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Santa Barbara

From carceral security to abolitionist safety:
The emergence of the transformative justice movement to end intimate violence

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Melanie Brazzell

Committee in charge:

Professor Avery Gordon, Chair

Professor George Lipsitz

Professor Zakiya Luna

December 2023

The dissertation of Melanie Brazzell is approved.

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Zakiya Luna

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George Lipsitz

_____

Avery Gordon, Committee Chair

September 2023

From carceral security to abolitionist safety:

The emergence of the transformative justice movement to end intimate violence

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by

Melanie Brazzell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dissertation writing by necessity flattens a collective process of learning and debate into a solo, authorial voice. So there are so many people who crowd these pages, who cheer led, questioned, critiqued, cajoled, and illuminated the thoughts captured in this dissertation. First and foremost are those who led and accompanied me down the path of feminist anti-violence and survivor organizing, leftist movement, and abolition and transformative justice struggle: Maura Bairley, the Reforming Sexual Assault Policy crew, and the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Program at Columbia University; the Schule für Erwachsenenbildung, the Transformative Justice Collective Berlin, the RESPONS collective, and contributors to the What *Really* Makes Us Safe? Project in Germany; folks at Just Beginnings Collaborative, Critical Resistance, Restore Oakland, and Project Nia who have given me opportunities to put my thought into practice; my ever-growing network of transnational comrades and the many experimenters and innovators who persisted in the face of opposition to make transformative justice a viable way of life. I'm grateful to all my interviewees and interlocutors for their openness and vulnerability, and particularly to Emily Thuma and Alisa Bierria for their generosity in entrusting me with their archives and Erica Meiners for always being a comrade, especially in a pinch! The first iteration of this project, my Master's thesis, is indebted to my critical theory education from philosophers like Daniel Loick, Mari Mikkola, Rahel Jaeggi, Eva von Redecker, and Maeve McKeown. The second iteration of this project was stewarded by Avery Gordon's wise hand, permission to color outside the lines, and intuitive knowledge of how to hew a book from a blank page; George Lipsitz's uplifting reminders of my place in a much larger horizon of political scholarship for liberation; Zakiya Luna's methodological precision, support navigating academia, and

professional development; and Tristan Bridges unconditionally generous, enthusiastic belief in my work. Thank you to the Center for Engaged Scholarship for funding the final year of dissertation writing. Grateful for extensive feedback from molly ackhurst, Nina Fraeser, Daniel Loick, my sister, and my tireless editor-coach Karen Rice, and the accompaniment of fellow social movement scholars Naomi Joseph, Jeff Feng, Geoff Henderson, Ben S. Case, and Diane Fujino. Adjacent research projects with the Realizing Democracy Project, Momentum Community, and the P3 Lab at Johns Hopkins University have cross-fertilized my thinking in this work. In those settings, I am grateful for the intellectual accompaniment of Liz McKenna, Kevin Simowitz, Ben Chin, Ethan Frey, Joy Cushman, Vera Parra, Lissy Romanow, Hahrie Han, Lynsy Smithson-Stanley, and countless other movement leaders and scholars I've been able to research with and learn from. Seeing as transformative justice is kitchen-table politics, so many friends, partners, and family members have fed me (literally and figuratively) over the past 12 years of this research. Gratitude to everyone who has given me my life.

VITA OF MELANIE BRAZZELL
September 2023

EDUCATION

University of California Santa Barbara
Ph.D. in Sociology (2023)
Dissertation: "From carceral security to abolitionist safety: The emergence of the transformative justice movement to end intimate violence."
Committee: Avery Gordon (chair), George Lipsitz, Zakiya Luna.

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin
M.A. in Gender Studies (2015)

Columbia University
B.A. in English & Comparative Literature (2006), *Magna cum laude*

Research & Teaching Interests: violence, gender, social movements, criminology, race and racism, organizations, critical theory, participatory research

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Harvard University (2023 – 2024)
Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Bloomberg Center for Cities, Harvard Kennedy School

Johns Hopkins University (2021-2022)
Predoctoral Fellow at the P3 Lab, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Agora Institute

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2018. with RESPONS Collective. *Was tun bei sexualisierter Gewalt? Handbuch für die Transformative Arbeit mit gewaltausübenden Personen [How Can We Address Sexual Violence? A Handbook for Transformative Work with Persons Causing Violence]*. Münster: Unrast.

Edited Volumes

2018. Editor & Contributor. *Was macht uns wirklich sicher? Ein Toolkit für intersektionaler, transformative Gerechtigkeit jenseits von Polizei & Gefängnis [What really makes us safe? A Toolkit for Intersectional Transformative Justice Beyond Police & Prisons].* Münster: Edition Assemblage.

- 23 book presentations with co-authors in Augsburg, Berlin, Bern, Bilbao, Cologne, Dresden, Erfurt, Frankfurt, Göttingen, Hamburg, Hannover, Lärz, Luzern, Munich, Münster, and for Heinrich Böll Foundation, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Institute for the Promotion of Social Studies, and various community organizations.

- Interviews: die Tageszeitung (taz), Supernova Magazine, Zeitschrift LuXemburg, Migrazine, Radio F.R.E.I., Westdeutschen Rundfunks Köln (WDR5), Radio Corax, Radio Bern RaBe, Radio Dreyeckland.

Peer Reviewed Articles

2023. **Melanie Brazzell**, Tara Leigh Tober, Tristan Bridges. "How We Define Mass Shootings Shapes What We Can Know About Them." *Contexts* 22(1): 71-3.

2022. Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, **Melanie Brazzell**. "Database Discrepancies in Understanding the Burden of Mass Shootings in the United States, 2013-2020." *The Lancet Regional Health – Americas.* 22: 100504. doi: 10.1016/j.lana.2023. 100504.

2022. Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, **Melanie Brazzell**, and Maya Chatterjee. "'Husband, Father, Coward, Killer': The Discursive Reproduction of Racial Inequality in Media Accounts of Mass Shooters." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13: 966980. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.966980.

Book Chapters

2023. "Digital Anti-racist Advocacy." *The Cambridge Handbook of Community Empowerment*, ed. by Brian D. Christens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (forthcoming)

2023. Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, and **Melanie Brazzell**. "Mass Shootings and American Masculinity." Pp. 19-32 in *All-American Massacre: The Tragic Role of American Culture and Society in Mass Shootings*, ed. by Eric Madfis and Adam Lankford. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

2022. **Melanie Brazzell** and Erica R. Meiners, with Molly Ackhurst, Annelise Ah-fat, Lauren Caulfield, Mimi Kim, Kelsey Mohamed, Shirley Leslie, and Meenakshi Mannoe. "Transnational Transformative Justice: An Opening Roundtable." Pp. 263-292 in *Abolition Feminisms: Organizing, Survival, and Transformative Practice*, ed. by Alisa Bierria, Brooke Lober and Jakeya Caruthers. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

2022. Molly Ackhurst with **Melanie Brazzell**, Aviah Sarah Day, Yara Rodrigues Fowler, Kamilah Tomlinson. "Creative and Transformative Approaches to Justice: Away from the Criminal Legal System." Pp. 268-282 in *Rape - Challenging Contemporary Thinking: 10 Years On*, ed. by Miranda A.H. Horvath and Jennifer M. Brown. New York: Routledge.

2021. "Von negativer/strafrechtsfeministischer zu positiver/abolitionistischer Sicherheit: Transformative Gerechtigkeit für Betroffene geschlechtsbasierter Gewalt [From Carceral Feminist Security to Abolitionist Safety: Transformative Justice for Survivors of Gendered Violence]." Pp. 328-363 in *Sicherheit: Rassismuskritische und feministische Debatten*

[Security: Anti-racist and feminist debates], ed. by Mike Laufenberg and Vanessa E. Thompson. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.

2021. "Theorizing Transformative Justice: Comparing Carceral and Abolitionist Selves, Agencies, and Responsibilities." Pp. 161-178 in *Abolishing the Police*, ed. by Koshka Duff. London: Dog Section Press.

2020. "Giving & Taking Account: Community Accountable Scholarship in a Participatory Action Research Model." Pp. 93-116 in *Beyond the Master's Tools: Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methodology, and Teaching*, ed. by Franziska Dübgen, Daniel Bendix, and Aram Ziai. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

2018. "Transformative Gerechtigkeit statt Polizei und Gefängnisse. Für einen alternativen Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt und Beziehungsgewalt. [Transformative Justice instead of Police and Prisons. For an Alternative Approach to Sexual and Partner Violence]." Pp. 279-296 in *Kritik der Polizei [Critique of the Police]*, ed. by Daniel Loick. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.

2018. Lisa Monz and **Melanie Brazzell**. "Kein einfacher Weg: von Restorative zu Transformative Justice im Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt und Beziehungsgewalt [No Easy Path: From Restorative to Transformative Justice in Addressing Sexual and Partner Violence]." Pp. 222-248 in *Strafe und Gefängnis. Theorie, Kritik, Alternativen. Eine Einführung. [Punishment and Prisons: Theory, Critique, Alternatives. An Introduction]*, ed. by Rehzi Malzahn. Stuttgart: Schmetterling.

