opportunities of the moment; this, de Certeau (1984) suggests, is the defining characteristic of a tactic – it ‘makes use of the cracks’ (37). But these emergent and opportunistic ploys are evanescent. Thus, archiving *and sharing* the evidence of our tactics of resistance is vital. Further, the need for justice work is ongoing and dependent on a populace coming together to initiate change; public movements, as Bernardine Dohrn states, are the ‘oxygen of a participatory democracy’ (Dohrn 2008). We agree with social geographers, Peake and Kobayashi (2002), that, ‘participation ... is a fundamental method of antiracist [and we add, all social justice] research’ (55). Archiving these struggles, we believe, can support the coalescing of an acting public.

In addition to archiving and generating knowledge from participatory research, this paper uses multiple frameworks and knowledge bases. We benefit from the scholarship of queer theorists who discuss the importance of feelings for political movement charting and building, social and economic geographers who examine the

decline of public space, a critical race theorist's construct of 'covering,' and educational theorists who research and write about policy and queer educational issues. This paper is divided into three sections composed of a story, a document, and a discussion. Using our work organizing against the military's incursions into the public schools, part one discusses the privatization of the public sphere. Part two narrows the focus to the *de facto* erasure of sexual orientation and the active removal of social justice from primary US teacher accreditation organization. Finally, connecting the previous two sections, we use our trip to a private Christian college⁵ to illustrate the role of the profession in supporting a culture of silence and silencing in public education, when the bodies and the issues are queer. While emotions run through our work and this article, this section addresses how some emotions – in particular, anger and shame – are used to regulate the borders between the public and the private, and work to silence queers (Cvetkovich 2003). We conclude with a discussion of feelings as public and political, and within participatory research.

Part 1 – Chicago Public School and the military

We live a block from each other. In 2005, word circulated through our neighborhood that a section of the local high school, Senn, was going to be turned into a military academy. A working-class, immigrant high school that opened to students in 1913, Senn was in the middle of a neighborhood starting to gentrify, and the new residents expressed discomfort with the 'quality' of the school. The area's alderwoman had approved an arrangement in which the local Navy base would give the fledgling school a million dollar start-up fund. The last to be notified were the teachers, the students, the school administration, and the community, and by that time the plan was described as a 'done deal.' After participating in meetings as citizens and neighbors, we wondered – as both of us are also professors of education – how we might be able to leverage our field's collective 'expertise' to participate in the policy discussions that were being implemented without public input. Our colleagues might not all turn out for community meetings or protests, but we thought they would endorse a letter that named the ways this process was flawed.

February 4, 2005

Dear Arne Duncan, Mayor Daley, and Members of the Chicago Board of Education:

On December 15th 2004 Chicago's Board of Education voted to approve the establishment of a 'Naval Academy' in Senn High School located in Chicago's Edgewater community. One of Chicago's most diverse schools, Senn is home to 1,700 students from more than 65 countries. Good things have been happening at this neighborhood institution—Senn has a successful International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, was recently awarded a five-year \$1.2 million grant from the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation to provide development and support services to freshmen and sophomores, and was selected as one of only 16 National Service-Learning Leader Schools. Despite these and other successes, against the wishes of many Senn teachers, students, and parents, and without a process for community consultation, you decided to install a Naval Academy at Senn High School in fall 2005.

There are many reasons to oppose this decision. The lack of neighborhood involvement is one: It is simply wrong to remake this school without considering community voices and vision. The apparent hypocrisy of city leaders is another: How can the city endorse the military for Chicago Public School students when the Chicago City Council has

declared the city a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and voted to reject the invasion of Iraq and the US Patriot Act? And, as educators, we oppose the proposed Naval Academy, because it and other military academies offer:

Bad education

The evidence is overwhelming that urban military-themed schools fail to provide a high quality education that prepares youth to graduate high school and enter college. Instead of receiving a well-rounded education, students study subjects like 'Military Science' and 'Army Customs and Courtesies'. With that kind of preparation, is it a surprise that at Chicago's Carver Military Academy, similar in structure to the proposed Naval Academy, only 54% of students graduate high school, and only 34% of graduating seniors enter college?

Racial targeting

The pattern is clear: The Chicago Board of Education targets low-income, primarily African American, communities for military-themed high schools. Schools for the elite, such as Northside College Prep, are not forced to house military programs. Instead, these schools and their upper-income white communities are offered gifted, magnet, and college prep schools and programs. Imposing a naval academy at Senn will reinforce this negative and unfortunately familiar message: *poor youth of color merit substandard education.*

Sanctioned discrimination

'Don't ask, don't tell' is not acceptable for Chicago's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth. Although the Chicago Board of Education, City of Chicago, Cook County, and the State of Illinois all prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, the United States Military condones discrimination against sexual minorities. Military schools are partnerships between the United States Armed Services and Chicago Public Schools; like San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, Chicago should refuse to allow the military to recruit in its public schools, and refuse to do business with organizations that discriminate against its citizens.

