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Active citizenship: Negotiation of private/public and activism/compliancy by public officials in Russia and Germany
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This paper is based on a presentation at the ESA-RN33 Women's and Gender Studies Midterm Conference 2016 at TU Dortmund University with the title “Going public? Gender regimes and activism” (the conference trip was supported by the Centre for German and European Studies) and on two research projects concerning LGBTIQ public officials in Germany and Russia.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................. 5
   1.1 Problem: Conflicts between uniform(ity) of the public office and personal identity .................................................. 5
   1.2 Data.......................................................................................................................................................... 6
2. Theoretical framework..................................................................................................................................... 7
   2.1 The Police as an institution: Special features and diversity inside the organization ................................................................. 7
      2.1.1 Hierarchy, loyalty and diversity within the police: Connections and tensions of activism .................................................. 8
   2.2 School as a Total Institution ........................................................................................................................ 10
   2.3 Private/public divide within the LGBTIQ-Identity: Political participation/activism as a solution? .................. 12
      2.4 Interim conclusion ........................................................................................................................................ 14
3. Empirical part .................................................................................................................................................. 15
   3.1 LGBTIQ Police Officers in Germany .............................................................................................................. 15
      3.1.1 How is the private/public divide perceived within the police? ........................................................................ 16
   3.2 School Teachers Conflicts of Identities ........................................................................................................ 20
4. Results ............................................................................................................................................................. 23
References ............................................................................................................................................................ 25
**Abstract.** In professions of public officials, the LGBTIQ identity might serve as a permanently negotiated border between the private and the public. The forced negotiations of one’s identity within the authority bring about specific forms of activism, performed by state officials. The working paper demonstrates results from the empirical research on public officials in Germany and Russia, focusing on the intersection of LGBTIQ identity and belonging to public offices. By doing so, the working paper detects a special meaning of the private/public divide as essential aspect of LGBTIQ-identity articulation and discusses its relevancy for the activism.
1. Introduction

1.1 Problem: Conflicts between uniform(ity) of the public office and personal identity

This paper presents work in progress and we invite the readers to enter into a scientific dialog with us. The paper deals with the analysis of binaries in narratives of public officials. We focus on specific tensions articulated in empirical interviews regarding private/public and activism/compliancy divides in Germany and Russia. While undertaking the analysis, we discover intertwined relations between the private and public as professionals in state-administered occupations, describe their duties and personal experiences as LGBTIQ individuals. Their experiences are conditioned by tendencies of unification of professional appearances, obligations, and conduct, on the one hand, as well as personal identification with ideas of uniqueness and diversity, on the other. The particularity of articulating these binaries of belongings to intersecting professional and sexual communities can be explained with the affiliation with public institutions that are visible and monitored from the outside. This makes the private life of the professionals a part of the public life. The study is based on qualitative interviews with police officers in Germany and with public school teachers in Russia in order to compare contrasting experiences related to the tension of professionalism and LGBTIQ-identity in two very different cases.

Public institutions, especially the institutions of executive power as the police use uniforms to represent a homogenous entity and to be identifiable as the unity of executive power (Reiss, 1992). A uniform is a means for shadowing the individuality (including private identity) as long as a person is on duty and establishing belonging of those wearing a uniform to the executive power. The uniform grants police officers rights and possibilities, as well as it provides them with obligations, that supersede their capabilities as lay persons (Narr, 1973). While wearing a uniform police officers oblige to orders and execute power irrespectively of their private convictions and they are committed to neutrality\(^2\), which means they are not allowed to bring their own political, religious or moral convictions into their professional occupations (Fehling, 2001; Winter, 1997). They are to be seen not as individuals, but as executive power, promoting their own visions of societal order, justice, and law.

Teachers are also part of disciplinary institutions of modern societies (Althusser, 2014: 50-51): they are not police officers, yet they police people’s behavior in their own way by providing knowledge on how to ‘fit’ better into current conditions of life and have the indulgence for punishing those who do not conform. In this sense, schools are medium for the reproduction of status-quo

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1 We are very thankful to Yannick Passeik and Eva Kristin Vogt for their great support in editing this paper and for all the administrative effort they invested in it.

2 Regulated by the federal states, ex. § 45 HBG The State officials regulation for the Federal State of Hessen (Hessisches Beamtenengesetz (2014)).
or a particular configuration of power relations in a society that reflect societal attitudes to various phenomena, including sexuality. Both schools and police could be regarded as forces that maintain a regime of sexual citizenship (Kondakov, 2014) which prioritizes some sexualities at the expense of others.

Yet, certainly, there can be conflicts between the private and public identities of these professionals, as well as between the forms of activism they perform and the loyalty or compliancy to their authorities. So long as they are professionals and citizens at the same time, these different belongings may engage in a kind of negotiations to produce the ultimate version of conflictual actions they actually perform on the ground. These conflicts can consist of questions regarding political rights such as the freedom of speech or other visions of citizenship rights. For both police officers and school teachers as public officials, there can be tensions between personal opinions and the institutions’ official policies. An even stronger case is exemplified in Germany when a police officer protests individually (against discrimination of LGBTIQ) while being visible as a public official, wearing a uniform at the protest. Exactly this has happened when a gay police officer took part in the Pride (Christopher Street Day Parade) wearing his uniform and therefore disobeying his superiors’ directives (Tagesspiegel, 20.06.2014). This will be the main example for the empirical part and different opinions of LGBTIQ police officers.

