Exploring Emotional Experiences of Belonging

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In this article, the authors look beneath the surface of people's academic lives to explore the emotional aspects of seeking identity and belonging. It is about the emotional geographies of academic lives.

> Where words are scarce they are seldom spent in vain.
> — John of Gaunt (*King Richard II*, Act 2, Scene 1, line 7)

In a general sense, this article is about the conditions of academe and the emotional experiences that academics undergo in making sense of their place within it. It is also about belonging and the scarcity of words and feelings expressed as participants negotiate particular academic spaces. These emotional experiences were often defined through silences that coalesced around and within certain places. Indeed, much of the symbolic importance of these academic places stemmed from the emotional associations, including the feelings they inspired of fear, distress, excitement, or worry. Emotional geography argues that emotions are fluid and move between people and other things (Pile, 2010). Pile (2010) also notes that emotion constitutes forms of knowledge that are grounded in intimate accounts of situations and event, which

means environments are not passive (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000). Emotions are understood in the context of particular places (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005; Davidson & Milligan, 2004) because only in this context can people understand how emotions make sense; furthermore, "feelings and emotions . . . make the world as we know and live it" (Anderson & Smith, 2001, p. 9).

Emotional geography emphasizes expressed emotions (Pile, 2010). It is argued that emotions emerge from feelings, and represent personal experiences that are socially constructed through language and other representational practices (Anderson, 2006). Emotions, then, are integral to each individual's contextual engagement with the world; "they compose, decompose, and recompose the

geographies of our lives" (Smith, Davidson, Cameron, & Bondi, 2009, p. 10), reinforcing the strong ties between emotion and place and thus emphasizing that emotions are produced in, and circulated between, individuals and others as actions and practices (Zembylas, 2011). In our work, many participants spoke about the emotional entanglement of negotiating particular academic places, which disrupted their sense of belonging. In making sense of these disruptions, participants described different meanings attached to belonging: silenced, dismissed, and constructed. These disruptions were particularly important as they served as entry points for us to explore the relationships between emotion and location in the broad context in which academic experiences occurred, emphasizing the location of emotion in both body and place (Davidson et al., 2005).

Exploring emotional experiences brings *senses* to the foreground along with questions about how and when emotions are felt, and what forms these emotional experiences can take: can they be seen or even heard? Without naming or understanding the emotional substance of such experiences, it is likely individuals will repress this knowing. Forms of emotional experiences are particularly pertinent for naming experiences as people traverse in, across, and through different geographic places. The research accounts and personal anecdotes in our work illustrate that individuals ascribe different meanings to the emotional experiences of belonging in academic places, in variable ways—verbally and bodily. Their stories reveal the complexities of belonging experiences and expose how the emotional

boundaries of Education scholars are affected through everyday negotiations of academic spaces. To illustrate this complexity, Jones (2005) points out:

Emotions are systemic and interact constantly with our conscious and unconscious selves, memories and environments; they enframe the rational and not vice versa. So who we are and what we do at any moment is a production of the stunningly complex interplay between these processes. These emotional spatialities of becoming, the transactions of body(ies), space(s), mind(s), feeling(s) in the unfolding of life-in-the-now, are the very stuff of life we should be concerned with when trying to understand how people make sense of/practice the world. (pp. 205–206)

Jones (2005) further asserts that, "if we are all vast repositories of past emotional-spatial experiences then the spatiality of humanness becomes even deeper in extent and significance" (p. 206), which reinforces how difficult it may be to put "the sense back together." He challenges readers to consider whether it is possible to decompose past terrains and past encounters, which are mapped within and colour their lives in ways they cannot easily feel or say.

The body then becomes a critical site of knowing, in that emotions are collective phenomena, but only expressed in the location of the body. The body is a site of feeling and experience, which is socially embedded (Pile, 2010). For example, geographies of agoraphobia have shown how bodily boundaries are disrupted during panic attacks that result in fragile boundaries long after the intensity of a panic attack