2018. "Einleitung: Was macht uns wirklich sicher? Ein Einblick in das Toolkit [What really makes us safe? An Introduction to the Toolkit]." Pp. 13-22 in *Was macht uns wirklich sicher? Ein Toolkit für intersektionaler, transformative Gerechtigkeit jenseits von Polizei & Gefängnis [What really makes us safe? A Toolkit for Transformative Justice Beyond Police & Prisons]*, ed. by Melanie Brazzell. Münster: edition assemblage.

Reports and Case Studies

2024. with Elizabeth McKenna. "Building an Alignment Among Florida Social Movement Organizations." Agora Institute Case Study Library. Baltimore: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University. (forthcoming)

2024. with Elizabeth McKenna. "ISAIAH's Multiracial House." Agora Institute Case Study Library. Baltimore: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University. (forthcoming)

2023. with Hahrie Han. "Color Of Change's Black Joy Organizing." Agora Institute Case Study Library. Baltimore: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University. (forthcoming)

2022. with Sonia Sarkar. "Black Joy as Power: A Case Study of National Organizing

Strategy." *Social Homes as Sources of Building Power for Health Equity*, ed. by Alexandra Dildine, Ryan Schutt, and Sonia Sarkar. P3 Lab. Baltimore: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University**.**

2021. "Building Structure Shapes: What structure reveals about strategy from six movement organizations in transition." Realizing Democracy Project and P3 Lab. Baltimore: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University.

2021. "Potentials and Pitfalls of Race-Class Narrative for the German Context." Berlin: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

Book Reviews

2021. **Melanie Brazzell** and Erica R. Meiners. Review of Fugitive Life: The Queer Politics of the Prison State, by Stephen Dillon. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 7(2): 207-10.

Manuscripts in Submission

"From Carceral Feminist Security to Abolitionist Safety for Survivors of Gendered Violence." (Under review)

Manuscripts in Preparation

"Towards a Theory of 'Structuring Capacity': Social Movement Organizational (Re)structuring Processes in Times of Crisis and Change."

"Building Structure Shapes: How Different Organizational Forms Manage Contradictions Among Social Movement Organizations."

Publicly Engaged Scholarship
2023. Erica R. Meiners, Shirley Leslie, and **Melanie Brazzell**. "This Fight Is Global: Abolitionists From the US and France Join in Conversation." *Truthout*, May 26. https://truthout.org/articles/this-fight-is-global-abolitionists-from-the-us-and-france-join-in-conversation/.

2022. "Building Structure Shapes: Florida's 'Fractal' Shaped Alignment Group." *The Forge*, August 4. https://forgeorganizing.org/article/floridas-fractal-shaped-alignment-group

2022. "Building Structure Shapes: ISAIAH's 'Multiracial House'." *The Forge*, May 27. https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-structure-shapes-isaiahs-multiracial-house.

2022. "Building Structure Shapes: Color Of Changes' 'Big Tent'." *The Forge*, April 7. https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-structure-shapes-color-changes-big-tent.

2021. “Building Structure Shapes: The NY Working Families Party’s ‘Stool.’” *The Forge*, Nov. 8. https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-structure-shapes-ny-working-families-party-case-study.

2021. “Structure/Strategy | Building Structure Shapes.” *The Forge*, Nov. 8. https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-structure-shapes.

2021. “We keep us safe: the transformative justice movement.” *ROAR Magazine*, May 28. https://roarmag.org/essays/transformative-justice-movement/.
(Published in German translation in *Arranca! Magazine*, Issue 55, November 2021; republished in Waging Non-violence, March 15, 2023).

2020. “A Personal Reflection on Doing Participatory Action Research in Transformative Justice.” *Thinking Gender Blog*, UCLA Center for the Study of Women, June 1. https://csw.ucla.edu/2020/06/01/a-personal-reflection-on-doing-participatory-action-research-in-transformative-justice/.

2021. “Eine Welt ohne Polizei [A World Without Police].” *Missy Magazine*, 2:57.

2019. “Zwischen Reform und Revolution: Transformative Gerechtigkeit für Gewalt jenseits staatlicher Institutionen. [Between Reform and Revolution: Transformative Justice for Violence beyond State Institutions].” *Täter-Opfer-Ausgleich Magazin [Restorative Justice Magazine]* 01/2019: 19-22.

2019. “Für die radikale Entknastung. Abolitionismus und transformative Gerechtigkeit in den USA. [Radical Decarceration: Abolitionism and Transformative Justice in the U.S.].” *IZ3W: Informationszentrum Dritte Welt [Third World Information Center]* 370: 33-35.

2017. “Sicherheit von Links. Der Transformative Justice-Ansatz. [Security from the Left: the Transformative Justice Approach].” *Zeitschrift LuXemburg* 1/2017. (Republished by kritischlesen.de, January 12, 2020)

2016. “Was macht uns sicher? Die Polizei jedenfalls nicht – der Transformative-Justice-Ansatz [What really makes us safe? Definitely not the police. The Transformative Justice Approach].” *Analyse & Kritik* 620: 13.

2016. with Transformative Justice Collective Berlin. “Introduction.” In *Das Risiko wagen – Strategien für selbstorganisierte und kollektive Verantwortungsübernahme bei sexualisierter Gewalt. Mit Einführung von der Transformative Justice Kollektiv Berlin. [Taking Risks: Implementing Grassroots Community Accountability Strategies. With an Introduction by the Berlin Transformative Justice Collective]*. Berlin: Transformative Justice Kollektiv Berlin. 1-12.

2013. “Das Problem mit ‘Critical Whiteness’ [The Problem with ‘Critical Whiteness’: Authentic Anti-Racist Relationship Building].” *Migrazine*, November; An.schläge 27 (11): 28-31.

2012. “Critical Whiteness: Falscher Freund? Antirassistische Lehrpläne Für den Unterricht aus den USA und Ihre Übersetzung in Deutschland [‘Critical Whiteness’: False Friend? Teaching a U.S. Anti-Racism Curriculum in Germany].” *ZAG Antirassistische Zeitschrift* 61: 23-26.

FELLOWSHIPS

2022-2023	Dissertation Fellowship, Center for Engaged Scholarship
2022-2023	Mendell Graduate Fellowship in Cultural Literacy, Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life, University of California, Santa Barbara
2021-2022	Predoctoral Fellowship, P3 Lab, SNF Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University
2017-2024	Chancellor’s Fellowship, UC Santa Barbara
2013-2015	Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Fellowship for International Master’s Students
2005	The Williams Traveling Fellowship, Columbia University

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2022	Student Travel Grant, Community and Urban Sociology Section, American Sociological Association
2022	Lee Student Support Fund, Society for the Study of Social Problems
2021	Graduate Student Dissertation Support, UC Humanities Research Institute
2020	Flacks Fund for the Study of Democratic Possibilities, UC Santa Barbara
2020	Sociology Department Seed Grant, UC Santa Barbara
2020	Humanities and Social Science Research Grant, UC Santa Barbara
2020	Center for the Study of Women Travel Grant, UC Los Angeles
2019	Center on Democracy and Organizing, UC Berkeley • “Momentum: Practitioner-Researcher Collaboration on Social Movement Strategy” research
2019	Individualized Professional Skills Grant, Graduate Division, UC Santa Barbara • “Public Science Project: Critical Participatory Action Research Institute”
2018	Nomination, Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, UC Santa Barbara
2018, 19, 22	Graduate Student Association Travel Grant, UC Santa Barbara
2018 & 22	Sociology Department Travel Grant, UC Santa Barbara
2016	Bosch Foundation’s Deutschen Schulpreis [prize for best schools in Germany] • second place for the Schule für Erwachsenenbildung [School for Adult Education]

RESEARCH

2022 – present. Participatory Action Research Consultant, Just Beginnings Collaborative, "Mapping the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Ecosystem and Way-finding Transformative Justice Alternatives."

2020-2021. Principal Investigator, Realizing Democracy Project, Ford Foundation, "Building Structure Shapes: The intersections of organizational structure and strategy in social movement organizations."

2019-2021. Principal Investigator with Lissy Romanow, Center on Democracy and Organizing, UC Berkeley, "Momentum: Practitioner-Researcher Collaboration on Social Movement Strategy".

2018-2022. Research Assistant, UC Santa Barbara, Drs. Tara Leigh Tober & Tristan Bridges, "Mass Shootings in America Database".

2019. Co-researcher, UC Santa Barbara, Drs. Melissa Morgan-Consoli & Melissa Smith, M.D. "Community-based Participatory Research on Santa Barbara Health Disparities".