1.2 Data

This paper deals with data from two empirical studies in Russia and Germany. The Russian case concerns school teachers (Kondakov, 2017a). The project was initiated by the Russian LGBT Network to find out if the federal law on ‘propaganda of homosexuality’ enacted in 2013 resulted in any discrimination at the workplace for school teachers. With this purpose in mind, researchers contacted school teachers in St. Petersburg who identify on the LGBTIQ and allies spectrum. Due to fears of the potential interviewees, only eleven school teachers accepted the invitation and, eventually, gave expanded narrative interviews. However, they were very diverse in terms of their teaching experience and their sexuality: they were teachers of foreign language, history and political science, arts, geography, Russian language and literature with teaching at schools from one to 17 years. Three of the interviewees identified as heterosexual allies, one as lesbian, five as gay men, and two as bisexual women. All gave informed consent and their identities were anonymized. We regard them as ‘everyday experts,’ those who have experience of the issue under question in their everyday life and with this experience provide ground for an alternative epistemology (e.g., Sousa Santos, 2015).

3 Alexander Kondakov supervised the research, Evgeny Shtorn and Polina Kislitsyna assisted in conducting some of the interviews.
The data for our still ongoing research project on LGBTIQ-police officers in Germany derives from approximately 30 qualitative narrative interviews with police officers we conducted in seven Federal States of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as several group discussions with members of the police staff (Zimenkova & Molitor, 2017: 2). We interviewed persons who have different functions within the police organizations and have different positions within the police hierarchy e.g. from the riot police, patrol officers, criminal directors, and persons who serve as office staff.

At the beginning of our research we thought that the group of the LGBTIQ-police officers might be a quite closed one and hard to reach (Shaghaghi et al., 2011). However, during the research process, we realized that the group of the LGBTIQ police officers really wanted to talk to us and to share their experiences (Zimenkova & Molitor, 2017).

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 The Police as an institution: Special features and diversity inside the organization

The police as a hierarchical institution aim at maintaining ‘normality’ and continuity (Behr, 2000: 59). A special common feature, which is framed within the relevant literature as an important dimension of police belonging, is loyalty towards the office, which is part of the membership and caused by processes of training and socialization (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Van Maanen, 1975) as well as executing partly life-threatened professional activities (for an overview see Terrill et al., 2003). This feature has been named as “cop/police culture” (Paoline, 2003: 201) and contains that the loyalty is perceived as a common security for a closed group towards anything outside the institution. Considering some aspects of the police profession, we are especially interested in how the exercise of this profession is possible parallel to political participation of police officers in a sense of (partly protest) activities, aiming at initiating political change, fighting or alternating given political/societal frameworks4. Of particular interest is political participation aiming at promoting one’s own rights within the organization and therefore a possible critique of the police as organization. In the following section, we are going to explain briefly the features of the police profession, which potentially collides with the civic engagement of the police officers.

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4 We define here political participation according to Gabriel/ Völkl 2008; Almond/ Verba 1989; Barnes/ Kaase et al. 1979.
2.1.1 Hierarchy, loyalty and diversity within the police: Connections and tensions of activism

The specifics of the executing power within executive power is described and coined by Rafael Behr as “Bürokratieförmigkeit des Gewaltmonopols” meaning a „bureaucratized monopoly on the use of force” (Behr, 2000: 59; which might be understood as a part of legitimate power according to Weber, 1922), as the police are strictly hierarchically organized within the authority and executing power outside of it. The maintaining of “normality” and continuity within the organization seems to be crucial for its well-ordered existence (ibid.). This might also mean the perceived necessity to prevent the diversification of authority and to maintain its assumed homogeneity.

This phenomenon, that police as institution and individuals within the institution oppose the perceived heterogenization of the police was observed when women where legally able to become police officers for the first time (Lewis-Horne, 2000; Werdes, 2003), as the gender of the officers seemed to challenge the relevant competencies and features of the profession, framed as exclusively and inevitably masculine. The same might be applied to breaking the perceived “ethno-cultural” homogeneity of the police while recruiting officers with migration backgrounds and to different skin colors, which results in discrimination of the “diverse” police officers, for their cultural background is framed as dangerous for the neutrality of the police (Peterson & Uhnoo, 2012; Morris et al., 1999). Everything which challenges the perceived homogeneity of the police (including the police officers, perceived as the “others” in a white-male-Christian-heterosexual profession, Loftus, 2009; Werdes, 2003; Dudek, 2009) might be framed as a danger for the image and also for the smooth functioning of the authority as well as their professionalism. If the police is framed as homogeneously male and masculinity domain (based on obeying the orders, male loyalty and friendship, courage and executing physical power; cf. Reiner, 2010:128ff; Dudek, 2009; Bernstein & Kostelac, 2002; Miller et al., 2003), then it becomes clearer, why the LGBTIQ police officers might feel excluded from their profession (to which they are loyal to) and develop the wish to protect their own rights and want to create the framework for their visibility within the police.

The German police are a strict organization with quite predetermined professional career paths, incorporating certain steps to be reached to have guaranteed career progress. Being a stable and secure occupation, the position of a police officer as state official makes it difficult for police officers to quit the secure job without a clear alternative (here, additionally to the loyalty and identification with the police, the stable job and pension guarantees might play an important role). It is as well difficult to enter the field of the police occupation from outside, after having completed other types of education. The Police stay a rather closed group, which has undergone the same instruction with strong

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5 Definitely, the intensive diversity management within the police and the heterogeneity of police contributes towards changes in police culture, making heterogeneity more and more normal and wishful condition, cf. Paoline 2003
socialization resulting in loyalty (Paoline, 2003; Behr, 2000). The police education seems to be (as we learn from our data) a rather homogenizing environment, which is partly perceived as homophobic by LGBTIQ police members (Molitor & Zimenkova, 2017 a&b).

The essential meaning of hierarchy for following the orders is incorporated into a cop culture as a guarantee for the security of the officers (Behr, 2008: 113) and connected to the loyalty (and trust) within the institution and within each single police unit. The loyalty towards the police is not only a part of the identity, emerging due to the intensive instruction and socialization within the profession (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Van Maanen, 1975; Reiner, 2010; Feuille & Juris, 1976). Moreover, loyalty is often framed simultaneously as an essential protection during the office execution (police as risk-bearing community Behr, 2008: 113 or community, self-identifying through danger and authority Reiner, 2010: 115 ff.) and the positioning of the police as closed, homogeneous group (sharing the same values) to the police environment. Homogenization of interests, goals, understandings of policing profession as well as framing the “citizen” as the relevant other (the client, the one to be protected and the one to be prosecuted Reiner, 2010: 122ff.) are essential elements of the hierarchical and loyal police organization and police identity. Subjecting to hierarchical structures and functioning within them is based on loyalty.