subsides (Davidson, 2001). Other studies have emphasized feelings between "selves" and "others" in exclusionary qualities of social life (Sibley, 1995) as well as resistive responses to body politics (Dyck, 1999). In particular, Dyck (1999) found that women with chronic illness, specifically multiple sclerosis were transformed as they struggled with "body troubles" in the workplace. Through negotiating culturally produced scripts, bodies are interrupted by the extent to which women with multiple sclerosis re-inscribed or redefined the meaning of self in relation to a work environment. Weick (1995) argues that interruption is a signal that important changes have occurred in an environment and in expectation, which represents a critical event for feelings to be experienced and emotions to emerge. He specifies that emotion occurs between the time an interruption happens and the time it is removed (p. 45). Thus, when individual bodies are interrupted by the contingencies and local social and material practices of particular environments, those individuals try to "make sense" of the emotion they experience (Weick, 1995). Overall, these findings illuminate the fluidity of emotions and the relational distinctions between bodily interiors and exteriors, as well as the links between "boundary-forming processes and emotions" (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005, p. 7).

In this work, we are particularly interested in understanding the full array of expressions affecting the meanings of belonging in the everyday geographies of academic lives. This relational concept brings particular kinds of meanings forward, meanings that are sometimes invisible or unformed yet for individual participants these emotions

are felt and reside notably in both places and bodies. We hope to step beneath the surface of belonging experiences and pay attention to the ways individuals express feelings as they encounter different academic places, so that we may understand the contradictory swirl of emotion that "sometimes proved productive and other times proved debilitating" (Berry, 2003, p. 149). It is perhaps not surprising that emotion punctuated the stories told by our participants. The expressions revealed the various ways that individuals explained the meanings of their belonging experiences. Longhurst (2007) points out, "bodies are lived and experienced through emotions. . . . [yet] emotions are not just tied to individual bodies, they are also inseparable from wider structures and processes" (pp. 114–115) and the landscapes of people's lives. It is such landscapes that bring under scrutiny the conceptualization and significance of emotions (Burman & Chantler, 2004), which are arguably crucial in exploring how belonging experiences are understood.

In this article, we view belonging as more than socially situated, we view it as sets of interwoven experiences. Like the gathered stories presented here, they twist and turn, move backwards and forwards at once, exposing the intimately entangled relations between experiences, emotions, and meanings. These narratives stirred emotions that spanned across time and place, which Sosnoski argues (2003) aligns with an inherent need to affiliate with people and with institutions. He further asserts "since our need to affiliate . . . is derived from our need for contact with other human beings, it is not surprising that emotions can be evoked by institutions when they are personified" (p. 78). The

stories of our participants are intended to expose the relations between emotions and place, highlighting the meanings of belonging as these individuals made their way in, through, and across academic geographies.

Silenced Meanings

Nelson (2003) writes that belonging is always a double-edged sword; belonging creates opportunities for action at the same time as it instills powerful constraints defining what actions seem impossible. According to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (2004), the root word belong (followed by *to*) means "be the property" or "be rightly assigned" while belong (followed by *in*) means "be rightly placed or classified" or "fit" or "be related to." Yet, the emotional meanings that were expressed by participants conveyed a different story than these somewhat static definitions. While some participants spoke about moments of belonging, other participants described academic spaces as risky places where fear undergirded their silent actions and disrupted their sense of belonging. Opting for silence meant either hiding or altering their identities, which forced individuals to fit into places that prevented their struggles from surfacing. Olsen (1978) names these places of silence as "unnatural silences," which represent "the unnatural thwarting of what struggles to come into being, but cannot" (p. 6). Also Miller (2005) writes, "fear is [thinking] that unnatural silences will envelope [them], either lulling [them] into comforting quiet of supposed completeness, or muffling the sound of [their] questions" (p. 62). For a few participants, fear lulled them into silence, stifling their questions and cutting off opportunities to develop. Anne described how fear crippled her

spirit of inquiry and forced her to be "way more cautious" as an academic, a stance that silenced her:

> I think what makes it possible for you to make real contributions and not be afraid…. I spent a whole year looking over my shoulder and now it's going to be a challenge because frankly it's burned me a little bit. I'm way more cautious and I never thought I would be. I had more freedom as a graduate student than I do in this job. To worry about people's approval has been a constraining element in my work identity.

The choice of silence was costly both personally and professionally. Choosing silence meant constraining the bodily boundaries and inhibiting full engagement, which ultimately meant participants were denied the fullness of inquiry; they endeavoured to hold down struggles and questions, which subsequently prevented them from working towards praxis. In one case despite feeling like he belonged as a teaching assistant, Kenneth revealed the personal cost of silence while trying to fit in:

> I am learning how to sit and listen and learn and how to follow. I think I'm astute when it comes to group dynamics and what's happening and I think I would know my position well enough there to know that I am junior and to keep that in perspective and to just kind of follow the lead of the other members…. I think what I want to do is really pay attention to the politics of the committee so that I am really clear about who it's important to align with in a learning situation

and be careful not to take unnecessary risks.