TEACHING

2019	Instructor, UC Santa Barbara Social Movements & Networks
2019	Teaching Assistant, UC Santa Barbara Introduction to Sociology
2018	Social Movements
2016	Instructor, Alice Salomon College, Berlin Ethical Foundations of Social Work (taught in German)
2016	Instructor, Humboldt University of Berlin Feminism and the State: Carceral Feminisms & Transformative Alternatives
2008-2016	Teacher, Schule für Erwachsenenbildung [School for Adult Education], Berlin English Literatures & Cultures, 11 – 13th grades (100-level equivalent) • This self-organized, co-operative school, run by students and teachers together via direct democracy, received 2nd place in the Deutschen Schulpreis [prize for best schools in Germany] from the Bosch Foundation in 2016.
2008-2009	Teacher, Freie Schule Charlottenburg [Charlottenburg Free School], Berlin English, Kindergarten – 6th grades

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

2023. "Abolitionist Feminism Beyond Borders: A Conversation between U.S. and German Activists" Panel. Berlin, Germany, June 28.

2023. "Reflection on the Abolitionist Feminist International Workshop" Panel. Racial Capitalism | Crises | Abolition International Activist Conference, Hamburg, Germany, June 24.

2023. “The Wayfinding Project: Centering Abolition Feminist Methodologies to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse” (with jenani srijeyanthan and Alison Reba). National Sexual Assault Conference, San Francisco, CA, August 22.

2023. "Carceral Feminist Co-optation & Transformative Justice (Re)vitalization of the Anti-Violence Movement." The Young Scholars in Social Movements Conference, Center for the Study of Social Movements, Notre Dame University, South Bend, IN, April 21.

2022. “What *really* makes us safe? Looking transnationally at abolition feminism and transformative justice for sexual and partner violence.” Recognising Sexual Violence: Developing Pathways to Survivor-Centred Justice Conference, University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland, September 28-29.

2022. “Building Structure Shapes: A Conversation with StateWide Alignment Group (SWAG).” The Forge, virtual, July 27.

2022. “Building Structure Shapes: A Conversation with ISAIAH.” The Forge, virtual, May 17.

2022. “Wege aus der Allgemeine Verunsicherung [Pathways Out of Generalized Insecurity]” Panel. Zentrum für Sicherheit [Center for Safety] Season Opening, Forum Stadtpark, Graz, Austria, April 8.

2022. “Building Structure Shapes: A Conversation with Color Of Change.” The Forge, virtual, March 28.

2021. “Building Structure Shapes: Structure-Strategy Report Launch.” The Forge, virtual, Nov. 4.

2021. “Round Table zu Abolitionistische Praktiken und Perspektiven [Roundtable on Abolitionist Practices and Perspectives].” BIPoC Referat, Universität Köln, Cologne, Germany, July 14.

2021. “Kämpfe für Systemwandel – unterschiedliche Bedingungen und potentielle verbindende Projekt [Struggles for System Change: Different conditions and potential

connecting projects]" Panel. Bundeskoordination Internationalismus [German Coordination for Internationalism] 39th Annual Conference, virtual, June 12.

2021. "Mass Shootings in America: Men, Masculinity, Guns and U.S. Gun Culture" (with Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, Julia Maya Chatterjee, Pierre Derbier). University of California Santa Barbara Dean's Cabinet, Santa Barbara, CA, May 29.

2021. "Carceral Cooptation and Abolitionist Revitalization within the Feminist Antiviolence Movement." Intercampus Social Movements Workshop, George Mason University, Washington D.C., April 23.

2021. "Eine Welt Ohne Polizei [A World Without Police]" (with Nadija Samour). Kritische Uni Tübingen, Germany, March 9.

2020. "Black Lives Matter, Abolition, and Transformative Justice." Colloquium of the Institute for Critical Social Analysis, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Berlin, Germany, Oct. 8.

2020. "Creative and Transformative Approaches to Justice: Seeking justice for survivors outside of the criminal legal system" Panel. Violence Against Women and Girls Research Network, Middlesex University, London, UK, Sept. 30.

Conference and Workshop Presentations

2022. "The Discursive Reproduction of Racial Inequality in Media Accounts of Mass Shootings" (with Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, and Julia Maya Chatterjee). American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 5-9.

2022. "Towards a Theory of "Structuring Capacity": How People-powered Organizations Pivot their Structures (and Strategies)." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 5-9.

2022. "The Momentum Model: Engineering Whirlwind Moments" (with Alissa Romanow). Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 5-7.

2022. "Structure-strategy pivots among six social movement organizations in transition." Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 5-7.

2022. "Building Structure Shapes: How organizational forms manage social movement contradictions." Mobilization Conference on Protest and Resistance in Contemporary Democracies, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, June 23-25.

2020. "Abolishing Carceral Feminism: Transformative Justice for Gender-based Violence." Sociologists for Women in Society Annual Summer Meeting, Aug. 7-10.

2020. "Measuring and Understanding the Gendered and Racial Dimensions of Mass Shootings in the U.S." (with Tristan Bridges, Tara Leigh Tober, and Julia Maya Chatterjee).

American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 8-11. (cancelled due to COVID)

2020. "Community Beyond the State: Reimagining Sovereignty in Community-Based Alternatives to the Carceral State." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 8-11. (cancelled due to COVID)

2020. "Summoning the moment of the whirlwind: Movement leaders' strategic planning processes." The Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 7-9. (cancelled due to COVID)

2020. "Towards a Theory of Transformative Justice for Gender-based Violence." The Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 7-9. (cancelled due to COVID)

2020. "From Carceral Co-optation to Abolitionist Revitalization of the Feminist Anti-violence Movement." Mobilization Conference on Protest and Resistance in Contemporary Democracies, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, June 12-13. (cancelled due to COVID)

2020. "From Carceral Feminist Security to Abolitionist Safety: Dialogues with the Transformative Justice Movement against Sexual Violence." Thinking Gender Conference: Sexual Violence as Structural Violence: Feminist Visions of Transformative Justice, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, March 6.

2019. "Abolitionist Alternatives to Carceral Feminism from the Transformative Justice Movement." American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 13-16.

2019. "From Carceral Feminism to Transformative Justice: Visions of Abolitionist Safety for Survivors of Gendered Violence." National Women's Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 14-17.

2019. "Transnational Transformative Justice" Roundtable. National Women's Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 14-17.

2019. "Carceral Feminism: Co-optation and the Anti-violence Movement." Mobilization Conference on Social Movements and Nonviolent Protest, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, May 10-11.

2018 – 2019. Twenty-three presentations with co-authors of Was macht uns wirklich sicher? Ein Toolkit für intersektionaler, transformative Gerechtigkeit jenseits von Polizei & Gefängnis [What really makes us safe? A Toolkit for Intersectional Transformative Justice Beyond Police & Prisons] in Augsburg, Berlin, Bern, Bilbao, Cologne, Dresden, Erfurt,

Frankfurt, Göttingen, Hamburg, Hannover, Lärz, London, Luzern, Munich, Münster, and for Heinrich Böll Foundation, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Institute for the Promotion of Social Studies, and community groups.

2018. "What really makes us safe? Stories of Community Accountability from Berlin" (with Tine McCaskill & Lisa Monz). International Conference on Penal Abolition, London, UK, June 15-18.

2018. "Community Accountability Against the Carceral State." Mobilization Conference on Nonviolence and Social Change, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA, May 4-6.

2018. "From Carceral Feminist Security to Abolitionist Safety." American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, April 10-14.

2017. Organizer & Panelist. "What really makes us safe? Lab for Alternatives to Police and Prisons" Panel, book launch, and art exhibition. Berlin, Germany, June 10.

2017. "Reimagining Young's Shared Responsibility Model through the Lens of Sexual Violence: Dialogues with the Community Accountability Movement." International Conference on Iris M. Young, Univ. of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, Paris, France, May 31-June 2.

2017. "Queer-feminist and Anti-racist Critiques of Security" Panel. Versicherheitlichung der Gesellschaft: Queer-feministische und rassismuskritische Perspektiven Konferenz [Securitization of Society: Queer-feminist and anti-racist perspectives Conference]. Deutschen, Österreichische und Schweizerische Gesellschaften für Soziologie [German, Austrian, and Swiss Sociological Associations], Technische Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany, July 13-14.

2016. Discussant. Radical Perspectives on Exploitation Workshop, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin Institute for Philosophy, Berlin, Germany, Sept. 19-20.

2016. "Responsibility for Sexual Violence: Dialogues with I.M. Young and the Community Accountability Movement." Feminism and (Political) Progress, Oxford Graduate Political Theory Conference, Oxford, U.K., May 13-14.

2016. "Restorative Justice Alternatives to Incarceration." Bundeskonferenz der Evangelischen Konferenz für Gefängnisseelsorge [National Meeting of Protestant Pastoral Care for Prisoners], Seddin, Germany, April 28.

2016. "Community Accountability & Participatory Action Research." Beyond the Master's Tools: Post- and Decolonial Approaches to Research Methodology and Methods in the Social Sciences Conference, University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany, Jan. 14-15.

