

## Special Thematic Section on "Rethinking Health and Social Justice Activism in Changing Times"

### Queer Solidarities: New Activisms Erupting at the Intersection of Structural Precarity and Radical Misrecognition

Michelle Fine\*<sup>a</sup>, María Elena Torre<sup>a</sup>, David M. Frost<sup>b</sup>, Allison L. Cabana<sup>a</sup>

[a] Public Science Project and Department of Critical Social/Personality Psychology, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY, USA. [b] Department of Social Psychology, University College London, London, United Kingdom.

#### Abstract

This article investigates the relationship between exposure to structural injustice, experiences of social discrimination, psychological well being, physical health, and engagement in activist solidarities for a large, racially diverse and inclusive sample of 5,860 LGBTQ/Gender Expansive youth in the United States. Through a participatory action research design and a national survey created by an intergenerational research collective, the "What's Your Issue?" survey data are used to explore the relationships between injustice, discrimination and activism; to develop an analysis of how race and gender affect young people's vulnerabilities to State violence (in housing, schools and by the police), and their trajectories to activism, and to amplify a range of "intimate activisms" engaged by LGBTQ/GE youth with powerful adults outside their community, and with often marginalized peers within. The essay ends with a theoretical appreciation of misrecognition as structural violence; activism as a racialized and gendered response to injustice, and an elaborated archive of "intimate activisms" engaged with dominant actors and within community, by LGBTQ/GE youth who have been exiled from home, school, state protection and/or community and embody, nevertheless, "willful subjectivities".

**Keywords:** participatory action research, LGBTQ, identities, activism, youth, solidarity, health, discrimination

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\*Corresponding author at: Critical Social/Personality Psychology, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 365 Fifth Ave, New York, NY, 10016, USA. E-mail: [mfine@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:mfine@gc.cuny.edu)



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Alex couldn't attend the last participatory analysis session for *What's Your Issue?*, a national participatory survey of/by LGBTQ and gender expansive youth. They sent a photo instead, and apologized: "I am 7 months pregnant and my gynecologist said I couldn't fly." An organizer at Gender Justice in Los Angeles and a transman now in their third tri-semester, Alex sent their photo (see [Figure 1](#)) not so much as an expression of "identity politics" as a radical insistence on recognition and reproductive justice; or what Sara Ahmed (2014) has called "willful subjectivity." While primarily engaged in having a baby at the moment, Alex has been and continues to be an important colleague in our research, a persistent voice queering categories, pluralizing identities and contesting binaries.

Alex embodies and organizes, at the intersection of an array of movements for racial, gender, sexual and reproductive justice.



Figure 1. Alex, Organizer and What's Your Issue? Researcher.

Like Alex, and the editors of this volume, we find ourselves bewildered and enraged by the current political circumstances, a dangerous cocktail of rising inequalities, spiking hate crimes, emboldened White nationalisms, a shrinking middle class, attacks on gender/sexual/reproductive rights, criminalization of communities of color and poverty, rising xenophobia and Islamophobia, and a deepening climate crisis. Just to name a few of the current threats to our collective well-being. And yet we find ourselves, at the same time, encouraged by increasingly vibrant solidarity movements and bold courage of young people, joined across struggles and identities, demanding a justice of redistribution, recognition and radical participation, and we learn that many of these movements are led by queer, trans, or gender expansive youth of color, at least in the U.S. In this context, at the Public Science Project of the Graduate Center, CUNY we have positioned ourselves among those critical scholars engaged with movements for justice, and engaged in movements for epistemic justice, that is the democratization of knowledge production.

We write this article to understand what we are calling “queer solidarities,” a new form of activism in which demands for recognition and belonging sit beside demands for redistribution and participation. We write this article with contributions from our co-researchers Shéar Avory, Jai’ Celestial Shavers, and Kat Williams. We enter and contest the false debate between “identity” based vs. “structural” political struggles, and empirically unpack how LGBTQ/GE young people, particularly those in the working class and those of color, are joining these commitments in their new activisms, and how activism seems to be good for their health.

### **Precarity and Misrecognition: A Politics Rooted in Redistribution and Recognition**

The debates around identity, or identitarian politics, have inflamed of late. Political theorist Nancy Fraser (2000) has argued that movements for recognition (gender, sexual, racial, religious) have frequently “displaced” movements for structural transformation and redistribution; reified and “essentialized” identities and have reproduced false “binaries” activating feuds between and within marginalized communities and ultimately strengthening forms of domination by elites. In 2000, Fraser argued, “Today’s struggles for recognition often assume the guise of identity

politics. Aimed at countering demeaning cultural representations of subordinated groups they abstract misrecognition from its institutional matrix and sever its links with political economy” (Fraser, 2000, p. 9). In 2017, Fraser complicates her earlier position further troubling the binary, when she argues:

Especially troubling is the resurgence of an old tendency on the left to pit race against class...Both views are problematic to the extent that they treat attention to class and race [and we would add gender and sexuality] as inherently antithetical, a zero sum game. In reality, both of those axes of injustice can be attacked in tandem, as indeed they must be. Neither can be overcome while the other flourishes (p. 10).

We would agree that movements, and critical scholarship, must be rooted in an intersectional politic, interrogating race and class, and we would add gender and sexuality focused on the transformation of economic and political systems. For this essay, we introduce the epistemologies and methodologies of *What’s Your Issue?* as an example of critical participatory inquiry, and we explore a slice of the results to understand how structural precarity and misrecognition live in the bodies of LGBTQ/GE youth in the U.S., and how oppression is metabolized into activism – on the streets, in the courts, online and at home. We also unpack how we have taken up an intergenerational participatory project, anchored in queer justice movements, across the U.S., and designed to interrogate questions of theory, social movements, methods, ethics and democratic knowledge production.

The evidence we gather draws from the 5,860 responses to the *What’s Your Issue?* survey – designed/analyzed/produced by an explicitly intergenerational research collective including a range of LGBTQGE (Gender Expansive) youth, most of whom are young people of color, trans and/or gender expansive (identifying as nonbinary or gender nonconforming). This research project is committed to an intersectional analysis (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989) and our evidence attends to structural conditions. Our results, elaborated in previous essays (Fine, Torre, Frost, & Cabana, 2017; Frost, Fine, Torre, & Cabana, 2017; Torre et al., 2018) demonstrate that *being denied one’s identity*, whether at home, in school, at church, by the police, in juvenile facilities, at work or in the law, unleashes an avalanche of adverse material, social, psychological and physical health consequences. This is particularly true for youth of color and trans and gender expansive youth who report the most substantial financial troubles, educational struggles, exposure to aggressive policing, housing instability and vulnerability to violence and exploitation. These experiences make clear that the structural politics of (mis)recognition are entangled with political economy. And we find significantly that racial and homophobic experiences of discrimination are positively associated with levels of activism, which are positively associated with mental health. This finding seems striking for the community under study, but also wonderfully suggestive about the politics of marginalized youth in revolt globally.