Chicago must provide high quality education equally to all its youth and communities. The racially targeted establishment of military-themed schools is wrong in every case. But in a time of seemingly boundless budgets for endless war it is especially fraught to tell poor kids, 'The best education we can offer you is one linked to combat.' This is not a 'choice,' as Arne Duncan has referred to the proposed naval academy, it is a tragedy.

As faculty in colleges and programs of education across Chicago, we know this city can do better. And it must.

Sincerely,
53 Concerned Educators across Chicago

We collected the signatures of over 50 colleagues and sent the letter out. The response was near-silence – one phone call from a local reporter who first asked us which of the letter's signatories were tenured professors and then wrote a short article noting the letter's existence. There was no reaction from CPS. Rickover Naval Academy was dedicated and opened in fall 2006. CPS then announced a plan to establish military-themed, -funded, and -operated schools across Chicago (Anchors Away 2007). We geared up to distribute the letter again, but noted that while we had raised the issue of queer kids attending these schools, the topic remained unaddressed in community organizing. After we sent her a copy of the letter, a local politician working toward a moratorium on the establishment of military schools, bluntly stated, 'If

anti-war sentiments can't sell this [moratorium], the gay issue certainly won't do it. It's a non-starter.'

Privatizing the public sphere

Across the USA, school choice is posited as a public response to an ineffective and bureaucratic public education system. Through choice-based reforms, parents are repositioned as consumers who must select the best educational option for their child. In Chicago, these choices, Lipman (2004) notes, are presented as "equitable" because everyone has a choice of "options" (57); they include local neighborhood schools, philosophic and thematic magnet and charter schools, and a range of selective admission academic preparatory schools, along with the newer military academies. Choices, the logic insists, ensure 'quality' through competition – as each school competes for each child, the quality of all schools will subsequently improve (Chubb and Moe 1990; Plank and Sykes 2003). The 'public' is cast as an artificial monopoly and perceived as a waste while what is private is seen as 'good' and natural (Lubienski 2001).

'School choice' must be interpreted through larger economic shifts that have reframed the public sphere in the USA, and subsequently altered the landscape for 'minorities.' In the last 30 years, the prevailing bipartisan public sentiment to shrink big government – the de facto supporter of a public sphere – and this 'shrinkage' has translated into the contraction of assistance services and the inflation of punitive and surveillance functions. While for some, to be anti-big government is motivated by a desire to lower taxes and for others, it is an ideological framework (Blackmar 2005; Harvey 2005), the rhetoric of smaller government typically translates into fewer public dollars for education, but more resources for the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security. Centrally, this expansion of the punitive arm of the state and the contraction of the welfare functions, and the subsequent privatization of public services (resulting in the faceless and unaccountable 'market' driving inequities), turns on the maintenance of particular tropes about race, gender, sexuality, and ability.

Downsizing the welfare state is required because *freeloaders* and *shirkers* will take advantage of the state's generosity, is how the argument is often framed by conservatives pursuing a small government agenda; these types are present in mass media as *lazy black mothers* or *illegal alien families* although data illustrates rates of welfare use at every socioeconomic level are relatively consistent across racial categories (Quadagno 1994; Zucchino 1999), and that 'less than 1 percent of surveyed immigrants move to the United States primarily for social services' and 'fear of deportation' and confusion about eligibility mean that immigrants are less likely to use state resources (Bohrman and Murakawa 2005, 119). Concurrently, the privatization of public schools and outsourcing of education and discipline to the military trades on similar practices of scapegoating and the construction of particular identities as dangerous and a wasteful allocation of public resources. For example, privatized schools such as charters and those operated by for-and-non-profit agencies which hire employees with yearly contracts as instructors (Quinn 2007) are represented as necessary because teachers hired by traditional schools are protected from termination by tenure and unions, and military-themed schools are portrayed as essential because urban youth of color are undisciplined, unruly, even dangerous, and need to be controlled (Lipman 2003; Montefinise 2007, 7). These cultural imaginings – of who cannot be trusted, is dangerous, and is unworthy of care and support – are gendered, sexualized and racialized, and deeply embedded in US narratives (Hancock 2004; Winant 2004).

Queer lives and movements continue to play an active role in the reconfiguring of public and private, as Alisa Solomon, writing for *the Village Voice* on the sex panic curriculum wars at the State University of New York, New Paltz, suggests ‘Where there is scant support for your campaign to downsize public institutions, seek out the sex – especially when it is female and gay’ (Solomon, quoted in Duggan 2004, 31). Demonizing recipients is one clear way to call into question the legitimacy of a public institution or program and to assert the importance of market driven regulation and oversight. Homophobia and misogyny, frequently intertwined, are embedded within racialized discourses used to delegitimize those that use public institutions; for example, single mothers on welfare are told that they need to get married (CNN 2002), and the youth targeted for and enrolled in Department of Defense schools are told they need military-style discipline – both positions are *de facto anti-women and anti-gay*.