Taking the previous considerations into account the following question emerges: how does such an organization treat the matter of diversity and what kind of problems might emerge because of the diversity within the police as an organization. What are the possible tensions between the visible/lived diversity and the uniformity of the police? How is the diversity articulated within the private/public divide by the police officers themselves? What kinds of activism might these tensions bring about? And how the activism, aiming at organizational change is compatible with loyalty towards this organization? We are not going to answer all these questions completely within this working paper. Yet, we want to pave ways of thinking in all these directions for future research.

The homogeneity and loyalty are understood by many scholars as essential part of the so-called cop/police culture (e.g. Paoline, 2003: 201) and Korpsgeist (Behr, 2009). The uniform of police officers can be seen as a means to erode all private from the body of police officers: their skin color, gender, sexual or religious identity, political views or economic status of their families. The erosion of the private and the strict separation between the identity as a police officer and as a private person are an important part of German socialization within the police (ex. with respect to one’s political or religious options, the police officers, as well as other state officials like teachers, judges etc. has the obligation to be neutral).

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6 Each federal state has its own legislation, however, the „neutrality“ law is to be found in each federal state. Ex. the Federal law of Berlin (Bundesland Berlin, 2005) was discussed in the
This means, that the private is likely to stay concealed within the police. At the same time, from the scholarship of sexual citizenship, we know that the right not to be private is one of the central claims of the sexual citizens (Richardson, 2000).

### 2.2 School as a Total Institution

What is true for the police is also true for the school, but for different reasons and with different implications. While the police control public behavior by enforcement of legal norms, the schools’ task is to convey and teach social norms or otherwise facilitate socialization. Thus, it is not an institution with the monopoly over the use of violence to control behavior, but a disciplinary institution that teaches people how to control their own conduct without external application of power just like in Foucault’s Panopticon prison (1995).

We offer to regard schools as total institutions (Goffman, 1961). These institutions, according to Erving Goffman, are hierarchical organizations with a variety of strictly positioned roles for inmates (director, instructors, students) and a certain level of opacity for the outsiders. Sometimes, even if we think we know what is going on inside these total institutions, our vision might still be very far from actual practices. Yet, the more some persons are involved in the workings of such a total institution, the more their everyday experiences are dependent on the rules of this institution so far as they tend to totalize inmates’ experiences.

The profession of a school teacher is usually romanticized as vocational (Weber, 2004: 1ff). It is assumed that people dedicate themselves to teaching to teaching because it is a special kind of occupation in comparison to many others. Yet, school teachers also become a part of the institution of the school as a highly regulated environment controlled by state education agencies and ministries through a hierarchical system of administrative command. In many societies, including Russia, these state bodies dictate not only standards of teaching, but also at least partly the content of classes. Hence, this profession is not simply someone’s vocation, but it is a position in a network of state administration with certain consequences related to the profession and personal life.

In terms of sexuality, schools may provide different ideas. Certainly, teachers are not distanced from more general prejudice inherent to societies’ attitudes towards queer sexualities. Even in those countries, where homophobia is formally outlawed, some teachers may still be a poor support for LGBTIQ kids because of personal ignorance, the absence of relevant education on the issues.

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7 This applies as well to the police, as police officers, at least in our data, position themselves as professionals, who has chosen their profession because of the dedication to law and the wish to serve to protect the citizens.
of sexualities, or indifference (Warwick et al., 2001; De Palma & Jennett, 2010, see for German case Klocke, 2012). Moreover, teachers may be under influence of peers in their ways of dealing with queer sexuality: whether the school environment is supportive or hostile to LGBTIQ will greatly inform teachers' own actions in situations of protection of students from bullying or developing an inclusive curriculum (Meyer, 2012). This is why legal or policy initiatives related to inclusion for LGBTIQ kids’ education are important, but they not always may penetrate walls of the schools.

As for Russia, the legal situation here is different from attempts to combat prejudice in schools. Gay and lesbian sexualities have been deregulated for many years after the fall of the USSR (Essig, 1999). In 2013, however, the state adopted the law on “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” that bans the dissemination of information on homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender to children. This law is inspired by Margaret Thatcher’s similar regulations of school curricula in 1980s Britain. It is designed as a tool to “protect” children from certain information, yet no explanation is given about why information on homosexuality is bad for learning and consumption. It seems to be good to know about something that exists in this world, and it seems good to learn it at school, not on the streets. Yet, legislators suggest that exposure of children to information on homosexuality makes kids gay, which is an unfounded prejudice that may hardly serve as a rationale for a law. Not to mention it automatically constructs homosexuality as an unwanted condition, which is being neither reflected nor explained.

Nonetheless, what is important in the discussions of the law is that the legislation is a piece of the official policy of the state towards homosexuality. This means that as public servants school teachers are supposed to obey the law and teach students how bad homosexuality is or withdraw from curricula any material that does not correspond to this policy. This situation produces a clash for those school teachers who taught homosexuality as just another expression of sexual desire among other in biology classes, as an issue of human rights and equality in history and political science classes, or as an element of inspiration in classes of arts. This may also conflict with those teachers who are active in schools as citizens defending LGBTIQ students from bullies, abusers, and offenders. Finally, this piece of legislation may trouble those teachers who identify on the LGBTIQ spectrum and now feel excluded as second-class citizens.