As a critical participatory action research project (Torre, Fine, Stoudt, & Fox, 2012), our work is conducted with and for LGBTQ and gender expansive youth in the U.S. This article lifts up a number of concerns that are of course particular to this group, living at a time of both heightened human rights and hate crimes. But it is also true that our evidence speaks to a broader swath of youth at the margins. That is, these young people may be distinct from their peers, by virtue of the ways they carry and express gender and sexuality, but largely they are young people, late adolescents and young adults, living at a time of rising inequality gaps, spiking rates of housing insecurity, and police violence. They have been deeply betrayed by the state, the economy and sometimes intimates, and they are deeply engaged with a range of solidarity activist social movements.

## Structural Precarity and Youth Activism at the Radical Margins

Lauren [Berlant \(2007\)](#) writes that precarity, living in conditions both traumatizing and unpredictable, is the fuse to slow death. Our research with marginalized youth over 20 years, living at multiple margins and intersections, suggests that precarity is multi-scalar; it occurs at the macro, meso and micro levels (see [Fine, 2017](#); [Torre, Stoudt, Manoff, & Fine, 2017](#)). In the U.S. and globally, precarity derives from a structural realignment of global capital and a rise of White nationalisms, entangled with immigration, gender and sexuality politics. Under conditions of neoliberalism and concentrated wealth, we witness economic dynamics and transnational policies that undermine and target those at the margins. These conditions undermine economic opportunities, threaten living and learning settings and heighten police surveillance and violence. Marginalized youth are left more vulnerable to the unnerving predictability of impending disaster. Within the United States, the pooling and coagulation of precarity-inducing policies can be found most viscerally and viciously in communities of color, struggling with poverty, dealing with issues related to immigration, as well as those marginalized by their gender and sexual identities.

It is well documented that structural dispossession – what we are calling precarity – leads to adverse economic and social conditions as well as psychological distress and physical health problems ([Bullock & Reppond, 2016](#); [Fine & Burns, 2003](#); [Fine, Burns, Payne, & Torre, 2004](#); [Fine & Weis, 1998](#); [Frost et al., 2017](#); [Lott & Bullock, 2006](#); [Meyer, 2003](#)). There is, however, also a rich literature on “radical marginality,” in which critical psychologists have demonstrated the mobilization of activist, critical consciousness rising in the margins. [Clara Mayo \(1982\)](#), [Rhoda Unger \(2000\)](#), and later [Ruth Hall and Michelle Fine \(2005\)](#) have published on the critical consciousness and radical commitments marinating in the margins of social hierarchies. More recently [Anjali Dutt and Shelley Grabe \(2014\)](#) have written on positive marginality, critical consciousness and social identities as core precursors to activist identity. Even as we interrogate in this essay, the devastating consequences of structural injustice on LGBTQ/GE youth on health, we also seek to document the creative and strategic forms of resistance, activism and political solidarities engaged by those exiled to the radical margins.

Indeed – this rising of activism from the ashes of discrimination – was part of our funding mandate. When we started this project, we were called by funders who asked us, plainly: “Have you ever noticed that the leaders of major youth organizing movements – Dreamers, Prison Abolition, Black Lives Matter, Fight for \$15, Muslim justice work, Environmental Racism, Educational Justice, UndocuQueer.... are disproportionately queer and trans youth of color?” (Youth organizing funder, personal communication, March 23, 2014)

Well, we had.

So with this question as part of our genesis story, we committed to unpacking relationships between discrimination, health and activism, informed by research on adult collective action ([Drury & Reicher, 2005](#); [Dutt & Grabe, 2014](#); [Hammack, 2010](#); [Hammack & Pilecki, 2012](#); [Reicher, 2004](#)) as well as youth activism ([Conner & Rosen, 2016](#); [Su, 2009](#)).

Provoked by the notion that alongside experiences of hardship, harm and discrimination one might find a reservoir of activist subjectivities, we turned to [Sara Ahmed's \(2014\)](#) writings on “willful subjects”, [Cathy Cohen's \(1997\)](#) work on the politics of deviance, and [José Esteban Muñoz's \(1999\)](#) writings on “disidentification” and the perfor-

mance of politics among queers of color. These writers contest psychological arguments about stigma, shame and depression as the primary psychological footprints of oppression. Ahmed argues that queer lives embody “willful subjectivities,” that do not shrink at misrecognition but unapologetically “refuse to straighten.” Cathy Cohen extends this line of analysis, recognizing that queer young women of color are not only willful but increasingly emergent as leaders of collective movements for queer justice, but also education, prison abolition, immigration justice:

There have always been radical black women or radical women engaged in mobilization, organizing, and leadership: we know that is not new....

...I do think what's new is the ways in which, at this moment in the Black Lives Matter movement, young, black, often queer women are not just doing the work but are part of a collective leadership. (Cohen & Jackson, 2015, para. 16-17).

And José Esteban Muñoz (1999) moves us beyond politics of social movements, onto the stage of the politics of performance, amplifying what he calls disidentification as a

...mode of performance whereby a toxic identity is remade and infiltrated by subjects who have been hailed by such identity categories but have not been able to own such a label... This management is a critical negotiation in which a subject who has been hailed by injurious speech, a name, a label, reterritorializes that speech act and the marking that such speech produces. (p. 185)

While traditional psychological research has focused primarily upon the relationship of oppression and internalization of stigma, in contrast, queer theory, critical race theory and performance studies join radical marginality studies to suggest that oppression accumulating in the margins may indeed affect health, educational and social outcomes adversely but may also be metabolized into critique, performance, contestation and collective action with beneficial effects on health. This discrimination-health-activism paradox is one that we explore in this article.

Empirical warning: our data are of course cross sectional. Arguments that suggest causality cannot be advanced. And yet, as you will see, the recurring patterns of association, both statistical and narrative, between precarity, health and activism are intriguing and worthy of far more critical analysis/exploration, particularly at a moment in history in which both State repression for “suspect” identities and collective protest by those who embody “suspect” identities are cresting.

## **What's Your Issue? Critical Participatory Action Research With LGBTQGE Youth**

*What's Your Issue?* (WYI) is a national, intergenerational participatory action research (PAR) project, developed out of the Public Science Project at the Graduate Center, CUNY created with, by, for, and about LGBTQ and gender expansive youth, ages 14-24. For the purpose of this essay, we will use the language “queer,” as our research collective has determined, to encompass the wide range of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and gender non-conforming or, as we prefer, gender expansive. WYI was designed by a diverse intergenerational team of activists and researchers, all dedicated to the production of knowledge by young people too often left out, specifically to over-recruit queer youth and espe-

cially youth of color, youth living at the intersecting margins of race/ethnicity and economic, gender, and sexuality struggles who have been absent from most national surveys of LGBTQ young people.