We are wary here of falling into the new homonormativity – a discourse anchored in ‘consumption and domesticity’ that does not ‘contest dominant heteronormative institutions’ (Duggan 2003, 50) – by arguing for queers in the military or advancing the right of queers to marry, as this frequently displaces core economic and political issues. Yet, it is the silence about queers and public military schools that resounds for us. Our attempts to include the issue of queer youth and staff in our opposition to these schools, a position that we perceived might possess traction with urban liberals, was completely ignored. The countering message we received was that real issue was the economic draft of youth of color. But this misses the point.

The privatization of the public sphere requires the production of specific identities (Lipman 2004) and we argue that queer identities are used in specific ways, in which feelings and affect (externally expressed emotion) are often central, to support the privatization of schools: Military schools need unruly youth of color to turn into soldiers and they need queers as the reviled and shaming contrast against which those soldiers will be created. ‘Almost every day of my junior year,’ one former Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) cadet officer candidate reported about his experience with the program in high school, ‘I was made to do push-ups ... I cleaned the commandant’s office, I drank chili pepper-infused water, I ate lunch underneath a table, I had to wear a dress, and I was regularly called “stupid,” “maggot,” “faggot” – all the happy, daily indignities that one had to suffer for the sake of “military discipline”’ (Wily Filipino 2003). The establishment of Department of Defense-run public choice schools is an issue for queers, we argue, *not* because ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ policies restrict the access of queers to full participation in the military, but because these schools require the systematic disparagement of queerness and queer lives, along with damaging conceptions of others, including youth of color. Homonormativity works, through produced identities and feelings of shame and fear, to remap queer resistance from a focus on social justice to gaining access for select – normal – queers to participate in militarism as patriotism, the free market, domesticity and other forms of a diminished public sphere (Warner 1999).

Part 2 – NCATE, social justice and sexual orientation

In the early fall of 2006, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) – the primary accreditation agency for colleges and programs of teacher education – invited public feedback on proposed revisions to its ‘Professional standards, 2002 edition’ (Johnson et al. 2005). The changes eliminated the phrase ‘social justice’ and facilitated the de facto elimination of sexual orientation. As teacher

educators and professionals, we felt we should respond by pointing out the importance of social justice to education broadly – and specifically, how it was linked to this attempted erasure of queers through the removal of sexual orientation – and also wanted to ask our professional colleagues and organizations to support these observations or to supply their own. We drafted a letter, with feedback and assistance from Queer SIG members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and an anonymous colleague within NCATE. Over 300 of our colleagues across the USA and Canada signed onto the letter, but in a personal email to us, AERA's President, Eva Baker, requested we remove the names of any AERA membership entities, such as Special Interest Groups (SIGs), that had asked to be represented (and there were several, including a Queer Studies SIG). We did this and then, sent the letter off.

September 30, 2006

Dear Arthur Wise, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE):

We call for the language 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' to be included in the main text of Standard Four: Diversity in the *Professional standards for the accreditation of schools, colleges, and departments of education, 2006*. As NCATE already acknowledges, teachers must be prepared for diversity in education, in their students, in their students' parents and families, among their teaching colleagues, as well as in class materials and discussions. Sexual orientation is a key part of diversity, as understood by our institutions and communities and as represented in the NCATE definition of diversity.⁶ But the absence of sexual orientation and gender identity in the body of the standards, where other aspects of diversity are listed, sends the message that the needs and identities of LGBT students, families, and teachers are not important. Addressing sexual orientation (a person's emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction) and gender identity (a person's sense of being male or female, feminine or masculine) in our schools is urgent.⁷

The population of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth is large.

In a 2003 survey conducted by the Chicago Public Schools and the Center for Disease Control (the Youth Risk Behavior Survey), 6.3 percent of high school students attending Chicago Public Schools identified their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Schools are unsafe for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth.

According to the 2005 School Climate Report conducted by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN):

- 45.5% reported being verbally harassed and 26.1% had experienced physical harassment in school because of their gender expression;
- 40.5% reported that teachers never intervened when hearing homophobic remarks; and
- 18.6% reported hearing homophobic remarks from faculty or school staff frequently or often.

Negative school climates affect LGBT youths' well-being and academic success.

According to the 2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, LGBT students are more likely than the general student population to:

- attempt suicide (32.7% vs. 8.7%), and to skip school because they feel unsafe (17.7% vs. 7.8%).

Teachers are ill-equipped to confront issues that contribute to anti-LGBT hostility.

- In a study of pre-service teachers, 57% indicated that they needed more training or education to work effectively with LGBT youth and 65% reported that they needed more specific education to address homosexuality in their teaching (Koch 2000).
- In a study of high school health teachers, two-thirds indicated that they had inadequate education about LGBT issues (Telljohann et al. 1995).