If the school is a total institution, its rules are applied to the experiences of all its inmates, no matter if they have inside and outside lives. The research on LGBTIQ school teachers who found themselves in a situation regulated by the “propaganda” law seeks to identify the particular ways in which the internal rules of the institution organize teachers’ everyday experiences in class and outdoors. Just like in the case of police officers, we are looking at tensions that arise out of mismatch between official policy of the institution and one’s
personal belonging. How this situation informs the private/public dichotomy: does it make one’s sexual experiences more private while rules of a total institution apply to one’s life?

2.3 Private/public divide within the LGBTIQ-Identity: Political participation/activism as a solution?

Focusing on the police and school as institutions, and minority identities within the institutional environment bring affront the divide between the private and the public as it becomes central for framing the professionals’ belongings and produces identity conflicts and troubles.

The idea of homogeneity and uniformity of the institutions (official duty of the police or total institution of the school) is challenged by the diversity which is exemplified in LGBTIQ identities of the professionals working there. The heteronormativity of the police is manifested exemplary in the articulated fear of inefficiency of policing through non-hetero or non-cis officers, as policing is framed as a profession, genuinely connected to “masculine” ascription of courage or strength (Belkin & McNichol, 2002; Möbius, 2014; Rumens & Broomfield, 2012; Dudek, 2009). Whereas, Russian schools’ heteronormativity is officially introduced through the law on “propaganda.” Hence, heteronormative discourse is being reinforced through the specific professional discourse or policies applied to professionals’ activities.

Given the evidence of the heteronormative discourse within the police and given the results from our own data (Molitor & Zimenkova, 2017: a&b) we can state, that LGBTIQ police officers face discrimination within their professional environment. It is then not surprising, that police officers in Germany (armed with the anti-discrimination legislation of the country8) search for ways to protect their identity and to stop discriminatory practices. As for the Russian LGBTIQ school teachers, according to the findings of this research, they were active in low-level practices of resistance to the overall homophobia in the country before the adoption of the law on “propaganda.” These activities included the development of school curricula that would include LGBTIQ topics and supporting victims of bullying in schools. Thus, at this point, we offer to turn to the empirical evidence on the activism of the LGBTIQ police officers in Germany and school teachers in Russia.

The LGBTIQ activism, at least in its roots and most general claims, aims at making LGBTIQ identities visible (Richardson, 20009) and not to be pushed into the private. It aims at making LGBTIQ identities livable in society and not reducible to sexuality/sexual practices (cf. Rohde-Abuba et al., 2017 (under review)). This is especially so in relation to the German case as we have to ask here, how can LGBTIQ-police officers provide for their own right to be visible

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8 Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes (2006). Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG)
9 see also Richardson 2015 for the professionalization processes within the LGBTIQ activism
within the (seemingly homogeneous uniformity) of the police, and which specifics LGBTIQ activism as a movement, calling for criticizing and changing the given societal order (Kollman & Waites, 2009; Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014), takes within the policing profession. Exemplary, by being organized within the association of LGBTIQ police officers, VelsPol\(^\text{10}\). VelsPol brings together police officers, identifying as LGBTIQ. The specifics of the organization are the double membership of the officers: the determined position of the members as LGBTIQ activists and police officers, thus taking action for the LGBTIQ right out of their position and identity as LGBTIQ police officers. Taking action as members of the association might be seen as an answer towards the institutionalized discrimination and the wish to live both identities: police officer and the LGBTIQ person simultaneously, as LGBTIQ police officer (Zimenkova & Molitor, 2017; Molitor & Zimenkova, 2017a). Additionally, in some federal states, the positions of officers responsible for same sex relationships are introduced within the police structure. Some of the VelsPol members are at the position of the officers responsible for same sex relationships within their units. However, these positions are not interesting for us in this paper, for we want to concentrate on activism of the LGBTIQ persons.

At the same time, a vision of activism as promoting open participation in political activities may not be relevant for contexts outside of the “West.” In conditions of danger, vulnerability, and lack of power, people may turn to other forms of activism that are less visible, yet still, ruin the existent state of affairs for a better future (Scott, 1985). This is the situation around LGBTIQ activist citizenship in Russia because it often takes non-conventional hidden forms of protest (Kondakov, 2017b). There are, of course, conventional forms of LGBTIQ activism in Russia such as public rallies or human rights advocacy, but many forms of resistance are more hidden than these and consist of enhancing social relations that promote better attitudes of proximate peers in someone’s social network (friends, family, colleagues).

In the German police, the understandable wish to be accepted in their identity by the fellow police officers, the LGBTIQ-coming out counts as an essential prerequisite for establishing trust relations within the working place. In Russia, first, a trust is established and only then issues of sexuality maybe discussed between the trusted friends. For these moments, breaks between classes are suitable for the school teachers, they rarely meet with friends from their school outside of the professional environment. Time slots of waiting during police operations or times of talking and exchanging stories during rather quiet moments in the patrolling car are framed with stories of personal life as well as telling romantic stories or heterosexual content (just as teachers’ room seems to be).

\(^{10}\) http://www.velspol.de/. Due to the organizational structure of German executive power, each federal state has its own police; additionally, the federal police, occupied with ex. Border control exists. The VelsPol is accordingly organized in Federal states associations, united under one federal VelsPol board.
At the same time, if LGBTIQ officers live in a closet, they end up telling alibi stories about imaginary heterosexual partners, who can never be brought to the informal meeting of the colleagues or introduced to anyone. The same is true for the Russian teachers: one interviewee even had a wedding ring so that his colleagues thought he is in a heterosexual marriage and so that they did not question his sexuality. This is not only a burden, which is consuming resources and might cause a burnout or other psychological problems (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Tilcsik, 2011), it is also believed to be disturbing to the relations of trust. If a police officer is not trusted by the colleagues (who perceive they are being told only half of the truth, so they suspect their fellow officer to have some reason to lie to them), then they are likely to give the non-trusted colleague less coverage or support in situations of danger. This happens not as a reasonable decision, in an extreme situation the condition of trust seems to play a crucial role.