Tania elaborated on the ever-present emotional tug-of-war within her, as she negotiated her place at her first institution. She attributed some of her angst to the affiliation she developed with a particular research centre that was not positively viewed by everyone in the department. She said:

I had a feeling that something wasn't right and there was a feeling that you were kind of on the outside . . . like there was more to every interaction than you understood. . . . There was some pawn stuff, like people trying to pull me on way or another. . . . I was torn because on one hand there was a feeling of really wanting to dive in and become part of the department… but, on the other hand, there was sort of a feeling of "I'm not sure I want to get involved in some of this stuff," but it was really hard not to because you really got pulled.

For Tania, the cost of breaking silence meant risking her identity performance and threatening her social place as a new academic. Exposing these feelings of angst were too high a risk for her at this stage of her career, which ultimately left her paying an emotional cost in particular social places and eventually led her to vacate that physical space and take up an academic appointment elsewhere.

John also talked about the structural silencing that can occur in the academy. After writing and publishing an opinion paper in a local publication, he soon discovered the real meaning of the words academic freedom and the consequential power and control of institutional rules. The emotional scars from this experience were repeatedly exposed as he re-visited this story. John reiterated multiple times how he "naïvely believed the academy was a place where social critique was welcomed." As if by "putting the sense back together," over time, he slowly unraveled the social construct of the term "academic freedom" by decomposing his emotional experiences at the margins:

My interior feeling is one of feeling on the side…. I feel on the edges and I don't feel hugely valued…. What I am feeling at this institution has all of a sudden opened my eyes and I say oh now I know how a system can conspire against you and make you feel unwanted.

John's story revealed the emotional complexity of particular places and how these relations highlight the permeability and fluidity of bodily boundaries. The fluidity of emotion also illuminates how emotions help to construct and disrupt the "bodily interiors and exteriors" (Davidson et al., 2005, p. 7) as individuals make sense of geographies. John went on to describe the internal negotiations and complexity that language, emotion, and place play, highlighting the intrinsically relational space of emotion:

It's very interesting, complex and hard to articulate feelings of being, feeling marginalized in a place where I am in some ways untouchable… where I am both secure and senior, but still feeling… I have tenure, am a full professor, there's nothing else I have to prove to anyone…. I can continue doing my own thing but still

with the feeling of being, you know, the language, feeling marginal, but getting language from the Director that is very positive and reinforcing. I now see her language at times as shallow.

Despite being at the margins, John rationalized his place "being on the periphery" and felt belonging was a relative term; he felt more privileged compared to others:

Periphery is an interesting term and I think in some ways I see myself as peripheral now, but not in comparison with people who are new or not in comparison with people who are part time. My position is actually rather privileged. I am tenured. I have been at the institution for 14 years. To the extent that there is security with tenure, I have it. So I'm not peripheral in that sense.

Nancy described the shaken sense of belonging and the disrupted rhythm of place and time moments after she defended her dissertation. She described the disruption in emotional terms recalling the rising feelings of uncertainty rapidly filled a space that once felt calm:

A slow rising tension… disrupted the usual patterns of time and space, as I walked away from the university the afternoon of my dissertation defense. I felt suspended… moving in slow motion, floating with a sense of both excitement and fear about leaving a place that had cradled parts of my soul for four short years. A colleague named this a "space of decompression" (K. McClelland, personal communication, 2006); it is

a release. In "Transcendental Etude," Adrienne Rich (1978) uses the term *free-fall*, a word that resonated strongly with me, conjuring up feelings deep within me that stirred an unformed sense of longing about where I belonged. A thunderous silence of mounting feelings gathered force, which words alone could never describe, dropping me into a space between my inner and outer self—an in-between space, not yet named, but fully understood…. A silent knowing.