Sexual orientation has never been part of the main text of NCATE's Professional Standards, but its inclusion in the glossary has encouraged educators to use NCATE's definition of diversity when planning how best to create and assess educational programs for teacher candidates. The proposed revisions direct readers to look at each standard for the elements of 'diversity' to consider when creating and assessing teacher education programs. But sexual orientation is not included in any of the rubrics for any of the standards. This decreases the possibility that teacher education programs will include sexual orientation. Gender identity is similarly absent. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be stated explicitly in the main text of the Standard Four: Diversity, along with other categories like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Absence sends a message of non-importance.

Social justice, when used as a guiding principle, encourages recognition and inclusion; it seeks the presence of all community members. NCATE discredited its commitment to 'help all students learn,' when it removed social justice from the glossary of the Professional Standards. The elimination of social justice makes it even easier to marginalize sexual orientation and gender identity. And the elimination of the words 'social justice' prompts the question: Who will be excluded next?

Luckily, examples of organizations that have taken ethical positions abound. Ontario's teacher accrediting organization vows that its members will 'model respect for...social justice.' The accrediting bodies of other professions, including the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychological Association, and the American Bar Association, have explicit commitments to social justice and queer rights in their accrediting requirements. NCATE should, also.

Educators of conscience call on NCATE to establish and prioritize sexual orientation, gender identity and social justice within our Standards.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned

The letter reached NCATE before its deadline for receiving 'public comments.' Then we waited. And waited. Were we naïve to expect a response?

AERA's director of social justice emailed us to say the organization was 'aware of' the issue. The journal of our professional association, Educational Researcher, refused to print the letter, stating that they only published scholarly research. The Chronicle of Higher Education, while helpfully supplying us with free passwords to their web site – Sappho and Stein – did not publish a shorter version. And NCATE has never responded – it's as if the letter with 300 signatures never existed.

Being made invisible is frustrating and prompts questions: How can our professional associations – which collect our money and purportedly represent memberships – get away with reproducing 'professional' practices that collude in the erasure of the political lives of their members? How is it that – in this moment of hyper-accountability for education – the figureheads at the top of our professions are unaccountable? Why does a private agency with an unelected president and invisible procedures set the standards for our public education system?

Privatizing public policy

Historically, teachers were 'certified' by communities; no accreditation process existed (Tamir and Wilson 2005). The main criterion was 'moral values' and spiritual leaders vouched for the candidates (Tozer, Violas, and Senese 1998, 59); these

informal practices weeded out queer and other outsider educators (Blount 2005). Vouching by spiritual leaders shifted to vouching by the state, and by the 1840s, a majority of teachers in the USA received certificates from local officials based on an examination (Sedlak, in Tamir and Wilson 2005, 333). This allowed local control, but also the pitfalls of ‘patronage’ and nepotism; schools varied widely in quality (Tozer, Violas, and Senese 1998). The state stepped into the picture, developing licensure requirements as a form of quality control; throughout the start of the twentieth century, state departments of education flourished and the first ‘normal’ schools evolved into teachers colleges (Tamir and Wilson 2005).

NCATE was formed in 1954 by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and four other educational organizations, including the National Education Association. By the 1960s, NCATE was the leading institution accrediting teacher education programs across the USA (Johnson et al. 2005). NCATE’s power expanded in part due to alliances with state governments, and the move to standardize the teacher education curricula at the state level. For example, in 1999, the New York State Education Department mandated that all state schools be accredited by a federally approved accrediting body or by the New York Board of Regents, and as NCATE was at that time the only such federally approved agency, 58 institutions in New York moved to seek NCATE accreditation (Johnson et al. 2005, 63). Reported costs for domestic accreditation range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 per institution (Johnson et al. 2005, 207); clearly, NCATE’s federal approval and dominance is lucrative. NCATE maintains this prominence through marketing and brand development – its ‘brand’ is affiliated with *Newsweek* – and strategic partnerships with state boards of education (Johnson et al. 2005, 19).

The accreditation processes of education stand in contrast to other fields, including psychology, law, and medicine, where accreditation is controlled *by* those fields and each profession’s standards are developed by its members (Lugg 2007). NCATE is not controlled by its membership. It is an independent organization and uses the services of consultants from various educator organizations; this practice effectively minimizes the influence of education’s researchers and members of our professional organizations. This context has specific ramifications for queers, who have little-to-no federal clout or power, though we are everywhere, including the teaching profession. A membership-shaped accrediting process for teaching *might* have allowed representation for its various constituencies; this seems to be the case in fields including law and medicine: the American Bar Association (ABA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) both have strong social justice and queer rights statements (Lugg 2007). Yet, while AERA has queer, social justice, and other SIGs, members are prevented from acting autonomously (by choosing to sign our letter, for instance) *as* SIGs, and at the same time, there are no transparent avenues available for members to petition AERA to participate in public policy debates or take public policy positions. So, AERA refused to take a position on NCATE’s deletion of social justice and as of this writing has no policy statement addressing queer rights or representation within systems of public education (or, for that matter, within its own organization), and its membership still has no clear means of compelling it to either take a position or develop policies.