Therefore, the police officers are facing othering because of not belong to presumed heterosexual homogeneity and as not complying to the wishful picture of heteronormative masculine policing11. At the same time living in a closet bears dangers for psychical health or even for life. Hence, if the LGBTIQ identity is suppressed into the “private” divide, the homogeneity of police might be maintained, at the same time the officers are in danger (of burnout, of distrust, but possibly also in danger for life). If the officers come out, the conditions of trust are more likely to be established. However, the officers face exclusion and discrimination, for they challenge the wishful picture of the police and might again suffer from mistrust.

As for the school teachers, they are rather worried to be seen “out.” The teachers consciously create two different versions of their selves: a heterosexual one and the “true” one. The former is for public performances, whereas the latter is limited to a network of trusted peers. The heterosexual expression is perceived as a protection from possible consequences of coming-out as a homosexual person: it protects from rumors, violent reactions, legal accusations, and complications. This heterosexual identity also gives a possibility to speak LGBTIQ issues at loud to some of the teachers: so long as you are perceived as a heterosexual, you are protected from accusations in homosexuality, and so you can provide protection to LGBTIQ students or mention this topic in class – which are all forms of hidden activism.

2.4 Interim conclusion

Negotiation between private and public seems to be one of the central features of the LGBTIQ identity. Professional identities, especially the belonging to the uniformed police, are public and strive for uniformity within the executive power. A school teacher is a vocational profession that facilitates socialization within a

11 which makes it partly to lesbian police officers easy to come out due to the prejudice of being a masculine females, so more suitable for police job as “feminine” gay man (Dudek, 2009)
heteronormative society and, thus, remains in conflict produced by official bigotry towards LGBTIQ which contradicts to some teachers’ self-understanding. Therefore, LGBTIQ identity cannot but challenges normative systems of both uniform identity and state education policy, among others in the sense that every articulation of the LGBTIQ identity questions the existent status quo by expressing various levels of visibility.

We cannot go into the details of political participation scholarship (cf. Gabriel & Völkl, 2008; Almond & Verba, 1989; Barnes & Kaase et al. 1979), but we just want to mention, that if the articulation of the LGBTIQ identity challenges the major conditions of a certain profession that seeks to establish a uniform space (be it execute authority or a total institution), then every articulation of the LGBTIQ identity might be framed as political participation/activism of the LGBTIQ individuals. If we define political participation as the actions of individual people or groups that confront institutionalized powers (Gallagher, 2008: 402; Zimenkova, 2013), then membership in VelsPol for the German police officers and updates of school curricula with LGBTIQ topics for the Russian teachers should be understood as political participation.

In the following empirical Chapter, we want to demonstrate, how the articulations of professional and LGBTIQ identities are negotiated between private/public divide with reference to the major features of institutions of power, and how these negotiations frame political activities of the LGBTIQ citizens serving in the police or at schools.

3. Empirical part

3.1. LGBTIQ Police Officers in Germany

The Christopher Street Day parade in Berlin on the 21st of June 2014 is a crucial event for our empirical analysis. On this day, a gay police officer disobeyed the directives of his superior chief of police (Minster of the interior of the Federal State of Brandenburg) and joined the parade wearing his uniform. The public servant of the federal state Brandenburg decided to wear his uniform to provoke a debate and general decisions about the sexual citizenship of police officers. He also criticized the different policies of various federal states: his colleagues in Berlin were allowed to join the parade in their official uniform.12

A spokesman of Brandenburg’s Ministry for the Interior defended the directive with the simple explanation, that the police uniforms are the official clothes for police officials (Tagesspiegel, 20.06.2014). Since the CSD is known for its various costumes, everyone can wear uniforms and it would be impossible to distinguish between public officials and costumed civilians. Nevertheless, this

12 According to German law on processions and assemblies (Gesetz über Versammlungen und Aufzüge (Versammlungsgesetz)), any participation in demonstrations or public gatherings in uniform is strictly prohibited (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 1953).
incident caused a discussion within the police about the conflicts between diversity and uniformity. These conflicts especially concern police officials with a LGBTIQ-identity. The following sections give an exemplary overview of different positions regarding the support of personal activism as a public official and the personal sexual identity that is visible while on duty.

3.1.1 How is the private/public divide perceived within the police?

First of all, we present some quotations from the interview with the gay police officer who disobeyed the directives of his superior chief of police and joined the parade wearing his uniform. The different opinions reveal the arguments and the (inner) struggles about the public-private divide of the LGBTIQ-police officers. The gay police officer, who was the initiator of the marching with the uniform, although it was forbidden by the Ministry of the Interior, said about his experiences after he marched in his uniform:

“It is because of all the publicity in the media that I had in the last year, for sure I’m known in the federal state of Brandenburg all over the place, within the staff, well it is this and people want to talk to me again and again about this topic from last year”\(^{13}\) (IntM6: line 927ff)

He stated that with his action he produced some kind of publicity not only among his colleagues but also through the media in the whole Federal State. He sees his action quite positive and is proud that he has done this and the colleagues are talking about him and his engagement in LGBTIQ activism. He also reports that his boss from the police station where he works was positive about his action and supports him concerning this:

„He (my chief) thought it was great, what I did in the last year. [He said] ‘What sucks has to be brought up and that was really good what you have done, that you had courage and did not let the ministry restrain you’\(^{14}\). (IntM6: line 920ff)

In this quotation, he presents his chief as his supporter who is in favor of going to the public if something is going wrong within the organization police, also even if this means doing something against the major authority, in this case, the ministry. In the interview, he repeats it several times that his action was well received and not only in his Federal State but also in Berlin and within the Berlin police (on the level of individual reactions of fellow police officers and chefs):