The weight of this emotional knowing grew heavier and while she reflected upon this experience, new questions emerged about where belonging existed and to whom? This experience reveals how entangled with emotion sets of experiences are for individuals as they transition through change and also how rich with knowing silence is when naming emotions. Lewis (1993) writes about a conceptual understanding of women's silence and admits to carrying the weight and responsibility of her version of other women's stories,

Their words connect with my own, beneath the surface, in the deep crevices of my woman's body. The barely perceptible trembling of their bodies catches the rhythms of my own creating the compounded resonations of a shared knowledge spoken for the first time. (p. 53)

As Lewis (1993) argues, "locating our experiences in the materiality of our everyday lives is not the same as telling all" (p. 53), but rather the embodiment of a subjectivity and the concrete articulation of a body knowledge—a fusion of the mind and

the body—as the primary site of oppression through which subjectivities are formed. The silence of these embodied spaces in time reveal the intricacies that thread subjectivity, place, and emotion together to re-make social meanings of belonging and better explain the fullness of silent knowing.

Constructed Meanings

Many participants discussed the personal price of negotiating conflicting and competing stories and the cost of constructed meanings of belonging. Their experiences of exclusion and separateness exposed the disruptive paths they had to negotiate in and through places that were already constrained by language, meanings, and modes of interaction.

Clearly, places do not have single, unique identities; they are full of internal conflicts that consist of social interactive processes. Participants' encounters with different places meant they were forced to construct "cover stories" (Olson & Craig, 2005) as a way to negotiate the contradictory narratives of fitting in. Living out these cover stories in an outward countenance of knowing meant carrying the weight of constructed meanings and even self-deception. Participants spoke about many ways of constructing meanings and the emotional consequences of doing so: "discarding pieces of myself," "feeling orphaned," and "performing to fulfill a cultural self." John talked about the work of living such a double life, "I'd like to think that I can focus on what I'd like to do and not have to concern myself with performing for others . . . not be a chameleon and not try to be everything…. I still find myself living a double life."

Many participants expressed the emotional emptiness these facades created, leading them to feel loss, lack of fulfillment, an inability to fully engage, and a sense that they were trapped; like Miller (2005), they felt "enmeshed in habitual responses or protective withdrawal" (p. 73). The participants' readings of academic places describing their sense of belonging varied in interruption within the context of their everyday relationships. For many individuals, academic places became places of risk. In her final year as a doctoral student, Anne explicitly spoke about her efforts to be anonymous, and thereby to avoid the risk:

> Those last few years I felt at risk all the time and I kept a fairly low profile institutionally. I felt that I couldn't go to my faculty for the kinds of assistance that I needed because I didn't want to draw attention to myself because I knew everything that I was doing seemed to fall between the cracks.

Renée talked about feelings of fragmentation, yet at the same time she spoke of the fear she felt of exposing her whole "self" in an environment where performance capacities were at a premium and often visible to others. Anne described the conflictive space of "surrendering [myself] emotionally . . . closing myself off." Miller (2005) acknowledged the conflict that such a space creates within the "traditional conceptions of a scholarly and tenure-able self" (p. 69). Miller described the fragmentation that so often accompanied her own academic journeys:

> I move through portions of my daily work as a segmented entity, floating,

watching from the ceiling, much in the way that people who have returned from near-death experiences describe the separation from their bodies as they observe the life-saving attempts of others upon their lifeless forms. I wait and watch, knowing now, with my third-year tenure track, assistant professor intuition, that there are a few moments of clearness and freedom in which I may reveal parts of myself that I typically hide in my role as "academic." (p. 70)

Struggles around the meaning of "fitting in" were points of tension for many participants. In a stratified profession like academia, the tension of belonging is a two-edged sword that both empowers and constrains, or as Shumway (2003) writes, "enables and limits" (p. 105). For many new scholars, the stratification was mostly invisible and for Anne in particular, the structural power of her statutory place came as quite a surprise. She said, "it's one of those unspoken things, [to learn] the hierarchy of your role and your position is marginal at the university. No one asks for your badge and what step you're at—but there's a big difference between being an assistant professor, an associate professor, and a hired limited-term lecturer or sessional instructor." Frances felt being accepted was often a mystery because the usual markers of acceptance were invisible. However, despite the mystery, these structures and cultural rules were written into social practices, whether informally or through policy, forming the contextual conditions of a ritualistic system that judged who was in and who was out.