As a critical PAR project, it is important to understand that our research collective included the authors of this essay (diverse by age/sexuality/gender/race ethnicity), and close to 40 youth co-researchers from 10 cities around the country, all of whom identify as queer, most of color, and activist/engaged in youth social movements in their local communities. This large collective gathered in person, at the Graduate Center, at the City University of New York (CUNY), for three in-depth research retreats, to design the survey, analyze the data and generate products, and across two years sustained contact over email, video conference calls, telephone calls and meetings around the country.

Together, over the course of six months, we drafted and edited, piloted and refined, varied versions of what would become the national survey, with structured input from more than 400 youth across the United States, recruited from 40 youth organizations around the country (GSAs, immigration justice, YMCAs, spoken word organizations, homeless youth groups, foster care advocacy, racial justice organizations and listservs and word of mouth). Across these many conversations there were “difficult” conversations, and as is the case with critical PAR, we dove into these generative conflicts. We had to decide, for instance, with young people across the country, on what language to use in the survey (queer? Gay? Trans? Cis?); we had to try to come to consensus on whether we would include traditional indicators of bullying, suicidality, mental health distress (we did); we worked hard to craft language that would ask about housing insecurity as we were aware that most “homeless” youth don’t consider themselves “homeless”; we had to manage the sampling demographics, particularly the influx of white respondents, as we sought the over-representation of African American, Latinx, Asian American, mixed race respondents, as well as trans and gender non-conforming/gender expansive; we worked with social media specialists across the country to be sure to reach rural respondents, those in the South, and multiply marginalized young people. When it came time for analysis, we had to negotiate, with difficulty, how we might aggregate the data so that we could statistically analyse by race (white vs. respondents of color), by gender (cis – that is, self identification is consistent with sex assigned at birth – vs. trans or gender non-conforming/expansive – that is, self identification is at variance with sex assigned at birth). We have written expansively about these debates (with much dissension) among our full research collective (see Fine, Torre, Frost, Cabana, & Avory, 2018; Torre et al., 2018), we have produced a video laying out the arguments against categories ([www.whatsyourissue.org](http://www.whatsyourissue.org)) and we invite you to consider not simply how we *resolved* these impossible epistemological/political tangles, but more importantly how we *struggled* – together – to appreciate our widely diverse conceptualizations of identities and refusal of binaries even as we were rooted in the statistical policy imperative to document serious disparities by race and gender in a world rife with injustice. In the end of the lengthy survey production process, we landed on a set of research questions elaborated below.

## Research Questions

Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from a large-scale national survey ( $N = 5,860$ ), within a broader participatory action research project, in this paper we explore five questions:

1. What are the material and psychological correlates of structural injustice for queer youth in the U.S., by race/ethnicity and by gender?
2. What is the relationship between exposure to structural injustice and psychological well-being?



3. How does structural injustice shape activism?
4. What forms of activism do WYI queer youth engage, for gender justice and beyond?
5. What is the association between engagement in activism and psychological well-being?

## Sample

Over 6,000 young people across the U.S. took the survey and answered 80% of the questions; some identify as “straight” (heterosexual) and “cis” (they self-identify with the sex assigned at birth). In this paper we will discuss the data from a substantial subgroup, those who identify as LGBTQGE ( $N = 5,860$ ). Ranging in age from 14 – 24, participants were from all US states, Guam and Puerto Rico, and reflected a balanced representation of the 4 primary geographic regions of the US. The research held a commitment to represent experiences missing in the existing national data about LGBTQGE youth; purposive sampling strategies were used to achieve a high representation of youth of color (39%) as well transgender/non-binary/gender non-conforming/gender expansive youth (58%), youth with disabilities (39%) and youth under 18 (46%) – populations under represented and often absent from the literature. We adopted various internet and community based sampling strategies to reach youth of color and trans and gender expansive youth (Meyer & Wilson, 2009) including a team of youth outreach workers who posted survey advertisements on Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram, directing interested youth to the project website, which contained an explanation of the project, video narratives from the CPAR collective, and a link to take part in the survey. Outreach was made to community organizations serving LGBTQGE youth in cities and towns across the US, as well as music, theatre, sports, spoken word, activist organizations which were provided incentives to host “survey making parties” and “survey taking parties” whereby youth were able to complete the survey in person, with assurance of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

A word on our sample: Our sample was gathered to be inclusive: a range of gender and sexualities, an over representation of youth of color, gender expansive youth and young people who had experienced negative interactions with police, schools and housing instability; young people from urban, rural and suburban communities, and from every state in the country. We wanted a sample that included young people attached to/engaged with community-based organizations (30%), but also those who are not involved with community based organizations (70%).

## Epistemological and Methodological Muddles

We realize the critical PAR may be a novel design to many readers, and so in this section we lay out some principles/strategies/commitments of our practice.

To questions of ethics and IRB: In WYI, as in other critical PAR projects, we followed traditional mandates of IRB and we developed more expansive commitments to ethics. The survey was submitted to and approved by the CUNY IRB; allowing young people aged 14 – 24 to take the survey with nothing more than their consent, and we provided “resources” and “supports” at the conclusion of the survey. The survey was anonymous and largely taken online. In settings where young people took the survey on computers in the same room we tried to assure confidentiality and privacy. In a rural YMCA in Missouri, at the Creating Change conference in Phoenix, at a homeless shelter in Detroit, we spent time with advocates speaking through questions of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy.

*The Survey:* We ultimately crafted an online survey, using Qualtrics. The survey was made available by following a link that we posted on the *What’s Your Issue?* website ([www.whatsyourissue.org](http://www.whatsyourissue.org)) and shared widely though

listservs, word of mouth, and a variety of social media outlets. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to enter a raffle for a gift card. With content determined by the core research collective, and iterative drafts passed back and forth with over 400 youth across the nation, the final survey included questions about identities, struggles, activisms and relationships with public institutions and intimates; there were traditional items about school belonging, relationships with family and police and educators; items borrowed from Black Youth Project (Cohen, 2010; Cohen, Celestine-Michener, Holmes, Mersth, & Ralph, 2007) about civic engagement, and open ended questions about “what do you do in your free time?” “what does community mean to you?” “what would you like to tell the next President of the U.S.” “what is your vision of your future?” “if you were to create a banner about yourself, what would it say?”.

*Creating qualitative and quantitative databases:* We have a vast quantitative and qualitative database, managed through SPSS. Demographic (for gender/race/sexuality) were created through a meticulous analysis of the entire data set for each demographic question, including all write-ins that was heavily informed by the insights of youth researchers. The qualitative data to date has been analysed by sub-samples.