2014. Discussant. Social Pathologies Workshop, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin Institute for Philosophy, Berlin, Germany, July 14-15.

2014. “Positioning Ourselves Intersectionally: Reading Iris Marion Young on Shared Responsibility for Oppression.” The Buck Stops Where? Responsibility in the Global Economy, University College of London Political Theory Conference, London, U.K., May 21.

2014. “Community Accountable & Participatory Scholarship.” PODIUM Film Project. Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg, Germany, March 29.

2013. “Imagining Safety Beyond Security in Queer Feminist Space.” Safe Space/Schützraum Symposium. Thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor, Bremen, Germany, Sept. 6-8.

2012. “Anti-racism and Being an Ally.” Self-determined Education Conference - under [de]construction, Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation, Ahrensburg, Germany, Oct. 18.

2010. “Ad-busting Sexism and Racism in The Media.” What music is playing on your stereotype? Seminar, Loesje International, Berlin, Germany, May 8-15.

2009. “Critical Perspectives, Creative Strategies for Teaching English in ‘Developing’ Countries.” Internationales Jugendgemeinschaftdienste [International Youth Community Service], June 20.

2006. “Chasing the Revolution: Urban Guerillas in the Classroom.” 1968: Global Resistance/Local Knowledge Graduate Student Conference, Drew University History Dept., Madison, NJ, Nov. 3-4.

2006. Roundtable with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Radical Politics and the Ethics of Life Conference, Columbia University Anthropology Department, New York. Jan. 20.

SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2020-2022. Co-founder, Momentum Research Collective
2020. Founder, Strike University (stikeuniversity.org)
2018-2019. Organizer, UAW Local 2865 UC Santa Barbara Student Employees Union
2016-present. Founder, What Really Makes Us Safe? Project (whatreallymakesussafe.com)
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ABSTRACT

From carceral security to abolitionist safety: The emergence of the transformative justice movement to end intimate violence

by

Melanie Brazzell

This dissertation addresses the topic of violence and collective action to transform it through close study of the movement for transformative justice for intimate and gendered violence. The work track the pasts, presents, and potential futures of this struggle to build non-carceral, community-based responses to harm beyond policing and prisons. I locate the movement in a lineage of organizing led by Black, Indigenous, women of color, and abolitionist feminists working at the intersections of state and intimate violence, of sexism and racism. Because there is so little academic literature on transformative justice, this research is exploratory, focusing on four deceptively simple questions: What organizations exist? How have they have evolved over time? What do they do? What principles unite their various practices? The dissertation explicates the movement's praxis through the concept of positive safety, which emphasizes interdependence and connection, contrasting it to the carceral state's logic of negative security, which focuses on separation. I do so by drawing on archives, interviews, and participant observation, carried out with an ethos of participatory and community accountable research. This work contributes to larger sociological debates

about the relationship between individual and structure and between theory and practice, particularly as they unfold over time through processes of contestation and transformation.

The first half of the dissertation looks historically at the roots of the movement, narrating its emergence in the early 2000s within the anti-violence sector as a (re)vitalization of radical, grassroots tendencies of positive safety. These had previously been pushed into abeyance by carceral feminist co-optation of the anti-violence movement in the 1970s and 80s, when negative security logics rose to prominence. These chapters use the social movement dimensions of organizational structure, resources, strategy, framing/ideology, and collective identity to explore processes of social movement transformation like co-optation and (re)vitalization.

In the second half of the dissertation, I look at contemporary transformative justice praxis, expounding the concept of positive safety across four domains: the movement's understanding of violence, survivor support, perpetrator accountability, and justice through the community rather than the state. Across these domains, I develop an abolitionist theory of the self, agency, responsibility, and collectivity. I contrast them to their respective carceral feminist approaches, using a Marxist methodology of immanent critique to argue that carceral feminism's contradictions undermine its own putative aims to end gender-based violence. These chapters use intimate violence as a portal to explore larger structures of violence, and deploy ethnographic case studies to analyze how movement practice and theory dialectically co-constitute one another. I close the dissertation by looking at three possible futures for the movement at a crucial juncture of increased popularity since the Black Lives Matter uprisings of 2020.

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Organizational Abbreviations

Anti-Police Terror Project (APTP)

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

API Women and Family Safety Center ("the Center")

Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC)

Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)

Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)

Community Coordinated Response (CCR)

INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence (INCITE!)

Los Angeles Committee on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW)

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)

Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse (NWN)

Philly Stands Up (PSU)

Seattle Rape Relief (SRR)

StoryTelling and Organizing Project (STOP)

Support New York (SNY)

Survived & Punished (S&P)

Introduction

Competing Visions of Public Safety

The murals span nearly a full neighborhood block adjacent to one of East Oakland's main thoroughfares. As you walk closer to the bright, splashy colors, images come into focus: people hold up seedlings, bees pollinate the orange petals of the California poppy, children dance, and protestors in silhouette hold signs proclaiming "BLM" [Black Lives Matter], "Free Palestine," "Abolish ICE" [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and "Defund OPD" [Oakland Police Department]. This is the Restore Oakland building, jointly owned and operated by several local groups organizing people power for justice in the areas of labor, housing, immigration, and the criminal legal system. According to their website, the building is meant to be a "community hub" (Restore Oakland n.d.) that supports Oaklanders navigating and resisting a variety of private and state systems that negatively impact their lives.

Tash Nguyen, Restore Oakland's Executive Director, offered a tour of the building, which opened shortly before the pandemic began in 2020. Despite her thick wool flannel shirt and heavy brown shoes to protect against the November chill, Nguyen has a lightness, moving with ease through the building, greeting everyone they see by name with some friendly comment or joke. Nguyen brings us up the stairs to the second floor, where housing and racial justice organization Causa Justa/Just Cause and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (which focuses on transforming the criminal justice system) have offices. Between the two is a plaque embossed with typical office building font but announcing an atypical place: the Restorative Justice Room.

On the ground inside the room is a woven textile with a set of symbolic objects (a queer flag, a feather, a plant) and small signs in different shapes and colors announcing agreements for those who use the space: "Speak and listen from the heart." "Use 'I' statements." Several symbols chosen by the community are painted on the walls in shades of blue: an Ohlone basket weaving pattern, the Mayan symbol caban, and the Sankofa bird from the Akan peoples of West Africa. These also represent some of the Indigenous origins of restorative justice practices. One of these practices is the "circle," a conversation carried out by a circle of participants to build community, address conflict, or repair harm. This room is exclusively used for circles, and it keeps busy: several community-building circles are held here weekly, and the room can be booked by any community member or organization facing a problem. The circle emblematizes restorative and transformative justice's ethos of building connection across difference and resolving issues collectively, as equals.

At a Wednesday evening community-building circle, the circle keepers posed a question to the group of ten or so individuals sitting in a ring of plastic chairs. The month of May would be devoted to the question of safety and healing, particularly the architecture and design of safe spaces. The circle keeper asked us to share about a place that feels safe to us. One participant described the circle itself as her place of safety. She continued by sharing that during her time in prison, long before she learned about restorative justice, she experienced safety through relationships with others who were locked up and, like her, were categorized as the "despicables." This group met every evening at a green metal table in one of the prison yards, knowing that if they needed to talk, someone would be there. Though the table itself was rectangular, she said that she felt it was their version of a circle.

Framed posters decorate the interior walls of the Restorative Justice Room and the larger building, including a poster series from an annual event held in early August by the Ella Baker Center. "Night out for Safety and Liberation" is an evening to re-imagine public safety, and each year's posters depict different images which all fill in the blank on a common phrase: "#SafetyIs." In one poster, three children framed by a giant monarch butterfly proclaim that safety is "a world where children grow freely." Another shows two Black people in profile and a third facing the viewer with a raised fist, above which it states that "#SafetyIs Community Care." A third shows bees pollinating a bright pink flower, announcing in looping brushstrokes that safety is the "Freedom to Flourish." The Center's digital archive of posters offer additional definitions of safety: accessibility for all, food sovereignty, feeling joyful in our neighborhoods, solidarity, mutual aid, care not cages, freedom from policing, education funding, men healing toxic masculinity, ensuring housing for all, and getting space to be ourselves (Ella Baker Center for Human Rights n.d.).

These wide-ranging understandings of the concept of safety stand in stark contrast to the scenery less than a mile down the street, at the Alameda County Sheriff's office. The squat one-story building also covers almost a neighborhood block, but its brown-gray exterior and windows covered by white shades do not make the space inviting. This architecture of enclosure and fortification speaks to the sheriff's vision of safety, which has had deadly consequences. Between the sheriff's office and the Restore Oakland building lies the Fruitvale public transit station where unarmed 22 year old Oscar Grant was shot and killed by a transit police officer while handcuffed and pinned to the ground on New Year's Day of 2009. Activists protested for weeks and renamed the plaza in front of Oakland City Hall "Oscar Grant Plaza" in his memory; local activist Cat Brooks of the Anti-Police Terror

Project has described these protests as the origins of what became the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (Akbar et al. 2023; Brooks 2021).