NCATE’s practices of diversity reveal its safe and functionalist approach (Johnson et al. 2005). Removing social justice from its standards dampens any need for the field to attend to the pervasive social problems that affect youth and their education, not only heterosexism, but poverty, unequal funding of schools, and the

factors that flow from these situations, such as fear, illness, hunger, and boredom and emotional trauma. Rather than grappling with how the unequal and racialized distribution of wealth in our nation shapes the experiences of youth in public schools, NCATE uses ‘diversity’ as a catchword for establishing that the organization helps foster the education of minority students (Johnson et al. 2005, 87), with quality taking second place to quantity. In fact, the most recent iteration of its standards defines as ‘acceptable’ only in-school experiences for candidates that allow them to work with ‘at least two ethnic/racial groups’ (NCATE, Second Draft of Revised Standards 2007). Why did NCATE decide to stop there? If two are good, why not three? In this instance, NCATE’s standards seem narrowing rather than expansive, and reductive rather than visionary.

Similarly, queer rights have never been on the agenda of teacher accreditation. In fact, the profession has a history of constructing queers as deviants who are ‘unfit to teach’ (Blount 2005). Max Rafferty, California superintendent of public instruction in the 1970s, and chair of the credentialing commission in California that decided which teachers were morally fit to teach, stated: ‘And from the beginning, I do assure you, we took for granted the self-evident proposition that a homosexual in school job was as preposterously out of the question as a heroin mainliner in the local drugstore’ (quoted in Blount 2005, 142). Moving from this kind of sentiment, representative of statements and policies that proliferated in the 1970s, the anti-gay movement retooled its strategies in the 1980s and 1990s, and conceded the right to privacy for select queers, yet simultaneously restricted access to the public sphere. The right ‘attacked gay rhetorical claims for privacy-in-public and for publicizing the private, specifically, and worked to define the public sphere as an isolated, domestic site completely out of range of any public venue.’ (Duggan 2003, 53). ‘No Promo Homo’ regulations further restrict the public, in the form of education funds, from being used to support positive discussions about queer sexualities in schools (Eskridge 2000). This strategy still affects educators in direct and indirect ways.

A search (8 January 2007) on NCATE’s website for ‘sexual orientation’ produced 52 ‘hits’ for the term, most in definitions of diversity included in glossaries for versions of standards. But the term’s inclusion in the definition of diversity was illustrational, not instructional. In fact, NCATE was careful to point out that aspects of diversity that must be addressed would be noted within each standard, and sexual orientation was not included in any of those. Queers were absent from the standards, and thus, would continue to be officially absent from public education, regardless of our presence in all areas of public life. Without the ‘tool’ of sexual and gender identity-inclusive standards, teacher educators have a difficult time advocating for that broader definition of diversity in their programs, as this professor of education notes:

We will go through the accreditation process for the first time next spring (2008). The few of us faculty who are committed to diversity issues, including gender identity and sexual identity, were hoping...[the] process would help move our teacher education programs toward a social justice stance. However, without [the support of] NCATE, the majority of our (white, middle-class, heterosexual) faculty will end up maintaining (and reinforcing) the status quo. (P. Bullock, pers. comm., February 20, 2007)

In 2008, NCATE’s revised standards included a reference to sexual orientation in the explanation of its Diversity Standard: ‘Candidates are helped to understand the potential impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning’ (NCATE Unit Standards in Effect 2008, 2).

While this change reflects some responsiveness by the organization, the primary focus on discrimination, as opposed to lives, is telling. In fact NCATE, a nominally private, through functionally public agency, wields a great deal of power, but remains virtually unaccountable. But NCATE is not an anomaly; as our previous analysis showed, the 'public' is increasingly marginalized as bureaucratic and ineffective, and is being replaced by a consortium of private beliefs and practices that are perceived as more efficient. Queers, erased in public and lacking the right to privacy, are addressed when useful, as in the case of the military schools, and when not, they are ignored.

Part 3 – Condemned: public issues or private behaviors

Was it 'prophetic' or just a weird coincidence that it was Friday the 13th, the day we drove to Evangelical College? We hadn't reached the campus yet, but we were feeling anxious as we talked about our upcoming day at the conference of Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE). Evangelical College, the private campus where this public conference was taking place, is a religious institution. The school requires all student applicants to sign a 'Community Covenant' that describes 'homosexual behavior' as a form of 'sexual relations outside the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman' that is thus considered 'immorality' (Evangelical College 2007, unpagged).

We developed an 'Accredit Love Not Condemnation' campaign to promote the position that the profession of teacher education should validate colleges and programs that aim to foster respect and love for all students, families, and teachers. Or, conversely, that teacher education programs which require signed pledges condemning anyone on the basis of sexual identity should not be accredited by the state.