The mystery around the authors of the unwritten rules and social practices was solved for Frances, after her application for tenure was rejected. She indicated the tenure committee "would form part of a social group, people who are some kind of 'clique' within the Faculty or would they be essentially operating independently—one without the other? So they just rely on their experience, on their status to invoke authority on these matters." O'Dair (2003) argued that "belonging as it currently operates in the academy, cemented by tenure, limits far more professionals than it enables" (p. 205). In particular, "tenure contributes not only to the woes of the victims—younger members of the profession, but to the woes of all academics, either by thwarting ambition or by building cynicism and a sense of illegitimacy within and without the profession" (p. 205).

Dismissed Meanings
Participants talked about the ceaseless needs of trying to feel accepted that led to dismissed or unrecognized feelings. Perloff (2003) wrote, "academics often have affiliation problems—the complexity of affiliation today demands ceaseless and uneasy negotiations" (p. 142). Frances expressed a sentiment that many participants shared when she described reaching a saturation point after her application for tenure was rejected. For Frances, the demands of working six years in a tenure-track position to build a new program did not prepare her for the emotional force of rejection, she said: " I [felt] completely shocked to be turned down…. I mean like the wind just goes out of you…. It is so insulting, it is just so insulting." An added insult was realizing her disciplinary research area was not recognized:

I had colleagues with whom I collaborate and worked with that were really excited and interesting, but in the long run that was not at all appreciated or acknowledged in terms of it being artistic work . . . so I mean try to push that as being a legitimate way of researching, of knowing, of learning or representing knowledge for which of course there is broad lip service.

O'Dair (2003) suggests, "what intellectuals want is voice and recognition in their profession, in seeking professional conversations" (p. 203). While Frances' colleagues recognized her day-to-day work and ideas, final professional recognition was denied. As Collins (1998) states,

What makes one an intellectual is one's attraction to this conversation: to participate in the talk of its "hot centre," where the ideas have the greatest sacredness, and if possible to attach one's own identity to such ideas so that one's ideas are circulated widely, through the conversation, and one's personal reputation with it. (pp. 30–31).

Frances felt this absence. Similarly, as a doctoral researcher, Nancy could not help but relate to feeling legitimate, accepted, and fully ensconced in her department and as a result naïvely assumed that she would enjoy the same academic recognition as a new scholar:

Graduated with distinction! Two weeks later, I was asked to teach a graduate-level research course. Needless to say, I was thrilled about the opportunity to connect with

students and to engage with other faculty members. I threw myself into planning for the upcoming course, which as a first step involved obtaining access to the online databases at the university. I can still feel the pounding in my chest as I reflected upon a conversation with the librarian to seek access. The librarian asked, what is your academic status? After a disturbingly long silence, I heard myself respond… No, I'm not a faculty member! No, I'm no longer a graduate student! And then I wondered: who am I?

The residue from this brief exchange lingered for some time and the feelings of being anonymous and unrecognizable began to take shape. The idea of being in a familiar place, yet feeling unfamiliar was confusing. Kenneth also discussed this affiliation gap. In both cases, it felt like slipping down an institutional stairwell, out of sight—in the same place, yet out of sight and unrecognizable. During the fall, Nancy got stuck in a web of structural relations between hierarchy and legitimacy. As a doctoral researcher, she felt like an important member of the university community yet as a new scholar standing in an old familiar place, she felt unrecognized.

Other participants described being "dismissed by association" and that affiliation could act in either productive or destructive ways. Tania described the "bad experiences" she experienced in her first academic position. She said, "Aligning myself with one of the strong faculty members who was involved in the centre immediately put me on a hit list with a sub-group in the department." She continued:

I knew there were dangers in becoming involved with the centre, but it was also the only place where there was a really an active program of research going on with many opportunities to participate and be involved in grants and projects . . . so there were lots and lots of opportunities and I think the jump start on my career was invaluable.

For this new scholar, the ties of affiliation both helped her develop a solid academic profile, yet hindered her social place in the cultural milieu of the department. The ties of affiliation were more tightly wound than Tania had expected, "there was more to the sub-group than I was aware of initially." Davis (2003) argued that, "Academic affiliations are the ties that bind. Some might say they choke. Yet the making of a career is deeply linked to the forging of such binding ties" (p. 175).

Like many of the participants, Nancy felt rejected by association:

I felt lucky to work on a number of contract positions after I graduated. To me, these offers represented signs of acceptance and certainly provided opportunities for me to develop as a new scholar…. However, it was while I was working on one of these contracts that a faculty member remarked, "there are some members of faculty who will never accept you into the department because of the strong affiliation you have with your advisor."