Some blocks north of that plaza is a third location – the Alameda County Family Justice Center. This is where survivors of sexual and partner violence who may ask for help from the Alameda County Sheriff's office are typically referred. The Family Justice Center also aims to be a "one-stop shop," offering services to survivors such as filing a restraining order or lodging criminal charges with the district attorney, counseling, and assistance with securing housing, health insurance, a GED, or food stamps (Office of the Alameda County District Attorney n.d.). The Family Justice Center model was first developed in San Diego in 2002 and taken up by President George W. Bush as part of a presidential initiative in 2003. Oakland's Family Justice Center was among the first 15 centers that initiative built around the country (Kim 2014:1; U.S. Department of Justice 2007). As transformative justice scholar and practitioner Mimi Kim describes her ambivalent relationship to this building:

> Despite the suburban mall metaphors used to describe the convenience and friendliness of the Center not only to the victims of gender violence but also to the non-profit denizens of the multi-storied building, the Center is clearly under the supervision of law enforcement. [...] As a local domestic violence advocate for immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence, I joined others in a dance of engagement and contention with and against the new Center. [...] The inclusion of our local ethnic-specific organizations would signal tacit approval of the Center's unifying vision, subsuming our political agenda under that of Center and weakening the potential for meaningful dissent. Failure to engage [however] risked the increased vulnerability of survivors seeking protection from the criminal justice system and the possible neglect and obsolescence of organizations unwilling to join. [...] The law enforcement character of this institution is, in a sense, de-militarized by joining the powerful symbols of "family" and "justice" under the comfort of a familiar, commercial metaphor. The ubiquitous battered women's shelter as the symbol of feminist occupation of material and symbolic landscape in urban and rural communities across the U.S. is being displaced by the carceral shopping mall. (Kim 2014:1–2)

The contrasts between Restore Oakland and the Sheriff's office are more obvious, but the contrast between Restore Oakland and the Family Justice Center is somewhat harder to differentiate. Both the Family Justice Center and Restore Oakland aim to provide a broad vision of safety – including food, healthcare, housing, education, mental health, and work – but they appear like distorted mirror image versions of one another. The Family Justice Center is embedded in the criminal legal system, linking services to criminal justice collaboration, while Restore Oakland rejects that system as a necessary component of its vision of safety. The Center approaches survivors in a way typical of the non-profit industrial complex, as consumer-clients in need of services and external professional expertise. In contrast, Restore Oakland approaches survivors of harm from a community and organizing approach, perceiving them as fellow community members with the both the agency and expertise needed to change their own lives. These two institutions serve as easily understood symbols of the contrasting discourses of safety I explore in this dissertation – they are both putatively feminist, but one is carceral, the other abolitionist.

Safety and Security at Our Contemporary Political Conjuncture

Since the 1970s, the Keynesian welfare state in the United States has been replaced by a carceral state (Beckett and Western 2001; Gilmore 2007a) that uses surveillance, criminalization, and confinement to manage racialized "surplus populations" who cannot be integrated into the capitalist labor force (Rehmann 2015; Wacquant 2009). This "punitive turn" (Garland 2001) has "rolled back" (Peck and Tickell 2002) the U.S. social state through neoliberal privatization and welfare retrenchment, and it has "rolled out" ever more punitive

responses to social problems and inequality, in the form of militarized policing, disciplinary social services, border and "crimmigration" (Stumpf 2006) regimes, and mass incarceration. The racist dimensions of the carceral state in segregating, surveilling, controlling, and punishing communities of color have been well-documented [for an overview of studies, see (Balko 2020)], suggesting continuities with older racial-carceral institutions like the plantation, the Mission system, the reservation, and internment camps (Davis 2005).

Over the past five decades, the feminist and anti-violence movement has increasingly allied itself with the carceral state to protect marginalized genders from violence through law enforcement strategies. This has led to a set of "carceral feminist" (Bernstein 2007) policies in the U.S. which include greater collaboration between law enforcement and advocates for survivors (Richie 2012); mandatory arrest for domestic violence calls to police (Ruttenberg 1993; Urs 2014); registries, community notification laws, and civil commitment for sex offenders (Meiners 2009; Tyson and Hall 2014); anti-trafficking "rescue" industries that often target sex workers (Bernstein 2012; Musto 2016); and the coupling of immigration status for survivors to their participation in criminal processes (Wang 2016). Family Justice Centers like the one in Oakland are one legacy of this close collaboration.

The viral hashtag #MeToo brought the anti-violence movement (primarily at the workplace) back into public consciousness in 2018 with a wave of outings of powerful perpetrators of sexual assault and abuse. This activism landed right in between two "cycles of contention" (Tarrow 1998) for Black lives that began in 2014 and 2020. Taken together, these two movements (Me Too and BLM) have upended the way we perceive violence, yet they seem to offer contradictory solutions to it. The early phases of Me Too often resulted in the firing and prosecution of individual perpetrators, which was critiqued by some as playing

into a carceral feminist tradition that fails to uproot the real source of sexual harm (Levine 2017; Press 2018).[1] Further, the focus on individual criminal legal consequences risks legitimizing the racist system that BLM activists are trying to change or even abolish (Hayes and Kaba 2018).

In this work, I draw on existing studies and analyses of carceral feminism to theorize its latent understanding of safety as *negative security* (and I will subsequently use the term 'security' rather than 'safety' in order to distinguish these models). Negative security individualizes the source of harm to a few "bad apples." It relies on moral binaries to sort innocent victims and evil perpetrators, providing the former protection and dependency through state services and the latter containment and disposal via the carceral system. Negative security is premised on a vision of the state as a universal, objective, and neutral entity that can fairly adjudicate justice in cases of harm.

This study exposes how carceral feminism's negative security accomplishes its opposite, sabotaging its own aims at security and sowing insecurity through its alliance with the carceral state. I argue that gender has played a paradoxical role in the rise of mass incarceration: serving as both an alibi for increased punishment in the name of "protecting women," and an outcome of the carceral state, since policing and incarceration often themselves enact gendered violence (Ritchie 2017). These Janus-like faces of the state as protector and punisher reveal themselves to be two sides of the same repressive apparatus, exposing a contradiction at the heart of the criminal justice system: it creates the very

[1] It is important to note that the longer-term impacts of the Me Too movement have included policy change that does move closer to addressing collective conditions rather than individual cases. The National Law Center for Women reports that, five years after Me Too, over 70 workplace anti-harassment laws have been enacted across 22 states and Washington, D.C. (Johnson, Ijoma, and Kim 2022)

problems it purports to solve. Hence, the study's provocatively simple question: What *really* makes us safe?

While Me Too and BLM may appear at odds with each other in terms of their answer to this question, women and queer people of color at the intersections of both anti-racist and feminist movements have rejected this supposed contradiction. They argue that interpersonal violence must be understood in the context of state violence, and vice versa, to achieve intersectional justice and best serve the needs of marginalized survivors (Critical Resistance and INCITE! 2001).

This dissertation examines community-based alternatives to prison and policing for gender-based violence developed by these abolitionist feminists over the past two decades. They seek to address both concrete cases of harm, as well as the underlying conditions that allowed the violence to happen, such that the harm cannot happen again. Out of this has grown a body of theory and practice organized under the umbrella concepts of *community accountability* and *transformative justice* (Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha 2011; Creative Interventions et al. 2012; INCITE! 2006; Kershnar et al. 2007). These practitioners began primarily with cases of sexual and partner violence in their own activist groups, community organizations, neighborhoods, and families, and they have since expanded their focus to interpersonal violence and conflict more broadly (see for example Project NIA and Creative Interventions).

I draw on interviews and oral histories, participant observation, archives, and my own experience as a practitioner to articulate potential answers from the transformative justice movement to the question of "What *really* makes us safe?" I offer an overview of transformative justice practices and distill from them a theory of the underlying concept of

safety as *positive safety*. Positive safety looks not at protection *from* but at empowerment *to* self and community determination. It grasps the root causes of violence as collective, recognizing how harm and violence reiterate like fractals from the micro (individual) to the macro (structural) levels. A positive safety approach resists binaries of good/bad in favor of processes of transformation and healing. It embraces interconnection as a method and a goal of justice, embracing the uncertainty of a collective process outside the state.

Literature Review

This dissertation focuses specifically on forms of intimate violence, or violence that happens in intimate places coded as part of the feminized private sphere (e.g., the body, the home, or the family). These include sexual violence and other forms of violence (emotional, psychological, financial, physical) that can make up partner or family violence. Chronic or repeated acts of violence are defined here as abuse. As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Three, feminists have raised awareness of the sexist and misogynist dimensions of intimate violence, since the majority of perpetrators of rape and partner violence are cis men and the majority of victims or survivors are cis women (RAINN n.d.). The queer movement, however, has brought attention to how trans and non-binary persons also experience high rates of sexual violence (HRC Foundation n.d.; NCADV 2018; Patterson 2016; Peitzmeier et al. 2020), suggesting other gendered dimensions to how intimate violence takes place. Taken together, I refer to these groups targeted by violence – cis and trans women, as well as non-binary and other trans people – as 'marginalized genders.' I use this term to expand beyond the limitations of the term 'violence against women,' while retaining a "gender-based

violence" frame that foregrounds the role of gendering processes in intimate violence. Unfortunately, 'marginalized genders' excludes cis boys and men survivors of sexual violence, though in my discussion of a transformative justice concept of violence in Chapter Three, I attempt to bring them back into the conversation as fellow survivors.