The conference was brought to order with a prayer led by an older white man in a business suit. Afterwards, we circulated, passing out pink fist-in-apple Power to Teachers buttons and explaining the campaign. Some people enthusiastically pinned the buttons on, but many of our colleagues wouldn't make eye contact with us; they listened quietly, asked few questions and seemed to be hoping we'd leave quickly. We placed copies of this pledge on each table:

ACCREDIT LOVE NOT CONDEMNATION

Teachers need to be well prepared to teach all students. Teacher education programs should support candidates by preparing them with the information and experiences they will need to teach and work with LGBT youth and family members. All teachers are responsible for gaining the education they need to teach and advocate for the well-being of LGBT students. All teachers should respect LGBT students, LGBT family members, and the identities and histories of LGBT people in classrooms and elsewhere. I pledge to do so myself. This retracts any earlier statements to the contrary.

Sincerely, _____ Date _____

Unsigned copies of the pledge soon littered conference tables, despite the presence of other gay and lesbian participants. One of us visited the restroom, followed there by a woman who whispered, 'Here,' while holding out a signed pledge. This encounter felt furtive and shaped by shame so powerful that it wouldn't allow a public return of the paper.

Next, the CEO of the conference's parent organization, the AACTE spoke. We had, so far, been working around the edges of the conference. But now, one of us asked her, 'Will AACTE support calling for the inclusion of social justice and sexual orientation in NCATE's diversity standards?' She answered with a long and deflective speech about respect and professionalism, and no mention of lesbian and gay students or families, or sexual orientation more generally. Social justice was just as absent.

We left the conference with four signed pledges.

A month later, one of us was told by her associate dean that Evangelical College was going to vote on whether or not to 'censure' us. Shortly after that, we each received a letter from Evangelical College informing us that our behavior at the meeting was inappropriate, our interpretation of their community covenant was faulty and showed a bias against 'traditional Christianity,' and our action at the conference was surreptitious and unprofessional. If we did not apologize, they would report us to our 'respective superiors.' We responded with an invitation to co-host and organize a public forum on 'Private Beliefs and the Public Good.' We wrote:

For us, and the queer youth, teachers, parents, colleagues, and allies, we work alongside, the *Accredit Love Not Condemnation* action ... was a great success. We distributed love-centered flyers and pink teacher-power buttons. These, along with our positive queer presence, countered Evangelical College's gay-excluding policies. As importantly, we raised questions about the appropriateness of Evangelical as a meeting place for the professional organization of teacher educators in Illinois, and the importance of sexual orientation and gender identity as key aspects of diversity. We believe that [this organization] should not legitimize with its presence any institution that dehumanizes and devalues lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. Evangelical's 'Community Covenant,' which is part of the application for admission to the college, equates 'theft, murder, and rape' with 'homosexual behavior.' As lesbians, educators, and as citizens, we find this an insulting and dangerous comparison, and the kind of assertion that lays the ground for violence against LGBTQ people. In addition, for queer youth, families, and educators, the distinction you attempt to make between identities and acts is false and cruel. Sexuality is not divisible from other aspects of our lives as workers, parents, and students; no person should have to agree to forgo loving relationships in order to be safe from hateful characterizations.

It is hard for us to understand why you think the *Accredit Love Not Condemnation* project shows a 'clear bias against traditional Christians.' It is inspired by and grounded in the traditions of critique and resistance exemplified by many Christians at the forefront of the profession of education including Margaret Haley, organizer of the first American teacher's union in Chicago; Myles Horton, co-founder of the Highlander Folk School who played an integral role in the labor and civil rights movements; and Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Outside this field, Christians have been central to worldwide movements against oppression. The list is nearly endless, but includes Harriet Tubman, John Brown, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jane Addams, Desmond Tutu, James Baldwin, Óscar A. Romero, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bayard Rustin, Cornel West, and Mel White. We claim their engaged faith traditions as our guides.

We disagree with your letter's claim that our distribution of the *Accredit Love* flyers was 'surreptitious.' In addition to writing our email addresses on the flyers, as your letter notes, we walked from table to table during the meeting breakfast, passing out and explaining the flyers; wore t-shirts with the same slogan; introduced ourselves to the conference and individuals; and passed out business cards. However, secrecy is a strategic tactic that is respectable and sometimes necessary – the Underground Railroad is a clear example of this – and one that should be familiar and acceptable to Evangelical, which highlights a rich history at the forefront of the abolitionist movement on its website. But, we didn't choose secrecy for this campaign; we chose visibility to counter the shame and silencing that institutions like yours seem to prefer for queers.

We also reject your characterization of our distribution of the *Accredit Love* flyer as ‘unprofessional.’ Sexual and gender minority youth are unremittingly subject to violence and hostility in public schools, and we believe it is our professional obligation to raise this issue and seek solutions with our colleagues in teacher education, despite the desire of some to suppress that dialogue. It is the responsibility of the profession of teacher education to affirm and advocate for all students, parents and teachers, including those who are queer. Advocacy requires that problems are made visible. And that is what we have attempted to do.