At the time, Nancy had no way of understanding the constructions she was working within, yet was fully impacted by the "replications and re-enactments of social, historical, and

cultural constructions" (Miller, 2005, p. 75) being played out in the academy. These struggles and injustices formed the basis of assumptions and expectations that framed discourses that were an everyday part of the contextual conditions of these academic places. The challenge of deconstructing these cultural and social practices helps to examine norms, habits, and symbols that are embedded in aspects of institutional places that influence and structure discourse that shapes such experiences.

Miller (2005) challenged academic women to, "struggle together to create versions of curriculum, teaching, and learning that do not posit particular voices, bodies and experiences as representative of all" (p. 82). Instead she calls for critique of institutional structures that are devoid of emotional, subjective, and interpersonal cues. Such emotional experiences alert academic women and allied men to examine and question the embedded assumptions of such disruptive narratives that disregard or defer the meanings that assist individuals in interpreting social places. Nancy has come to see these struggles as "important entry points into understanding the emotional interactions of place through time and space." Frances described in general the (dis)missed voices and place of women in the academy. She believed,

There are all kinds of things that are part of it certainly . . . masculinity, traditional . . . and I mean that's what was set up, that is the space into which women have been trying to find in the last hundred years; you would think in a hundred years something would have been opened up to make a more comfortable space. . . . There are certainly lots of women

involved but you see the thing is… students would see a lot of women teaching, [but] many are seconded from public school systems or are sessionals [and]… they are not really invited to a formal place in academe.

The stories from our interview echo other reports that document the ways women, racialized minorities, and other scholars have been admitted but not fully accepted in the halls of academe. Different bodies may be accepted but not the corresponding new ideas and meanings.

Reflections

Belonging is frequently conceived as a binary notion: a conditional notion of being "in" or "out." Yet, through the stories of our participant experiences, we have understood belonging as sets of experiences that include a spectrum of emotion that is both dynamic in time and "socially placed" (Parr, Philo, & Burns, 2005, p. 96). Our participants' experiences in academic places and their descriptions of distinctive cultures of emotional interaction allowed us to begin to understand how emotional silence for example was socially constructed into such different personal meanings of belonging as dismissive or constructive. Upon reflection we agree with Parr, Philo, and Burns (2005) who argue that the processes of silence surrounding emotional knowing, appear to "render emotion largely ineffable, 'unsayable'" (p. 97). As such, individual and collective repression creates silences and, as we found in this study, conflicts with institutional norms and expectations are at risk of being silenced and marginalized. Repression is central to rendering emotional knowing ineffable or unspeakable by individuals in their everyday academic places.

The study participants implicitly wished for some form of legitimacy in their emotional experiences of belonging. Those who remained silent or felt dismissed desired their belonging experience claims be taken seriously, whether through negotiating social places or gaining easier entry into academic communities. For others, negotiating contradictory feelings created uncertainty that added to the preexisting burden of individual concealment strategies. Disclosure presented the risk of closing off opportunities for development; it also presented opportunities for renegotiating the meanings of their belonging. Opting for silence often meant feeling fragmented. The fragmentation meant participants perpetuated the separations that kept them at the margins that appeared natural between emotion and place.

Rather than understanding academia as a static place with fixed boundaries where rules and procedures impose a particular status on individuals, we discovered that the meanings of academic places were dynamic and contextual. For our participants, academic places were destabilized and contested in emotional processes where they negotiated their day-to-day geographies. The meanings of belonging experiences varied, but by in large were beneath the surface of visibility. Academic places were recursively implicated in the reconstitution of meaning as participants judged their acceptance. These diverse places comprised a layering of social relations and spatial organizations that provided the context and conditions for fitting in.

The salience of belonging varied from place to place. We learned that our participants used cover stories (Olson & Craig, 2005) to disguise conflictive relations between emotions and place; this meant the boundaries of what constituted belonging were dynamic and changeable and their concealment kept these boundaries potentially unstable. In sharing the realities, processes, and consequences of their emotional experiences, the participants revealed strong emotions that were mostly unsayable (Parr et al., 2005) in their contexts. In the absence of this knowing, academic organizations will continue to be unaware of their emotional geographies and the potential for future instability. Emotional geographies help express the relations between emotions and place, highlighting the fullness of meanings Education scholars ascribe to belonging.

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