*To questions of generalizability:* We make no claims about our sample being “representative,” but we do about its inclusiveness. We present few overall descriptive statistics, but offer statistical evidence of associations between, for instance, housing insecurity and psychological troubles; rates of discrimination and activism; having “out” teachers and queer-friendly curriculum and overall positive academic outcomes. That is, we sought (1) to recruit an inclusive sample, representing the wide swath of LGBTQ and gender expansive youth who had been severely underrepresented in prior surveys of the LGBTQ/GE population; (2) to analyse where racial and gender disparities amplify within the LGBTQ/gender expansive community, and where race/gender do not seem to demarcate large differences, and; (3) we have sought out evidence of distressing statistical associations between precarity and negative outcomes but also promising associations between dignity, respect, and agency with positive outcomes.

*A note on statistical categories:* As you might imagine, our research collective spent weeks battling out the question of “categories.” As a group firmly resistant to the “straight jackets” of gender/race/sexuality categories, a number of the youth co-researchers were initially distressed that the adult co-researchers were interested in “collapsing the data” so that we could “trace” statistically where race and gender matter. And so we discussed different ways of cutting the data and decided – in a nation in which trans women of color are murdered at outrageous rates; where youth of color are assaulted and killed by police in shocking disproportionality; where queer youth of color are significantly over-represented in foster care, homeless shelters and juvenile justice facilities (especially youth of color who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or trans) – we committed to a to create combined categories for statistical comparisons, and to simultaneously find ways to honor the rich and complex self identifications of the respondents in all data presentations. With these dual ethical principles, as you read the text below you will hopefully see, our “jazzy” commitments to both rich self-descriptions and to statistical disparity analyses so that we might reveal, at once, the profound complexity of subjectivity and the oppressive blades of race/gender injustice. In addition, we have produced a video, available online, to explore how/why we reject categories for self-definitions, see [whatsy-ourissue.org](http://whatsy-ourissue.org).

*A note on sustained muddles and disappointments:* This question of statistical comparisons remains unresolved. Our research collective asked, and debated: If gender and sexuality are fluid, how can we construct binaries? If race is a social construction, how can we re-inscribe these racial distinctions? And even more complex – if I identify as a trans-woman does that mean I am not a real “woman” on the gender choices? If a person of color



passes as white, should they be included in the “of color” category (say, if we are analysing their treatment by police)? If someone is “mixed race” does including them in the “of color” category erase their white heritage? Don’t we need to look at skin color rather than race?

Long hard discussions were held and our “resolutions” were not entirely satisfying but ultimately we decided “good enough”. To ease the our decisions we collectively committed to supplement the research “results,” we have committed to producing videos about “Categorical Refusal”; policy documents that reveal how much “whiteness” protects young people in contentious relations with police and in schools; to present our findings as an amalgam of rich self-descriptors alongside any qualitative material, and to generate evidence of statistical disparities only in terms of issues of public policy (aggressive policing, school suspension, access to public housing). We were disappointed our final sample didn’t include, immigrant or undocumented respondents but we understand the deeply embodied fears in the queer undocumented community, in the U.S., even to respond to an anonymous survey; we were discomforted by the high rates of psychological distress reported by respondents and unsure how to “make sense” of these findings; we have held “sub sample parties” with under-represented groups included young intersex folks, queer Muslims, and are planning gatherings with queer Mormons, disabled trans folks to help “unpack” what these subsamples are teaching us. For these discussions, WYI data are a platform for conversations long over-due, and much deserved.

*A note on names:* In this text, we use “real names” for the youth and adult researchers and pseudonyms for participants in our survey making parties. Our data is anonymous. When we present qualitative material from respondents, we display their self-curated gender/race/sexuality descriptors.

## Cumulative Misrecognition Incites Dispossession

As the writer Junot Díaz (quoted in [Stetler, 2009](#)) has argued<sup>i</sup>, recognition matters:

You know how vampires have no reflections in the mirror? If you want to make a human being a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves. [G]rowing up, I felt like a monster in some ways. I didn’t see myself reflected at all. I was like, ‘Yo, is something wrong with me?’ That the whole society seems to think that people like me don’t exist? And part of what inspired me was this deep desire, that before I died, I would make a couple of mirrors. That I would make some mirrors, so that kids like me might see themselves reflected back and might not feel so monstrous for it.

In this project we collectively, sought to design a survey, with traditional quantitative items as well as open-ended qualitative questions, that could feel like a mirror, reflecting back the often difficult biographies and rich complexity of lives.

Jai’ Celestial, one of the What’s Your Issue youth co-researchers and an organizer at BreakOUT! in New Orleans argues, queer youth – particularly those of color – insist on challenging dominant categories and exploding binaries. “LGBTQ youth of color reject the binaries and identities that have been placed on us. We have a range of identities and refuse to squeeze ourselves into categories you can understand.”

More over as, Shéar Avory, another youth co-researcher and national social justice youth activist who identifies as trans, Black, Indigenous, and from Los Angeles, argues identity categories have been used to oppress and

contain, with devastating consequences for the “cradle to prison” pipeline encountered by queer youth of color. Sharing from their own life, they illustrate how this can unfold:

From age 5 to 10 my father had me in conversion therapy. When that didn't work I was placed in foster care, at 10. I never finished high school because I was traumatically bullied in elementary, middle and high school. At 17 I left LA for NYC. I wasn't able to find stable housing and was finally thrown out of a youth shelter because they wouldn't let me stay with my partner. We were on the streets, went to a small home in rural Pennsylvania, to stay with relatives, and then there was family violence – it's Trump country. We ended up in jail – I was assigned to the men's facility and experienced relentless transphobia – me at 18, being lectured by a captain about chromosomes, X and Y.

We learned much at our survey making parties, where young people would explain that they reject categories for self-descriptions, but that adults in positions of authority – police, social workers, teachers, politicians – deploy these identity categories as weapons of misrecognition and then unleash terror on youth who dare to transgress hegemonic binaries. At one of our survey making parties, we were trying to finalize questions to ask about young people's interactions with police when Sam whose uses the pronoun, they, raised a hand, and from under a baseball cap sitting atop a full Afro, soft brown skin, welcoming smile, grey eyes, spoke, “Every time the police stop and frisk me, you know in parks or at the piers or even in my neighborhood, when they feel my breasts they get angry and beat me up. Can we put that on the survey?” And at another gathering discussing both policing and school suspensions, Angelique, a 17 year old Puerto Rican woman who identified as a lesbian explained, “When I walk down the street alone, the police cat call me; when I am walking hand in hand with my girlfriend, they say ‘can I fuck both of you?’ To which affirming finger snapping sounds filled the room.

No surprise – these incidents were not reported to the police.