Professionalism as silence, silencing, and covering

Our actions at Evangelical were prompted by a conviction that our profession should engage with vital questions, such as: Should private colleges with discriminatory ‘covenants’ be supported – accredited – by the state to produce teachers for public schools? Should public organizations hold meetings at private campuses that discriminate? How do discriminatory policies like Evangelical’s contribute to the dehumanization of LGBTQ people in schools? For us, this line of inquiry made sense, yet our colleagues’ response was often silence or what we perceived as equivocating questions:

What about free speech? Shouldn’t we protect the right of individuals to possess private beliefs? Is an action, such as signing a pledge, really an indication of a belief? They discriminate against the sin, not the sinner. As a private institution, don’t they have the right to privacy and to private beliefs?

Hearing these, we pondered: sure, we believe in free speech, but whose is protected? Who gets to possess private beliefs? The seeming dismissal of the anti-gay pledge was surprising, as it trivialized the hate at its core. Also clear was that a conceptual framework of ‘multiculturalism,’ used to support the inclusion of *all* in schools, could not be relied upon to include sexual and gender identity in schools. (In fact, multiculturalism was cited by Evangelical to support the right of ‘traditional’ Christians to discriminate against LGBTQ people.)

This field trip also raised questions about how our profession participates in regulating boundaries between topics framed as appropriate for professional concern or as private matters. The conference we attended on a private campus was of a *public* organization dealing with the issues of preparing teachers for *public* education, and the mandate to ‘teach all children’ is commonly accepted in the field. But, as outlined previously, sexual minority youth and families are rejected as part of what constitutes the public in education; sexual identity is seen as a private choice and a lifestyle problem, not as a public concern.

At this conference, our transgression of professional limits was clear. We looked different; we were wearing homemade message t-shirts and jeans, while most others, female and male, were wearing suits. Also, conference-goers reacted to us with obvious physical discomfort; many refused to make eye contact, avoided us, and were silent as we spoke to them. Finally, our call for accountability was rejected; we thought we were raising concerns appropriate to the field, but our colleagues responded as if we were showing ‘our privates’ in public.

Professionalism has a colloquial meaning that is mostly about decorum represented through the body and its adornments, clothing, hairstyle, and actions, ‘getting along’ with others, and is gauged through complaints – ‘She didn’t behave professionally; she wore biker shorts, had a piercing, let her tattoos show’ – that we’ve heard about student teachers. What can be professed ‘professionally’ is what has already been accepted or

mandated by the field, but in education, where there is no commonly understood knowledge base, the field guards its boundaries in other ways, such as by scrutinizing styles of professionalism. Teachers, and professors of education, are indirectly or directly required by the profession to *cover*: dress, hair, fashion, speech, and more must conform to normative and mainstream standards, or they are marked as unprofessional. *Covering*, as Yoshino (2006), building on Goffman (1963), notes, is different than *passing*. Passing requires one to pretend to be something she is not, while covering requires that one simply cloak oneself in the mantles of the profession. In this instance, since we were unwilling to cover by remaining quiet about the disquieting topic of queerness we were marked as unprofessional and spurned.

Conclusion: feeling and doing research for a public

In part, we were compelled to write this paper because, during the projects recounted here, we often felt *bad*. Through engagement with work on political feelings, we came to understand our bad feelings as public and pervasive, rather than private and local. As Feel Tank Chicago (2008) points out, politics is a ‘world of orchestrated feeling’ (3). For example, when accused of being unprofessional in a number of contexts, we felt embarrassed and paralyzed, except for a fleeting but panicky urge to prove we *were* professional. Aiming at ‘emotional epistemology’ (Feel Tank Chicago 2008, 2), or, knowing through (attending to) feelings in this way – thinking of them contextually, as meaningful in social ways – has been a useful focus of our participatory research because these feelings demonstrate how affect is used to regulate not just our field’s definitions of professional and scholarly activities, but many institutions.

While we experienced a wide range of emotions during our projects – exhilaration inspired by ideas and our collaboration, anger associated with professional silencing, anxiety about being invisible while present – when we received the letters from Evangelical, something changed; we became depressed. ‘Censure’ sounded threatening, even legalistic, and it was an effective way to deflect attention from their exclusionary policy and shift it to us (what *we* did wrong, why *we* were wrong, and so on). The anger that inspired our action was dismissed, while the anger of institutions seemed to be perceived as reasonable; the reactions of horror by administrators who heard about our intervention at the conference is an example of this. Jaggar (1989) argues that oppressed people have a kind of ‘epistemic privilege’ and their ‘outlaw emotions’ like anger are, ‘more likely to be appropriate than the emotional responses of the dominant class; that is, they are more likely to incorporate reliable appraisals of situations’ (146). Yet, as Cvetkovich (2003) points out, minorities have less credibility than those with power when they report their trauma and bad feelings. Our emotions shifted from the previously noted embarrassment, to fear (‘we are first contacting you’), and then settled into shame (‘reckless behavior’). An exploration of shame can serve as another model of the value of charting and analyzing feelings and affect, as it allows us to describe the power of the profession to produce and use both to normalize and to repress dialogue and change.