\(^{13}\) Orig.: „Also das ist wirklich durch diese Presse, die ich da hatte in dem letzten Jahr, das ist natürlich also bin im Land Brandenburg bin ich bekannt wie son bekannter Hund also bei der Kollegenschaft, also das und ich werde auch immer wieder angesprochen auf diese Thematik vom letzten Jahr.“ (IntM6: line 927ff)

\(^{14}\) Orig.: „Er fands super was ich im letzten Jahr gemacht habe also was Scheiße ist muss auch angesprochen werden und war richtig gut was du da gemacht hast, dass du auf dem ich sag mal den Arsch in der Hose hattest und dich da nicht unterdrücken lassen hast vom Ministerium.“ (IntM6: line 920ff)
"First and foremost the participation at the (CSD) last year has been perceived very positively and the reaction of the police of Berlin, (...) at the open day, the colleagues talked with us at our (information) desk and they said ‘that has been really great what you have done last summer’ and that we should go on like this”\(^\text{15}\). (IntM6: line 961ff)

In the whole interview, he is mainly reporting about positive feedback of his action.

In other interviews, we also asked about the opinion about the action of the colleague from Brandenburg. One interviewee, a lesbian police officer from another Federal State, said:

"Why are they allowed to participate or why are other organizations or companies allowed to go, we are, sure, we are the police but we are also a company somehow and we represent the staff and simply showing this (at the CSD) and there is, I mean if someone is a person of color, then you see it, if there is someone with a darker complexion inside the uniform, so it is obvious, but it is not obvious when it comes to sexual orientation and it is an important part of the personal identity. So, I think that it is important and a few colleagues support it, but there are also others who say ‘you should not do that, we don’t need that’”\(^\text{16}\). (IntF1: line 1913ff)

She is a clear supporter of disclosing one’s the sexual identity, of going public, and being active in terms of demonstrating the diversity within the police. She is also aware that they are the police and there might be people within the police who are against this, still sees public coming-out as an important action.

Another interviewee, a gay police officer, sees this even more differentiated:

“I support it. What I did not support, was the way how the police officer dealt with it. It was forbidden, by his police directors, and then, especially since he made it explicitly public, that he disobeyed the directives of the chief of police

\(^{15}\) Orig.: „Und vor allem auch dieser Auftritt beim (CSD im) letzten Jahr, ist wirklich sehr gut angekommen und diese Reaktion auch von der Berliner Polizei hab ich bei letzten Jahr beim Tag der offenen Tür der Berliner Polizei, wo dann wirklich Kollegen an uns, an den Stand gekommen sind und dann gesagt haben „also das war wirklich super was ihr da im Sommer gemacht habt“ und wir sollen einfach so weiter machen.” (IntM6: line 961ff)

\(^{16}\) Orig.: „Warum dürfen die da mitfahren oder warum dürfen andere Organisationen oder Firmen mitfahren, wir sind, klar wir sind die Polizei aber wir sind auch irgendwo ne Firma ja, wir vertreten ja auch die die Belegschaft und da einfach zu zeigen das gibt’s ich mein wenn jetzt jemand dunkelhäutig ist das sieht man ja wenn da jemand mit nem dunklerem Teint in der Uniform steckt, das ist einfach offensichtlich aber es ist einfach nicht offensichtlich die sexuelle Orientierung und es ist ja auch wichtiger Persönlichkeitsanteil also ich finde es schon, dass es wichtig ist und ein paar Kollegen unterstreichen es so aber es gibt auch einige die dann sagen: das muss man jetzt net, ja, das braucht man nicht.” (IntF1: line 1913ff)
and protested wearing his uniform. I did not think that was acceptable, also because this creates an impression for the non-homosexual colleagues that ‘they can do what they like to anyway.’”¹⁷ (IntM7: line 1100ff)

He points out that it might even turn into a disadvantage for the LGBTIQ-police activists. He has a strong opinion on the incident and why he is against the action were the gay police officer disobeyed the order of the minister:

“Because we are the police and the police are an organization, a structure where you are dependent on directives and you have to follow the directives and therefore I cannot say, just because I am gay, I defy it and do whatever I want to. That does not work. But as I just said, that is simply the police and it is still the police and certain structures are simply necessary.”¹⁸ (IntM7: line 1147ff)

Here you can see that he is for the hierarchal order within the police and sees the police as an organization where the sameness among the staff is important.

Another interviewee, a trans-woman police officer sees it similar:

„I don’t like it too much, if, well they can show the rainbow flag for all I care, you know? If the chief of police walks in the CSD-parade or something similar, as an institution [representative]. If the police walk there, for what reason? Of course, we are the mirror of society and we should be that. But it is sufficient, if I teach that to the normal police officer, that it is normal. I mean the basic system of gays, lesbians, transgenders, Gender-Queer and so on persons”¹⁹ (IntF5: line 1256ff)

On the one hand, she thinks it is acceptable to wave the rainbow flag during the CSD. On the other hand, she thinks that the police is and should be the mirror of society and every police officer should know that LGBTIQ people exist within

¹⁷ Orig.: „Unterstütze ich. Was ich nicht unterstützt habe, ist auch wieder die Art und Weise wie der Herr (xxx) damit umgegangen ist. Ihm wurde das ja untersagt, von seiner Polizeiführung und dass dann vor allem, er hat ja auch wieder ganz öffentlich rausgestellt, dass er sich also gegen die Weisung seines Polizeipräsidenten entgegen sich (…) trotzdem in Uniform aufgetreten ist, das fand ich nicht korrekt. Auch aus dem, weil das natürlich auch bei nicht schwulen Kollegen einfach das Bild ergibt, so nach dem Motto „na die machen doch was sie wollen.“ (IntM7:line 1100ff)

¹⁸ Orig.: „Weil wir sind nun mal Polizei und Polizei ist nun mal eine Organisation, ne Struktur, wo man auf Weisungen angewiesen ist, wo auch Weisungen eingehalten werden müssen und da kann ich nicht sagen, nur weil ich schwul bin, widersetze ich mich dem und mach was ich will. Das funktioniert nicht. Aber wie gesagt, das ist eben, das ist Polizei ist eben immer noch Polizei und ja, bestimmte Strukturen sind eben einfach auch notwendig.“ (IntM7:line 1147ff)

the police. However, marching as police officers during the CSD goes beyond this and is too much for the interviewee, because she does not see the need for this special action.