We define misrecognition – far too soft a language for capturing the range of violent provocations we have archived – as a range of experiences in which LGBTQGE youth are denied full expression of self, shoved into boxes by authorities, parents/caregivers, peers and strangers, and/or are punished physically, verbally, psychologically for transgressing gender/sexual norms. Banal and severe, everyday and spectacular, “didn't bother me” and traumatizing, cumulative and episodic, predictable and not, misrecognition permeates bodies, communities and institutions. We draw from critical race theorists including [Fanon \(1967\)](#) who marks the sharp wound of being denied humanity, as well as [Taylor \(1992\)](#) who argues that recognition is considered a “vital human need” (p. 26). [Honneth \(2003, 2007\)](#) writes on the harms produced when ideological belief systems depict some as non- or sub-human, and when networks of love and care withhold reciprocity to those deemed Other. We also appreciate the writings of [Young \(1990\)](#) who recognizes justice as a combination of access to opportunities and resources, as well as respect and “standing” in the eyes of one's peers. And we take seriously by Yuval-Davis' writings on the need for “belonging” ([Yuval-Davis, 2012](#)) in conversation with Honneth's sense that recognition flourishes inside love and friendships, relations of loving care.

Misrecognition, then, can be devastating – whether from strangers or ideological systems, laws or policies, peers or those whom we love. For queer youth we learn that misrecognition often takes the form of structural and intimate betrayal (e.g. by families, schools, community leaders), neglect (e.g. by educators, religious leaders, social workers) and abuse (e.g. by police, shelter staff, juvenile facility staff, foster families, peers). When a family member, police officer, teacher or social worker is disturbed, irritated, outraged, or aroused by their own affective response to a gender nonconforming, or same sex loving young person, the unleashed responses are poured

onto, and pummelled into, the body and psyche of the young person, ranging from disrespect to violence (see Fine et al., 2017; Torre et al., 2018).

Evidence from WYI suggests that LGBTQGE young people carry painful amounts of contested misrecognition and resistance. For some the wounds are deep and widespread; for others, the wounds are hidden. We consider below structural sites of exposure to state violence – housing, police and schooling – as sites of misrecognition, discrimination and negative experiences, asking how often, for whom and under what conditions does precarity cascade into cumulative dispossession? And, we ask, what else emerges from these experiences? What is, for example the relationship of discrimination to activism? We consider housing insecurity, a well documented struggle for young people who identify as LGBTQ or gender expansive.

### **Disproportionality Along Key Vectors of Structural Precarity: Housing Insecurity, Bullying/Harassment and Police Aggression**

Across these three vectors of precarity, we know from national surveys, queer youth suffer disproportionately when compared to their “straight” peers. On each metric, queer youth report higher than average rates of housing insecurity, bullying and harassment and police aggression. WYI data allow us to explore variations within, so we learn that youth of color and trans/gender expansive youth are most vulnerable. We report in the following section, data from the national What’s Your Issue survey with a total  $N = 5,860$  LGBTQGE youth. It is important to note that missing data varied from question to question and thus, the analytic sample may shift from one analysis to the next.

Across the sample, our respondents report housing insecurity rates of 40%, in line with national estimates (Choi, Wilson, Shelton, & Gates, 2015; Keuroghlian, Shtasel, & Bassuk, 2014; “True Colors Fund” at <https://truecolors-fund.org/our-issue>). Cautioned by youth researchers experienced in housing precarity, on the survey we defined housing insecurity broadly to include young people living in a public or not for profit shelter, in another family member’s home or a friend’s apartment, in foster care, inpatient institution, on the street, or feeling unsafe where they are sleeping, at least once in the last year. For housing insecurity, participants reported their housing/living situations over the past 12 months and indicated “How often have you faced not having a safe place to spend the night in the past 12 months?” on a scale of 5 = never to 1 = always. Participants were considered to have experienced housing insecurity if (a) they reported being homeless, living anywhere other than in a home they personally rent/own or the home of a parent/guardian and/or (b) reported any experience of not having a safe place to spend the night during the past 12 months. For a sample aged 14 – 24, the rates of “not having a safe place to sleep” are alarming. And then variations by race and gender are exponentially disturbing: youth of color are consistently more likely to experience housing insecurity than white youth, and trans and gender expansive youth substantially more likely than youth who are cisgender. Trans and gender expansive youth of color are almost twice as likely as white cisgender youth to report housing insecurity. The following tables (see Table 1, 2, and 3) reflect the percentage within each group by race/ethnicity and gender to report each experience.

Table 1

*Percent of Youth Living With Housing Precarity: Race/Ethnicity and Gender*

Gender	Youth of Color	White Youth
Cisgender (gender identity matches sex assigned at birth)	37% ( <i>n</i> = 369 of 994)	28% ( <i>n</i> = 395 of 1423)
Trans/Gender Expansive	54% ( <i>n</i> = 676 of 1256)	42% ( <i>n</i> = 860 of 2057)

We assessed experiences of bullying borrowing two items from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Kann et al., 2018) asking: “Have you ever been bullied?” and “Have you ever been electronically bullied?” (count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook or other social media). We also asked young people if they were harassed in the last 12 months. In the last 12 months:

Table 2

*Percent of Youth Bullied or Harassed: Race/Ethnicity and Gender*

Gender	Youth of Color	White Youth
Cisgender (gender identity matches sex at birth)	87% ( <i>n</i> = 812 of 936)	88% ( <i>n</i> = 1174 of 1339)
Trans/Gender Expansive	91% ( <i>n</i> = 1088 of 1194)	92% ( <i>n</i> = 1825 of 1982)

And we have documented the race/gender distribution for young people who report negative interactions with police. We defined negative police contact as being stopped, frisked, or arrested:

Table 3

*Percent who Report Negative Contact with Police*

Gender	Youth of Color	White Youth
Cis gender (gender identity matches sex at birth)	27% ( <i>n</i> = 273 of 1002)	15% ( <i>n</i> = 213 of 1425)
Trans/Gender Expansive	36% ( <i>n</i> = 444 of 1249)	18% ( <i>n</i> = 365 of 2051)

Across these three matrices of structural injustice, we find that race matters dramatically in housing precarity and exposure to aggressive policing; gender matters on all three measures, and trans and gender expansive people of color endure the most systematic forms of oppression across various sectors of public life.

## From Discrimination to Activism

We analysed the relationship between discrimination, economic, social and psychological outcomes, and also with activism. Specifically, we examined the associations between structural inequality (e.g., economic hardship, over-policing), interpersonal injustice (e.g., racism, homophobia, transphobia) and well-being (measured using

standardized indicators of psychological distress, physical health, and suicidal ideation). These associations are perhaps best articulated as a life story by Kat, an author and co-researcher from Detroit Represent!:

When asked, “Why do you think that being discriminated against makes young people more activist?” Kat connected the dots:

My experiences ‘in the system’ encouraged me to become the change I needed when I was younger. I was in the system since I was 13; ran away, lived on the streets, in shelters, juvenile facilities, back into sleeping in an abandoned building. Then I met Lance who offered me a place to stay, and I learned the importance of activism and giving back. So now, as an activist and an organizer, I work on campaigns for housing, against domestic violence and for the human rights of young people living on the streets of Detroit.