In education, covering is mandated by the norms and ‘dispositions’ circulating around the profession, but maintained through shame. Shame has two aspects, ‘painful individuation’ and ‘uncontrollable relationality’ (Sedgwick 2003, 37); it isolates the person who has misbehaved, but at the same time pulls observers into an uncomfortable identification with her. Shame acts as a through-line, linking private and public; it isolates, yet also requires a social environment, and the ground of connection is the

body. At Evangelical, our public queerness made it harder for the hoping-to-be-invisible queers in the room to stay unacknowledged; the woman who trailed us to the bathroom seemed equally compelled and revolted, drawn to us and ashamed of our connection. Shaming is what is happening when the cadet is called ‘faggot’ (his peers are the unnoted audience); the possibility of shame is what keeps professionals in line (our colleagues judge our ‘fit’ to the profession). Yet, through the lens of queer theory, the experience of shame is useful – it highlights bodies, behaviors, affects, and cultures that are non-normative and might otherwise be overlooked or avoided (Gay Shame, 2007).

Understanding feelings as produced and as productive (when studied) has been an important analytic strategy for our participatory research. In particular, it has helped us reframe shame – ours and others’ – as a political and privatizing tool, and marks it as something that happens in and yet is corrosive to the public. An insight from disability studies is useful here: Linton (1998) points out that disability theorizing is not intended to offer ‘a parable for the forgotten and downtrodden’ but rather, it is a ‘problematizing agent’ that points to the need for something different (185). Similarly, our focus on feelings in research is not useful because it may encourage a sympathetic response from readers. Instead, we contend that focusing on feelings can help us see and challenge norms, including of professions and institutions that claim dispassion even as they produce feelings to achieve ends. Further, feelings indicate openings, if we are paying attention; in this way, feelings can be *tactic-triggers*.

In this paper, we have argued for archiving and attending to feelings as aspects of participatory research that are important ways to generate a public for movement. We have no clear-edged successes to brag about, yet we continue to mobilize ourselves and colleagues; we are in these movements for the long haul. And while there are no recipes here, archiving charts a course that someone followed which could (but needn’t) be followed again. At the same time, it invites innovation by emulating the hackers’ maxim: Information wants to be free (to which we add, and *public*). Similarly, pushing back against the privatizing of feelings by framing them as information *in* and *for* a public helps to make the coalescing space that social movements need.

Offering first-person narratives, revealed emotions, and unanswered questions in this jointly claimed paper is also a way to resist privatization, our goal throughout all the projects discussed here. Our collaboration acknowledges that ideas are public, produced in relationships, through and *because of* work, and that this materiality is erased by myths of solo originality. In this paper, we have aimed to demonstrate that not only is the messy work of participation what is needed now in education, but that chronicling this public work and the feelings that fuel and can guide it *is research*. We invite you to try other tactics that seize on the ‘crosscuts, fragments, cracks, and lucky hits in the framework of a system’ (de Certeau 1984, 38), and ask that you, too, archive and share this work, as we have done here, to expose the fissures in power that make institutions vulnerable, and build communities of resistance along the way to change. To paraphrase Marc Bousquet’s invitation to activism in academia, we can’t promise you a revolution, but we *can* promise you the pleasure of some very butch and femme shoulders to lean on as you do this work.⁸

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Notes

1. This is a co-authored work with equal contributions from each of us and no first author. The order in which we are listed is based on a rotation we use in our collaborations on publications.
2. Despite associations with whiteness and privilege, we use the term queer to encompass, not just gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered identities but all non-heteronormative and non gender conforming identifications (de Lauretis 1991). Heteronormativity, the structures and systems 'that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and 'natural' within society' (Cohen 2005, 24), is pervasive in most institutions, including schools (Rofes 2005).
3. Not unlike the way changing legal definitions of whiteness in the USA affected who could benefit from affiliated social, economic and political privileges (Roediger 1991; Harris 1993; López 1996), the lack of consistent public protection for sexual minorities is reflected in shifting official terminology: homosexuality, sexual preference, alternative lifestyles, lifestyle choices, sexual orientation, and more. We prefer queer *lives* and *rights* (or for educators, queer *competency*) to queer *issues*, *lifestyles*, or *sensitivity*, but use the terms that seem right at the moment.
4. This is a co-authored work with equal contributions from each of us and no first author. The order in which we are listed is based on a rotation we use in our collaborations on publications.
5. We use the pseudonym, Evangelical College, for this institution located near Chicago.
6. Diversity: differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area. From NCATE Glossary (2006).
7. Compiled by Illinois's Safe Schools Alliance, formerly known as the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation (CESO).
8. From his foreword to *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor*, posted at <http://www.cust.edu.ubc.ca/workplace/issue7p2/index.html>

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