Protect/Punish: Gender in the "Punitive Turn"

What role has gender and gender-based violence played in the punitive turn over the past decades in the U.S.? On the one hand, women experience state control in unique ways, due to the gendered division between what Loïc Wacquant (Wacquant 2009) calls the "punitive fist" of the state for men and the "social bosom" (i.e. social welfare state) for women. Social welfare institutions like schools (Nocella, Parmar, and Stovall 2014), foster care (Lee 2016; Roberts 1995, 2011, 2012) and homeless (Wooten 2018) and women's shelters (Koyama 2006) make up a "carceral assistential net" (Wacquant 2009). This net of feminized punitive social control complements the prison, traditionally gendered masculine, but the seemingly benevolent "pastoral power" (Young 2003) of these forms of "carceral protectionism" (Musto 2016) can be harder to diagnose as controlling and punitive.

Marxist, postcolonial, and poststructural feminists have theorized the state as gendered (Brown 1988, 1995), reproducing patriarchy and controlling the bodies of marginalized genders through the imposition of gender binaries (Lugones 2016; Oyěwùmí 1997), division of labor (Costa and James 1975; Federici 2004), the social – and implicitly sexual – contract (Pateman 1988), the division of public and private spheres (Fraser 1990), and the heteronormative home and family (Young 2003). As Iris Marion Young contends, the masculinist state has a Janus character, showing two different faces of its power: one as punishment, the other as paternalist protection (Young 2003). Arguments for public safety

often invoke the image of helpless women and children to justify paternalist protection. For instance, as anti-trans organizing seeks to limit trans people's access to gender-appropriate bathrooms or terrorizes drag queen storytime events at libraries, it frames children as innocent targets of an imagined pedophilic "trans agenda," rather than as agents with human rights and age appropriate self-determination of their own.

Survivors' accounts of violence at the hands of the state suggest the two faces of the state as protector and punisher are inseparable, however. As intersectional feminists have argued, the promise of protection can easily become the risk of punishment for survivors who have historically not been accorded the assumption of innocence or been figured as worthy of protection (INCITE! and FIERCE 2008). Protection constructs both a gendered and racialized subject. As Sarah Haley (Haley 2016), points out in her historical study of Black women's imprisonment in the post-Reconstruction era, womanhood was constructed around sexual vulnerability, a status which Black women were denied, marking them as queer before the term was used to denote homosexuality (Haley 2016:5–6). Historically, white sexual vulnerability has been weaponized to falsely accuse Black men of rape to motivate judicial and extrajudicial murder, such as lynching. Even for the white women who acquire womanhood as a property right [like whiteness, see (Harris 1993; Lipsitz 2006)]], however, masculinist protection means a monopoly of access to their bodies.

Carceral Feminism as Contradiction and Cooptation

As feminism has gained institutional ground and entered the realm of governance, some feminists have advocated strongly for using the "punitive fist" to address gender-based violence, seeing the state as an advocate. Marie Gottschalk posits a causal relationship: "The contemporary women's movement in the United States helped facilitate the carceral state"

(Gottschalk 2006:115). Tough-on-crime frames for gendered violence have been critiqued by women and queer of color activists and scholars as carceral feminism (Bernstein 2007; Law 2014). Carceral feminism frames state intervention as protection and "social justice as criminal justice" (Bernstein 2010: 57). The term describes a variety of institutional practices that lead to collaboration between law enforcement and feminist social movements/service providers. Additional examples of carceral feminism include mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence calls to police (Ruttenberg 1994; Urs 2014); sex offender registries and civil commitment (Meiners 2009; Tyson 2014a); and anti-trafficking "rescue" industries and immigration policies (Bernstein 2012; Musto 2016; Wang 2016).

Similar critiques (Lamble 2014) have been levelled at the queer punitivity of mainstream LGBT movements for their advocacy of hate crime sentencing enhancements (Spade 2015; Stanley and Smith 2011), trans-friendly prisons (Spade 2012), increased policing in gentrified gayborhoods (Hanhardt 2013; Haritaworn 2015), and the right to join the military (Duggan 2002). Critics looking transnationally have linked carceral feminism in the domestic sphere to "femonationalism" (Farris 2017) and "militarized humanitarianism" (Grewal 2005) in international relations, whereby protecting women is used as a justification for state violence in the form of military intervention, for instance, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

As detailed further in Chapter One, the anti-violence movement's cooptation into a racialized law-and-order politics also brought it into unexpected alliances, such as with the conservative victims' rights movement. The result was the elevation of the crime victim as the contemporary legal subject (Gruber 2007; Simon 2007) who is often gendered, with the "battered woman" appearing as a sensationalized figure of victimhood (Gruber 2007).

Certain strands of identity politics like carceral feminism have mobilized the affective power of images of victimization to buttress their claims for state retribution, redistribution, and protection. As Wendy Brown asserts, however, this leaves carceral feminism with a "wounded attachment" to its members' victim status as necessary for state protection [(Brown 1993) see also (Doezema 2001)].

Carceral feminism names a discursive formation that informs state policy and anti-violence service practices. As some have argued, the term 'carceral feminism' should not be leveraged to discredit survivors or their advocates who turn to the carceral state because they have no other options available to them (Dixon 2015a). It is not an individual moral judgment but a critique of collective movement strategy in the face of a history of cooptation. A number of actors can leverage carceral feminist arguments in their favor: law-and-order politicians appear more clearly attached to the "carceral" half and instrumentalize the other "feminist" half to make their arguments appealing by pulling the heartstrings of moral panic and gendered sentimentality. Still others may be deeply committed "feminists" who have adopted the "carceral" half due to a lack of alternatives, imagination, or critique. I generally analyze carceral feminism in this dissertation as a set of discourses and practices that serve as a heuristic, but they are not identical with any particular organization or person, recognizing that many anti-violence hotlines, rape crisis centers, and domestic violence shelters may exhibit carceral feminist patterns as well as other, contradictory tendencies.[2]

Why is carceral feminism harmful for survivors of gender-based violence? For many people of color, sex workers, queer or trans survivors, or illegalized migrants, contact with

[2] For more on the strengths and weaknesses of an approach that repeatedly contrasts carceral feminism with transformative justice, see the "What We Stand to Learn" section of this chapter.

the criminal legal system leads not to safety but further harm. Carceral feminism has the unintended but serious effect of increasing some survivors' exposure to public and state surveillance, as well as law enforcement violence. Survivors may face harassment and abuse at the hands of police; indeed, sexual misconduct is the second most common form of police misconduct in the U.S. (National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project 2010). Contact with law enforcement often exacerbates structural violence due to racism, sexism, homo- or transphobia, and poverty (Ritchie 2017). In the course of this contact, survivors may have their children removed from their custody (Park 2011; Roberts 2011) and face deportation or arrest because they participate in illegalized survival activities and street economies (Young Women's Empowerment Project 2009) or because their own self-defense strategies are reframed as aggression and subjected to prosecution (Love & Protect and Survived & Punished 2017). Studies indicate that the vast majority of women in prison are themselves survivors of rape and abuse, leading scholars to speak of a "trauma-to-prison pipeline" (Baumle 2018). Once in custody, women are exposed to additional sexual violence at the hands of prison guards or border regime agents. Even relatively privileged survivors struggle to get justice through the legal system, facing statutes of limitation, narrow definitions of rape and abuse, high burdens of proof, retraumatizing trials, and extremely low rates of prosecution. In addition, structural violence facilitated by the state systematically exposes marginalized genders to further gender-based violence, for example, when the feminization or queering of poverty keeps survivors unable to leave abusive relationships due to economic dependency or the militarization of the border systematically exposes migrants to rape (INCITE! 2006) to such a predictable extent that women commonly take birth control when crossing the border (Falcón 2006; Letona, Felker-Kantor, and Wheeler 2023). Gender-

based violence thus plays a contradictory role in the carceral state – as both an alibi and an outcome.

Gender-based violence takes place in a context where the welfare and penal regimes necessarily intersect, as the state is called upon in both of its traditional roles as protector and punisher, the so-called "good cop" and the "bad cop." As such, gendered violence offers a useful lens through which to examine the contradictions of the penal-welfare regime and the inherent link between state protection and punishment. When carceral feminist security turns to the state as protector, it fails to recognize the state's other face, the one more familiar to marginalized survivors. Ultimately, this form of negative security appears self-defeating, as the state contributes to the dangers from which it purports to protect women. Out of a critique of this contradiction, transformative justice has emerged to offer an alternative, abolitionist vision and practice of positive safety that embraces and strengthens interdependence and points toward genuine justice.