Kat’s experiences mirrors our empirical models, confirming the relationship of precarity and discrimination with activism; the buffering impact of activism on mental health, physical health and suicidal ideation, and the range and forms of activist solidarities WYI youth pursue.

*Levels and forms of activism:* As seen in Figure 2, queer and trans youth in the WYI sample are highly involved in activism. We assessed “civic engagement” building on a series of measures borrowed from Cohen and the Black Youth Project (Cohen et al., 2007). We asked youth to indicate whether they participated in any of 14 possible activities (e.g. “signed a paper or email petition,” “been active in or joined a political or justice focused group” “worked with people in the neighbourhood on a problem or issue”... in past 12 months; we also assessed forms of activism by asking participants “Are you presently involved or participating in activist organizing work” in 11 different areas including LGBTQ issues, racial justice, gender justice, and environmental justice. Additionally, we asked participants were asked whether they participated in a community based organization.

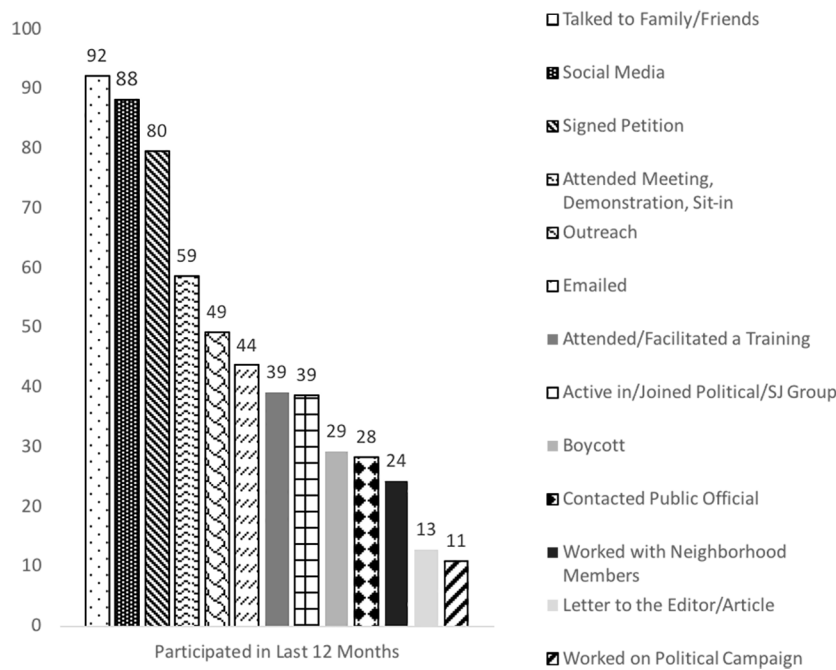


Figure 2. Percent of youth involved in activist activities.

It is important to note that the high level of civic engagement cannot be explained only by respondents' participation in community based organizations. In fact, only 30% of the respondents report that they are involved in a community based/youth leadership organization. Queer and trans young people across the country seem to be generally primed to activism, on the streets, through organizations, on line, and with family/friends.

Cutting a little more deeply into the database, [Table 4](#) reveals two particularly interesting associations between discrimination and activism. Discrimination was measured by the Everyday Discrimination Scale ([Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997](#)) of 9 items in which participants indicated how often they experienced forms of discrimination (based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion) on a scale of 6 = never to 1 = almost every day. Items included: How often: "You are treated with less courtesy than other people" and "People act as if they are afraid of you."

Table 4

*Correlations Between Discrimination and Activism*

Group	Activism Indicators	
	# of Activist Behaviors	# of Activist Areas
TGE & POC	.23	.24
TGE & White	.18	.22
Cis & POC	.21	.21
Cis & White	.15	.12
Total Sample	.22	.23

*Note.* All correlations are statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Interestingly, for the WYI sample, the more discrimination reported, the more activist behaviors engaged. That is, we find a robust relationship between experiencing injustice and fighting back. As important, however, the relationship is stronger for transgender and gender expansive youth and youth of color and relatively weaker among cisgender white youth. A buried resource within the LGBTQ/GE community, trans and gender expansive youth of color seem to be most adept at converting structural pain into political action. Particularly for queer youth of color and transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming youth, activism may be a positive resistance response to discrimination among those who are most marginalized.

Of course, reverse causal explanations are also possible: activist youth may be more likely to explain their circumstances in terms of discrimination than non-activist youth, and queer youth of color and trans/gender expansive youth may be most adept at such "bottom up" analyses of resistance. Either way, we want to signal that this dynamic of discrimination metabolized into activism is a crucial generational dynamic worth further inquiry.

## **But What About Health? The Curious Relationship of Discrimination, Activism and Health Outcomes**

In response to calls for more systematic inquiries into health inequalities faced by queer and trans youth (see [Frost, 2017](#) for a review), we examine how experiences of discrimination and bullying—along with potential responses in the form of activism behaviour—were associated with indicators of health. Specifically, following the minority stress model ([Meyer, 2003](#)), we hypothesized that discrimination and stigma faced by LGBTQGE youth (i.e., the forms of discrimination and bullying discussed above) would be associated with poorer health outcomes.



Additionally, following critical and feminist analyses of positive marginality (e.g., Unger, 2000), we hypothesized that engagement in activism behaviors would be associated with better health (Klar & Kasser, 2009).

As can be seen in Table 5, both discrimination and bullying were indeed both associated with three indices of poorer health: higher levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation along with poorer levels of self-rated health. And yet activism was positively associated with all three indicators of health. Even though the magnitude of this association was small, it is important to note that this association persists controlling for exposure to discrimination and bullying, which are known robust correlates of negative health (see Table 5).