Another example for the division of public/private as well as another example of protecting the uniformity and sameness of the police representatives is the story of one trans* (male to female) police officer who now lives in her new gender:

„'what do you want?' well, firstly off the street (patrol), because now I am at a certain point, where I not just live in the role during my personal time, but 24h a day. 'Why do you want off the street?', I said: ‘simply for protecting the office/institution. I do not want it to be said at some point that the office sends faeries on street patrol’. Because I act as a part of the authority on the street, I will continue wearing uniform, but I don’t want the direct contact with the citizens outside on the streets anymore. Not because they could possibly insult me, which could have been as well, but primarily I wanted to protect my institution.”20 (IntF5: line 805ff)

Here you can see another point concerning the public/private divide. The trans* police officer tries to protect the institution as well as the citizens – the public – from herself and her “private” gender identity. This goes even beyond the question whether it is the right of LGBTIQ police officers to march in uniform at the CSD because this deeply affects the identity of a person.

The exemplary cases and quotes have shown that there are different opinions whether wearing a uniform at the CSD and therefore disobeying directives of superiors is a favorable action or not. The interviewed public officials reveal the presupposed existence of different conflicts between the public and private identity, such as a sexual citizenship and LGBTIQ-activism on one hand and the loyalty and necessity to follow directives and therefore maintaining the police culture on the other hand. Although most of the interviewed persons are in favor of activism inside the institution, some of them value the loyalty to the office and uniformity more than showing diversity to the outside.

One police officer pointed out that he feared that the LGBTIQ community might be discredited within the authority if they are too visible in public as officials. Another case highlights the special feature of the police: loyalty. It is the case of a trans-woman that does not want to work in direct contact with civilians anymore in fear of damaging the authority.

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Nevertheless, the disobedience of the police officer at the CSD has been followed by encouraging comments and respect inside the institution and by the staff. It can be seen as a way to openly address the conflicts of identity and interests of professional public officials.

3.2 School Teachers Conflicts of Identities

In Russian schools, according to our interviewees, a very specific technic of privatization of homosexuality is employed. It is unofficial “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. It refers to the notorious practice in the US army in 1990s and makes LGBTIQ people silent about their sexuality on any occasion, while heterosexual people should not be interested in these issues and never ask. One of the interviewees compares two different schools where he worked, saying that ‘in both schools, in general, the secret practice of “don’t ask, don’t tell” was implemented’ (gay, 8 years). Thus, there is a certain level of secrecy and silencing that surrounds homosexuality to produce it as an issue of personal concern and never a matter of public discussion (even though such things as discrimination, bullying or violations of rights on the basis of sexual orientation should be publicly discussed for the sake of seeking justice).

Importantly, the unofficial policy does not apply to heterosexual experiences. On the contrary, discussions of presumably private issues related to heterosexuality are frequent in the schools: marriages, heterosexual partners, children, family vacations or internal family concerns are among casual topics of conversations between school teachers:

“…at school, there are always these remarks like: “oh, look at that woman, she doesn’t have anyone, and you are not that young anymore, and you need to have children” … So with time, as I have worked in many different [schools] and excellence programmes, I have concluded that school teachers are mostly a type of Soviet women who can only talk about borsch, husbands, and time-to-get-married topics” (gay, 12 years).

This quote gives a sense of heteronormative environment at schools when everyone is presumed heterosexual. Hence, sexuality is not banned from school (it is discussed here), it is just sexuality is understood solely as heterosexuality in its very specific form shaped around heterosexual family. These are the rules of the game in the total institution of a Russian school: silencing of homosexuality and compulsory heterosexuality which is a discursive heteronormative regime that produces an illusion of totality or impossibility of any kind of resistance.

This silencing is employed not only to regulate personal relations and conversations, but also school curricula. Topics related to homosexuality are regarded as inappropriate for classes:

21 Sexual identity and experience of work in education are indicated in the brackets.
“This topic [homosexuality] is totally ignored in high school. This is not there. No stories that might exist in literature or history – these all are absent. Nothing. So I wouldn’t call it a homophobic policy, rather it is silencing policy. We keep silence about it” (gay, 3 years).

The “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy is a contract: one is guaranteed security and employment in exchange for contributions to the existent status-quo. Such a norm is directly related to political participation, since no claims for a change of the status-quo are supported in this system and, therefore, no participation is encouraged or even feasible. According to our data, school administration seeks to establish an image of a particular school as an idyllic place where nothing scandalous or extraordinary is happening. Someone’s homosexuality is a way to ruin this image, while LGBTIQ activism is considered an outstanding way to destroy school’s reputation. Thus, there were several instances when school teachers who were active in LGBTIQ advocacy were fired from their jobs as soon as it became known to the public. As our interviewees report (bisexual, 2 years), if a school principal is a “good person”, then in this situation she will do her best to dismiss a “rebel” without big consequences: for example, not leaving the reason of dismissal in official records.

School principals are under influence of supervising state bodies. In this sense, they work to satisfy these bodies and produce an image of their school for them, rather than for any other possible public. This Image is mostly shaped by compliance with state policies in education and other relevant spheres: “anyway, a principal broadcasts policies of the state … it doesn’t matter if a principal is progressive or not, no matter what his thoughts are” (ally, 11 years).

In the conditions of a clear state policy towards homosexuality exemplified in the “propaganda law”, even those schools that have had a different attitude to LGBTIQ topics have to change their views and regulations:

“Say, five years ago this topic [homosexuality] could be discussed, yes, I talked to several teachers, could be discussed, and no matter in what context: positive or negative. Now… this topic does not exist. So if someone tries to, then this person is forced to leave, anyone, if he initiates anything like this, he has to put his notification on voluntarily quitting the job on the table” (gay, 3 years).