The Emergence of Transformative Justice

Black feminists and feminists of color have led the way in developing an intersectional analysis of the gendered politics of the carceral state (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2003; Haley 2016; Hartman 2019), in part because women of color stand at the dangerous intersections of state and interpersonal violence, both of which take gendered and sexualized forms. Kimberlé Crenshaw argues, however, that the "intersectional failures" (Crenshaw 2012:1451) of social movements to examine violence through the lens of women of color's experiences has led them to see only part of the story: in the case of antiracist movements,

focusing on state violence at the expense of an analysis of interpersonal violence, and in the feminist movement, the reverse.

Confronted both by a white-dominated feminist movement and male-centered initiatives to combat mass incarceration and police brutality, queer, trans, non-binary, and women of color activists made a dual intervention in the late 1990s and early 2000s. On the one hand, they called upon organizations working against state violence institutions like police and prisons to take into consideration the particular ways that said violence is gendered and sexualized (INCITE! 2006; Stanley and Smith 2011) and to recognize that ending state violence will not end forms of interpersonal violence circulating even within their own activist communities, which require sustainable alternatives to prisons and policing (Critical Resistance and INCITE! 2001). On the other hand, they critiqued the carceral feminism that many of them had encountered firsthand in the anti-violence field. They insisted that the state participates in structural oppression and enables interpersonal violence; thus, it cannot be seen as a solution to such violence. Since the earliest days of transformative justice, activists have pushed back against this limited menu of options for survivors: "The question is not, should she call the police. The questions are, why is that her only option, and can we provide other options that will keep her truly safe" (INCITE! 2003:1).

This partakes of a long tradition of Black women's "bridge leadership" (Robnett 1996), serving as a "bridge" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984) between various social movements and communities. This role has been critical, as Black women have critiqued both racism within the feminist movement and sexism within the Civil Rights and other anti-racist movements (Hull, Scott, and Smith 1993).

An influential early national network of feminists of color, INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence, created the concept of *community accountability* (INCITE! 2003) and defined it as four integrated areas of work: survivor support and self-determination, perpetrator accountability and change, transforming community values and practices, and challenging the structural conditions that enable gender-based violence (INCITE! 2008). Rather than following a fixed, centralized model, most transformative justice-community accountability practices are experimental and contextual, varying in their focus on one or the other of these four areas. Some practitioners focus on survivor support and harm reduction, like sex workers developing their own community reporting, evidence collection, and surveillance systems to prevent assault by their johns or police (Forrester and Lam 2020). Others engage more with those causing harm, as groups like Philly Stands Up and Creative Interventions have developed models to facilitate accountability, rather than denial and shame, for persons who've committed sexual assault. Still others explore how communities have stepped up to support both safety and accountability, de-escalated violence at parties and demonstrations (Safe OUTside the System Collective), used story-telling to open conversations about harm and healing (Story Telling and Organizing Project), and built networks of non-state resources for people to activate when facing gender-based violence (Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective).

While 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of key transformative justice organizations, the movement is rooted in a much longer history of improvised, kitchen-table responses to violence by women and queer people in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities where calling the police was not an option (Dixon 2015a; Rojas Durazo, Kim, and Bierria 2011). This could mean opening one's home to someone whose partner is acting

violently, sending over respected elders to talk with that partner, or starting honest, painful conversations about violence in one's mosque or church, at school, or in one's own family. In searching for alternatives to the carceral state, transformative justice activists also drew upon Indigenous justice traditions, since appropriated and popularized outside those communities as *restorative justice*. While restorative justice holds promise for change within institutions like schools, it has also often been coopted as a supplemental arm of the criminal legal system. In contrast, transformative justice responses stand outside of state institutions, rooted rather in social movements.

Restorative justice interventions are located within institutions like schools or prisons and are thus more formally studied, with entire journals (*Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice* and the *International Journal of Restorative Justice*) and conferences (like the annual National Association of Community and Restorative Justice conference) devoted to the field. On the other hand, transformative justice interventions, which take place in grassroots, informal settings, remain understudied despite their potential to illuminate the wisdom of marginalized communities targeted by state violence. The small but growing literature on transformative justice (Dixon and Piepzna-Samarasinha 2020) is largely outside of academia, and it often focuses on single interventions or programs rather than looking historically and comparatively across them at a national level.

Research Design and Methodology

My dissertation fills these gaps by offering the first comprehensive account of the movement. The study is by necessity exploratory, asking (1) what organizations exist, (2) how they have evolved over time, (3) what they do, and (4) what principles unite their various practices.

Mapping the Transformative Justice Ecosystem through Interviews

To address the first aim, this dissertation provides a map of the contemporary, rapidly growing field of organizations using a transformative justice framework to address gendered violence. To this end, my qualitative methodology included interviews with expert, long-time players in the transformative justice movement ecosystem. In a pilot phase of research between 2010 and 2014, I conducted 14 interviews with a broad swath of U.S. based[3] transformative justice thinkers and activists, and I used grounded theory coding to find thematic codes. In the second expanded phase of research from 2019 to 2023, I developed a more systematic sampling strategy (detailed below) and conducted formal interviews with 49 people and informal conversations with nine people. Some interviews were group interviews with two to three members of the same organization. Each interview was roughly one to two hours (except for one conducted via email), and I held follow-up interviews with eight people. Interviews were held in person or, during the pandemic, primarily online via Zoom. Recordings were transcribed and coded using Otter AI and NVivo software.

For the expanded research, I defined my universe of interest as people and organizations whose work (past or present) focused on sexual and partner violence, included

[3] One of these people had worked in both the U.S. and in Western European contexts.

an abolitionist feminist politics, and offered community-based (rather than only institution-based) interventions and services. I also included a limited number of interviews with people and organizations on the outer edge of this universe, whose work may overlap in significant ways with transformative justice but differs in focus. For instance, some practitioners share an abolitionist politics but are responding to violence in institutional settings such as universities and prisons. Others are organizing to change state policy, for example, through campaigns to defund police, in ways that complement the grassroots organizing for alternatives to police. For comparison, I also talked to a few anti-violence service providers in mainstream organizations with more carceral feminist politics.

Within this universe, the sample of people who agreed to participate in the research were often people with whom I had pre-existing connections through my own transformative justice activism, leading to a snowball sample as they referred me to subsequent connections. I diversified my sample across a number of dimensions: geography, interviewee identity, identities of the communities they serve, the type of work done, and the organizational vehicle through which the work is coordinated.

For geographic diversity, I focused on three cities at the forefront of transformative justice innovation: New York, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Seattle. These were also cities where I had the highest number of connections and easiest access to practitioners, so it was partly a sample of convenience. Interviews with roughly ten expert longtime practitioners per city illuminated how the movement evolved within and across organizations linking transformative justice actors locally, as well as nationally. In addition to these three coastal sites, I spoke to a smaller number of practitioners in other regions, including the Midwest (Chicago, Minneapolis, and Lansing, Michigan), the South (New Orleans and

Atlanta), the Northeast (Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia), and the West (Los Angeles). This broad national sample helped balance the picture of the movement that emerged through deeper dives into the three case study cities. Because I was interested in the development of the movement in places where practitioner networks were dense, however, my sample has a noticeable lack of practitioners in rural and more conservative-leaning areas.

As I describe in Chapter Two, the movement emerged in response to mainstream, one-size-fits-all anti-violence services in order to better meet the intersectional needs of marginalized survivors. I intentionally oversampled interviewees to ensure representation by marginalized genders, sexualities, and races in order to stay grounded in the perspectives from which transformative justice emerged. For example, I spoke with practitioners working with Black, Indigenous, immigrant, Asian Pacific Islander, queer, youth, sex worker, and disabled communities, interviewing at least two people for each of these groups (which overlap and were therefore sometimes double counted).

I also diversified my sample by the type of work practitioners were engaged in: survivor support, perpetrator accountability, culture change within communities, and organizing to transform political conditions.[4] Lastly, I diversified my sample in terms of organizational form (or lack thereof), since this proved to be a dimension of interest in the

[4] Here, interesting trends emerged. Individuals coordinating informal processes outside of an organizational context were more likely to engage with both survivors and those causing harm, whereas organizations often kept these groups separate and served one or the other explicitly. The Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse in Seattle, for example, employs an assessment tool as part of its intake process to determine who is likely surviving or causing harm, in order to ensure that only survivors access survivor-specific programming. As discussed in Chapter Three, however, some persons causing harm also have a history of surviving violence and abuse, which can trouble the waters of permanent binary distinctions between survivor and perpetrator beyond a specific incident or situation. Organizing to change political conditions was the least common among my interviewees' activities, a gap that I take up in my discussion of the community and the state in Chapter Four.

social movement literature. I interviewed members who were practicing transformative justice in volunteer-run, non-hierarchical collectives; as staff at 501(c) 3 non-profits like women's shelters; and individuals working largely solo or freelance among a network of fellow practitioners, trainers, or consultants. For detailed break-downs of my study sample by the dimensions discussed here, see additional discussion and tables in the Appendix.