Table 5

Multivariate Regression Models Testing Associations Between Discrimination, Bullying, Activism and Health Outcomes

Variables	K6				Suicidal Ideation				Self-Rated Health			
	B	Lower CI	Upper CI	Beta	B	Lower CI	Upper CI	Beta	B	Lower CI	Upper CI	Beta
Intercept	14.33***	13.35	15.32		1.68***	1.46	1.91		2.59***	2.40	2.78	
Person of Color	-0.26	-0.55	0.02	-0.02	0	-0.07	0.06	0	-0.01	-0.07	0.04	-0.01
Cisgender	-1.95***	-2.23	-1.66	-0.17	-0.41***	-0.47	-0.34	-0.16	-0.37***	-0.42	-0.31	-0.18
Age	-0.21***	-0.26	-0.16	-0.11	-0.05***	-0.07	-0.04	-0.13	0	-0.01	0.01	0.01
Discrimination	2.15***	1.99	2.31	0.39	0.35***	0.31	0.38	0.29	0.23***	0.20	0.26	0.24
Bullied	0.70***	0.38	1.01	0.06	0.14***	0.07	0.21	0.06	0.06*	0	0.12	0.03
Activism Behavior	-0.17***	-0.22	-0.12	-0.09	-0.02***	-0.03	-0.01	-0.05	-0.01*	-0.02	0	-0.03

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

To summarize the data to this point: First, queer and trans youth – at least those represented in WYI – are highly engaged in a range of social movements and activist strategies. Second, there appears to be a modest relationship between discrimination and activism, particularly for youth of color who are trans and/or gender expansive. Third, activism also seems to demonstrate a positive association with health, one that persists even when controlling for the well-demonstrated negative effects of discrimination and bullying. Fourth, we can see in Figure 3 that queer youth and young adults are engaged broadly in intersectional social movements, not only in LGBTQ movements but in a wide range of social movements.

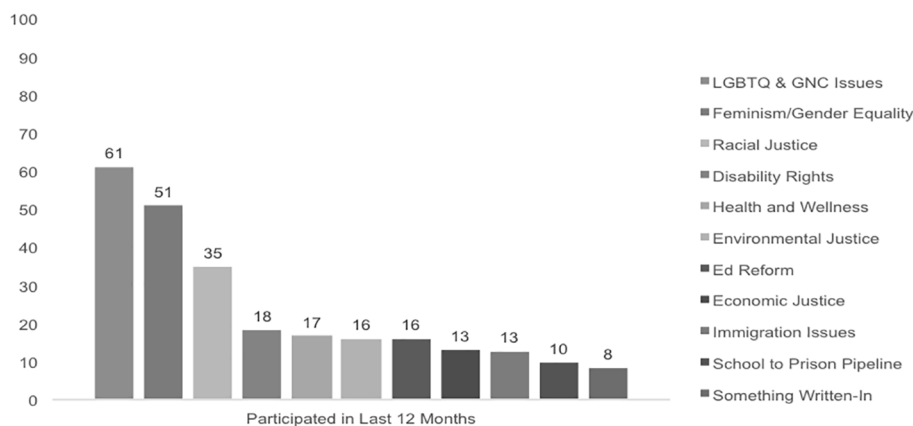


Figure 3. LGBTQGE youth involvement in social issues.

Insisting upon what Fraser (2000) calls a *Justice of Recognition*, and enacting what Ahmed (2014) calls *Willful Subjectivities*, young queer people live “unapologetically” at varied intersections, voicing commitments to and engaging broadly with a wide range of political solidarities (e.g. Black Lives Matter, Muslim American youth, young people with disabilities, prison abolition). Their activisms seem to demand recognition and transformation, not assimilation and inclusion; they voice a critique of structural/State/social violence and commit to feminism and gender justice, anti-racist organizing, disability rights, environmental justice and immigration justice. And as much as they engage these “normative” political strategies, they also take up a range of what we are calling “intimate activisms” with family and friends, for themselves, other queer youth and those coming up behind them.

## Intimate Activisms

While our quantitative dataset reveals the intensity and range of activist commitments pursued by LGBTQGE youth, the qualitative material reveals a rich range of what we are calling *intimate activisms*. We take seriously what we now consider the *intimate politics* of queer activism – the hidden and bold, relational and solitary, everyday enactments of interruption, care and solidarity, evident in delicate challenges to family, friends, teachers, and strangers who vocalize discriminatory attitudes, enacted in deep *generosity/care work* with/for “others,” and marked in the hilarious, if biting humor – that we call “*radical wit*” that jumps off the survey pages.

Inspired by Muñoz (1999), we want to end with some reflections on the wide range and forms of intimate activisms expressed by and among LGBTQGE youth. Beyond the substantial evidence of political solidarities, deep commitments to protest on the streets, posting and tweeting online, talking to family and friends, writing letters and showing up at public meetings, there are other forms of “intimate activism” animated throughout the survey – care work, speaking up/intimate interruptions and radical wit. We will briefly touch on these activist strategies. We draw largely from a cursory thematic analysis of narratives gathered across responses to the open ended question “What is your proudest moment?”, as we did not anticipate these intimate activisms adequately when designing the quantitative items for WYI.

## Deliberate and Delicate Interruptions

One of the ways in which LGBTQGE youth are advocating for themselves and for peers is by interrupting and initiating difficult conversations with family, peers, educators and strangers. Throughout the survey, there are many instances of these moments of deliberate and delicate interruptions. As one survey participant (who self-identifies as White, agender girl) recounts in response to a question about their “proudest or happiest moment”:

My proudest moment was two weeks ago, when I came out as gay to one of my teachers. Three years ago he had said some very homophobic things in my history class, and it stuck with me for basically the entire time between then and now – I became suicidal, depressed, and I went into denial about my identity. After talking to one of my friends (a straight ally) about what was up, and I got up the courage to confront him about it. I was pretty much terrified about the outcome (I thought that he wouldn't care about what he had done, would deny he had done anything wrong, etc.) but she convinced me to stick it out even after I tried to back out. I came out as gay to him, and told him about how what he said had affected me for so long; it was the first time I had actually told anyone that I was suicidal, and it was a huge relief to finally say it. He ended up being really supporting and took everything I said to heart. Even though I kind of regret telling him and my friend as much as I did, it feels good to say things which I hadn't been able to before. Now, I feel a lot more at ease with the fact that there are people who change and learn, and who care about me and my well being.

A recurring theme shared by youth making these stands is the simultaneous feeling of strength and the discomfort when they challenge everyday heteronormativity and racism. As one participant describes, sometimes the conversations are on a large scale (what they call “Big Activism”) and sometimes the conversations are on an interpersonal scale (“little activism”)- and yet both are important. The young person (who describes themselves as queer, fluid, and bi-racial) shares:

To me there is Big Activism and little activism. Big activism is protesting in the streets, is going to rallies and creating petitions, it is driving people to polls to make sure they can vote because you know that they aren't the people that those in positions of power want voting. Big Activism is actions that you take publicly on a larger scale than yourself. little activism is just as important and I only call it little because of the way it seems smaller in proportion, not because of its relative importance. little activism is all of the things you do everyday to make the lives of those discriminated against better, it could be asking for preferred pronouns, setting up a safe space in your office, it could be tweeting about #BlackLivesMatter or making sure that people #StayWoke. It is a hundred little things that begins the death of a thousand cuts for the status quo.

And at other moments the tension is intimate, rising in the most important relationships. This participant identifies as a lesbian, cis female, Chinese American:

When I was 21 I came out to my parents and while it was definitely not my happiest moment, looking back now I would have to say it's my proudest. I had to work hard and overcome a lot of things internally to be who I am today. We were in a hotel room for my sister's volleyball tournament and I handed them a manila folder with a letter I had been writing for the past six months. Coming out to first generation immigrant, Christian parents is not an easy feat. I broke their hearts when I told them who I was and while we are still in the process of figuring out how to love and understand each other, I'm glad I can die unapologetic about who I am or what I stand for.