In this quote above, the interviewee struggles to talk about homosexuality and employs many silences on the way (see, Shtorn, 2017). Restrictive policies seem to be working on many different levels here. Besides, he also mentions that formal mechanism of control which is claimed very common in other interviews as well: stigmatized teachers are supposed to desire to leave the school “voluntarily” when school administration targets them and makes their working conditions impossible in order to force them to go. Certainly, such a disciplinary regime is a bad soil for protest or any articulations of citizenship, especially in relation to LGBTIQ. Silencing, heteronormativity, and administrative system of command compose a configuration of power relations
that do not allow for dissent and open confrontations. Yet, there are ways in which resistance paves its path through. Those are forms of secret activism behind the closed doors of classrooms.

One of common ways of resistance is support to LGBTIQ school kids despite of possible sanctions. Even in the situation of silencing, there are some articulations of queerness that may be coded and decoded by people to allow for the establishment of connections between those who understand secret languages. Some teachers speak of “gaydar” in this regard:

“I can tell you that even earlier, when there wasn’t this law on propaganda, kids certainly didn’t take the risk of addressing a teacher with these topics, with their problems, for help, even if they knew this teacher as a good person. Well, I think so. Because, with my radar, I do understand who is who. I can see people. I understand that this boy is gay, yes, well. And this girl is lesbian… it’s always there! Some moves… it’s visible. Not always, but most of the times. Sometimes, let’s say. I can be mistaken, well, but statistics is on my side, someone has to be. Well, these kids, they seek for a contact with you because they feel or they know from social networks that you can support them morally” (ally, 11 years).

A conversation about homosexuality between a student and a teacher maybe regarded as inappropriate if disclosed to the third parties. It could fall under the violation of the law on “propaganda,” but the teacher may also face graver accusations as talks about sexuality and sexual intercourse are rarely distinguished in an environment of silencing of homosexuality. When there is no sex, everything becomes sex. This is why instances of such conversation should be considered an act of real and dangerous activism. As some of our interviews say, these acts do occur at times:

“A questioning boy, right, asked [his friend], “what if I tell you that I like not only girls,” he was afraid to say, “I like boys”… and so his friend told him that he could talk to me about it. We talked. I told him that he should not be afraid of this, because when you are fifteen, when this all is being formed, it is sometimes hard to find support. And support from a teacher – or someone adult, right – is very important for any person. Well, we talked with him about this topic. He was so afraid to confess to his friend. Another friend, a friend of mine, she organized a meeting. We were three of us there and discussed it, then we also talked to his friend who was very homophobic and who – when he learned that a friend of him with whom he was hanging around for ten years was gay – he was in shock. So I had to have a kind of psychological training with two of them” (gay, 3 years).

This teacher’s decisions and actions are admirable. Certainly, he is not the only one who tries to support students in need of psychological relief, help or simply unbiased information. Yet, in the condition of silencing, this channel of communication (and activism) is very narrow. One positive tendency that is remarked in our interviews is that understanding is easier to find among students rather than among colleagues and school administration. Hence, some
teachers do discuss LGBTIQ issues in class despite possible consequences. It is especially so for “allies,” heterosexual teachers who support LGBTIQ people. For example, this story relates a picture of solidarity in the struggle against homophobia undertaken by an ally and students together:

“We [a part of the class and the teacher] did not fully defeat his [one of the student’s] homophobia. But he eventually came to an understanding that let them be, those homosexuals, changing his position from actually arguing that they, well, should be put against the wall and shot down all of them” (ally, 11 years).

Teachers, in general, think that homophobia is not widespread among students and that this marks a generational gap between them and the rest of the school “inmates”: ‘there are some homophobic words, well, in class, when we discuss the theme, there are different opinions, but this [homophobia] is not trending’ (ally, 17 years); ‘for the last fifteen years, I have seen that teenagers have become more tolerant to gender identities… homophobic rhetoric definitely produced a number of desperate homophobes, but the majority think they are jerks’ (gay, 8 years). Some parents may also contribute in this situation of “getting (limitedly) better”: ‘one girl from the tenth grade came out to her mother, and her mother called me on the phone and asked to meet her and talk. So we met with her several times, I gave her some readings, including works of Igor Semenovich Kon’ (gay, 8 years).

4. Results

Our research touched upon various topics as we sought to establish connections between two very different contexts of experiences of LGBTIQ people: German police force and Russian schools. One of the major themes in relation to both empirical datasets is a discussion of boundaries between public and private. The professions in our cases are state administered; they are venues of state policies in domains of law and order or education and socialization. Yet, these professions are inhabited by people with a range of different other belongings not limited to professional identity. Experience of LGBTIQ sexuality is one such example. Sometimes, LGBTIQ identity is in conflict with professional duties: either in a form of rules applied to police officers who wish to be visible within the police and the LGBTIQ-community, or in a form of homophobic state policies implemented in schools to silence LGBTIQ topics. The interviewees in these two cases are confronted with a choice of privatizing their sexuality or going public to resist unfair or restricting rules.

In Russia, the choice between activism and privatization of sexuality is not a real choice, if we apply the concept of activism that prioritizes public rallies and coming out. However, once activism is understood as networking and support for other people in order to advance a better future, then Russian school
teachers are activist citizens. They negotiate the boundary between public and private by employing possibilities of "silent activism" (conversations, counselling, support, in-class discussions), and they also negotiate the limits of their own invisibility as LGBTIQ persons (by responding to the "gaydar" signals). This does make the Russian case different from the German institutionalized forms of LGBTIQ citizenship, but it also sheds light to the ways in which citizenship may be articulated in other contexts.
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ZDES Working Papers

Arbeitspapiere des Zentrums für Deutschland- und Europastudien

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