As reflected in these responses, young people are taking up the intimate labor of interrupting the very banal offensive speech that is too common. In these moments they advocate for themselves and others. They risk rupturing tender, sometimes vital relationships, so they – and others – might be seen and recognized.

### Care Work

Queer and trans youth are engaging in deliberate and delicate interruptions that challenge, and at the same time, they are also building *care worlds* and community. We hear in their words a stitched together “we”, with a rich sense of generosity, a commitment to others, a knowledge of surviving in the cracks, and a wisdom mastered too young. That is, we hear much about what critical childhood studies scholar Wendy Luttrell (2013) calls *care work*.

While our findings suggest more research should be done in this area, we do have some suggestive quantitative evidence of care work: 23% report missing 1 or more days of school in the past 30 days to “take care of family responsibility”; 69% indicate they “make a difference in someone else’s life” at least once a month, which seems as prevalent as a reported 70% of youth who to “achieve a personal goal” at least once a month or more, and 83% report spending days “helping a friend with depression.”

We also grew attuned to care work as we reviewed questions, penned at the end of the survey, when participants were given the chance to “If you could ask three questions of other young people, what would you ask?” While

most asked questions like “how old were you when you came out?” or “do you daydream?”, quite a few turned the focus back on others, asking how might “I” help you.

They explicitly make the connections between themselves and the imagined youth they are talking to, asking questions about what “we” might do or need. For instance:

**How are you?** (straight, female, Dominican American)

**How can I help to make your life better?** (bisexual, woman, White)

**Can I give you a hug?, how are you feeling today?, do you want a cookie?** (gray-asexual-pansexual, agender, White)

**How can I make today a better day for you?** (demisexual, trans male, African American)

**Is there anything I can do to make a change in your life for the better?** (pansexual, non-binary, White)

**How can I help you?** (queer, heavily leaning towards lesbian, ???, Black American)

**What are we going to do to make this place better?** (queer, nonbinary Black girl, Black)

These commitments to care were voiced over and over at our research collective meetings. At the participatory data analysis session, Kwan Moonlite, a co-researcher and colleague/ youth organizer at BreakOUT! in New Orleans, responded to the question, so What’s YOUR issue?

When I think about my issue, I think about something that’s in my mind all the time – the next time we get a flood in New Orleans, the next time the dams break, for QTPOC without family, who is going to protect us, even as we will try to protect ourselves and each other?

Denied the public and private assurances of protection and care, that too many of us who are relatively privileged may take for granted, for LGBTQ/GE young people questions of protection, care and responsibility sit on the very surface of their skin, and deep in their souls.

### Radical Wit

Finally we have come to be interested in yet another form of intimate activism, what we are calling “radical wit.” We have just begun to analyse these narratives, and so only offer this as a still forming/“forthcoming” thought. There is a long, and sometimes quite stinging legacy of humor from the shadows – Jews, Blacks, Irish, now Muslim women – and LGBTQ/GE comedians. Radical wit appears to be a discursive opportunity to parody the normative, expose the ugly, refuse the silences, critique the everyday thorns of oppression. Comics at the margins refuse to respect the proper silences that accompany oppression.

Radical wit was most apparent to us when we reviewed the range of responses to an item tucked away early on in the survey, where we asked the respondents: “If you could design a banner for yourself, what would it say?”

**I was born gay, were you born an asshole?** (natural, queer, woman, White)

**We were all born naked and the rest is drag.** (goldstar, platinum, double mile gay, male with some drag queer influences, sombrero AF, Latino, Native)

**I am #tamirrice I am #sandrablend I am #john crawford** (Straight?, nonbinary, two spirit, GNC, Peruvian)

**Radical by necessity not choice** (gay as hell, queer, pansexual, fluid, female, Korean, Asia)

**Yellow Peril supports Black Power** (lesbian, cis, biracial, Japanese/White)

**Mexican, dyke, disability, woman... how much more powerful can I be in this country?** (dykeness, cis gender, Mexican to the core, Maya/Aztec)

**Disability is about a system of oppression, not about me being broken** (straight, transman, White)

**Flexing my complexion over white supremacy** (Gay, boy, multiracial, Brazilian, Latino, Asian, Black)

**My PGP is prison abolition** (Queer, GNC, butch, White)

**Hug a Gay Mormon: We Exist!!** (I am a boy who is attracted to other boys for emotional and physical reasons, I am Caucasian and my family stems from Europe... I am LDS but have Jewish heritage and practice both Jewish and Christian holidays, White)

## Reflections

We close by reflecting on the contributions this project makes to social and political psychology, justice studies, and activism research. We begin by asserting *misrecognition* as a social psychological and political experience that results in dispossession, health problems and also activism. Like African American scholar and activist W.E.B. DuBois who reflected on a question he was asked, “how does it feel to be a problem?” the young respondents to What’s Your Issue refuse to be a problem: they will not be misrecognized, they reject their erasure, challenge the categories and violence that support harmful hierarchies, and they insist on being known in their full complexity. With a full embodied sense of Ahmed’s “willful subjectivity,” they refuse boxes and generate a rich palette of identities, fluidities and hybridities to narrate their subjectivities.

We also feel the need to comment on critical PAR in times of ideological assault on young people of color, queer youth and marginalized youth, and assert our commitment to “no research about us, with out us.” This project was deeply participatory: in ways both profound and hysterically funny, enacted with great joy and pain, seamless and bumpy. To understand both oppression and resistance from and with those who have endured the most substantial violence from the State and from intimates, and remain radically generous and witty, is an epistemological gift. In this project we learn from/with young people that experiences of discrimination seem to accumulate in the body, and just as they are associated with material and psychological outcomes of dispossession, they also may metabolize into resistance – enacted as a range of activisms, both the traditional sort of protests and campaigns, and also the intimate sort including care work, social interruptions and radical wit. We witness, today, LGBTQGE youth organizing for gender/sexuality justice *and also* deep and expansive engagement with intersectional solidarities. We confirm, as our funders, and later youth colleagues anticipated, that LGBTQ/GNC youth of color are indeed disproportionately leading various social movements for gender, economic, immigrant/refugee and criminal justice.

We close indebted to our nearly six thousand respondents, and all those they represent, who carry the affective burden of misrecognition and yet teach us to transform pain into the passions of solidarity.

## Notes

i) We acknowledge the controversy surrounding Junot Díaz brought from within the #metoo movement. Before any accusations were made public, we used this quote to provoke writing as part of our analysis process and found its call for "mirrors" useful for describing aspects of our research purpose.

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## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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