As a result of my sampling strategy, my interviews and oral histories (see next section) gathered a wide range of stories about intimate violence. Transformative justice was developed by and for people for whom calling the police could pose danger, typically people with marginalizations around race, sexuality, disability, class, religion, immigration status, housing status, and more. As a result, many of the stories I heard concerned violence within marginalized communities. In some cases, it also included forms of violence that would not be captured by the definitions, evidential thresholds, and statute of limitations in criminal law, where participants were therefore more amenable to alternative justice models because their story would not fit within the narrow criminal justice approach.

However, my focus remained on organizations and their approaches rather than on specific cases, interventions, or activists. As a result, for organizations that I was particularly interested in, I often individually interviewed several members of the same organization, particularly members who had been active at different times. Many of these organizations of interest became case studies for the dissertations' chapters.

Tracking the Evolution of Transformative Justice through Archives & Oral Histories

The second aim of this work is to track the historical evolution of the transformative justice movement, contributing as yet unwritten histories of queer and women of color mobilization to social movement theory and gender studies and in turn democratizing their

archives. The dissertation looks historically at how transformative justice projects, ranging from informal collectives to non-profits, emerged in the early 2000s and have evolved over the last two decades. Interviewees routinely named several early innovator organizations as their introduction to transformative justice and community accountability, including Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) in Seattle and generationFIVE and Creative Interventions in the San Francisco Bay Area, two of the three cities I highlight in my research.

I focus in particular on Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), whose story is narrated in Chapter Two. My partnerships with former CARA co-founders and members allowed me to gather ten oral histories with former CARA members and receive access to never-before seen archival material with hundreds of organizational documents, including internal memos, newsletters, membership lists, grant reports, and strategic plans. I have developed a proto-archive of this text material, with plans to share it more publicly through a project spearheaded by former CARA members. To do so, I constructed a database with information about each document, including subject tags, document type, short descriptions, and more for each archival object. I coded this archival material and oral histories according to five categories of interest identified in the social movement literature (Snow, Soule, et al. 2018): strategy, organizational structure, collective identity of participants, resources, and framing of the issues.

In addition to CARA's work, I drew upon over two decades of movement writings, media, and ephemera to round out my overall picture of transformative justice's development and evolution.

Understanding Transformative Justice Practices through Participant Observation

I analyze what transformative justice-oriented organizations do, the third aim of the project, by looking at their interventions in the four areas INCITE! (INCITE! 2008) identified as central to their model of community accountability: survivor support, perpetrator accountability, community prevention and response, and structural change. Interviews and participant observation, in addition to my years as a transformative justice practitioner, provided insight into the concrete practices conducted in the name of transformative justice.

Over the course of this research, I conducted thousands of hours of participant observation at events under the umbrella of abolition, restorative justice, and transformative justice in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and New York City (the latter are two of the three cities I focus on in my sample; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to conduct fieldwork in Seattle as planned). While transnational comparison is not foregrounded in this study, my ongoing relationships with practitioners in the Global North meant that I also conducted participant observation more loosely in the United Kingdom, Iceland, Spain, and Germany. I participated in in-person events related to education (trainings and workshops), political campaigns (planning meetings, protests, meetings with elected officials, volunteer service work for organizations), networking with fellow practitioners (conferences and roundtables), healing practices (workshops and group practice sessions), and community-building (public celebrations, private hang outs, and community-building circles like the one at Restore Oakland). During the pandemic, much of this participant observation went online, just as the BLM uprisings of 2020 greatly increased interest in

transformative justice. This digital accessibility and growing hunger created a new wave of transformative justice programming.

Arguably the central element of transformative justice practice is direct engagement with survivors, persons who cause harm, and communities in a situation of violence. Because these interventions or processes can be delicate, volatile, and complex, however, it seemed unethical to participate in interventions from a research perspective. The crisis, trauma, and emotional and mental duress that participants in transformative justice processes may be experiencing would impact their ability to freely consent to research, and because many processes are initiated once violence is escalated to a crisis level, there would not be the time or resources to build trust with participants. Conducting research amidst an urgent, often under-resourced intervention seemed to me like a burden at best to those involved. Instead, I draw upon my own work for seven years as a transformative justice practitioner as part of the Berlin Transformative Justice Collective, a self-organized volunteer group that counseled communities dealing with situations of sexist, homophobic, racist, and sexual and partner violence.[5] This gave me a background understanding of what these processes can look and feel like. As someone out of practice, in order to update myself on the current issues facing facilitators of interventions,[6] I participated in a "Community Accountability 303" group run

[5] Though it had a few different early beginnings and changing constellations, the collective was officially founded in 2011 and ended in 2018.

[6] My sample of interviewees for this portion of the research was largely made up of facilitators, rather than survivor and perpetrator participants in processes. Admittedly, facilitators often have multiple, overlapping identities, and they may identify as survivors or perpetrators in other contexts, so interviews with them do shed light on a variety of experiences with the transformative justice context. Yet choosing not to include the voices of survivor and perpetrator participants in processes limits the research's understanding of those processes. This choice was driven by the scope of the project, focused as it is primarily on the transformative justice movement and its organizational histories, presents, and futures. As such, it takes organizations and movement leadership rather than transformative justice processes as its unit of analysis. Additional much needed research by others is

by a Chicago-based transformative justice collective, Just Practice Collaborative, in the summer of 2022. This four week, 16 hour focus group, made up of panels and group discussion among experienced facilitators, focused on naming and troubleshooting some of the hardest and most unresolved questions in transformative justice practice.

Theorizing the Principles of Transformative Justice

From this breadth and depth of stories, the dissertation synthesizes underlying principles that unite these various practices, accomplishing the fourth and final aim of this research.

To develop this body of theory, I undertook content analysis in my pilot project phase on my first set of interviews using MAXQDA software, developing codes related to my research questions and the four arenas of transformative justice described earlier (survivor support, perpetrator accountability, community response, and structural change). I have drawn on these codes as a guide for my analysis of subsequent interviews done in the second phase of the project. From this, I have distilled some underlying logics of transformative justice that bridge diverse interventions into intimate harm, refracting these findings through my two primary intellectual lineages, BIPoC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) feminisms and Marxist critical theory.

This project leans on a lineage of Marxist critical theory, captured by philosopher Iris Marion Young's description of her own approach:

> In my work, I try to follow what I take to be the spirit of critical theory: to reflect from within the political debates of a particular socio-historical context, try to clarify their terms, construct a coherent logic of the relations among its concepts, identify the

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underway that focuses on processes themselves that can better understand how survivors and perpetrators experience them.

> positions that might further the cause of justice if widely accepted, and offer social theoretical support and normative justification for those positions.(Young 2002:282–83)

In particular, I draw on immanent critique (sometimes referred to as "ideology critique") to expose the self-sabotaging character of carceral feminist theory and practice, and I offer transformative justice practice and theory as new ways of imagining some of carceral feminism's core concepts of responsibility, justice, safety, and violence. Immanent critique is a method developed in the Marxist critical theory lineage, particularly by the Frankfurt School in Germany and later in exile in the U.S.

As explicated by Rahel Jaeggi, immanent critique distinguishes itself from less sophisticated forms of critique that Jaeggi describes as internal and external critique (Jaeggi 2008). Internal critique, starts from existing norms held by a group, examining if that group's own practices live up to their stated norms. Many prison and police reform projects implicitly believe that prisons and police are necessary social institutions that provide for public safety and that their practices of disproportionately criminalizing, harassing, and murdering certain marginalized groups are aberrations from their principles. Internal critique as reform aims to align police practice with what reformers believe the police's true principles or aspirational norms to be. External critique, in contrast, views the principles as the problem. For example, an external critique that is against prisons and police would argue that those institutions' principles are corrupt and illegitimate and that we need entirely new principles to guide society with regards to harm and violence. The problem with external critique, however, is that it imports a set of ideal norms to bear on a specific situation, regardless of whether or not those norms are indigenous to that situation. This imposition of norms poses philosophical problems: when norms are so ideal and abstract, they require extensive metaphysical

justification. This imposition of norms also poses practical problems: when principles are imposed that appear foreign to a situation, convincing a majority of people that they are necessary can be quite difficult. Campaigns to defund police have faced this challenge when they have been unable to make their vision of a police-free world palatable and convincing to constituents.

In immanent critique, both norms and practices reveal themselves to be plagued by contradiction, and thus they may be inadequate and in need of transformation. A seemingly stable concept, like freedom, appears to harbor a contradiction upon closer inspection. In Karl Marx's famous example, it is the seeming freedom under capitalism to sell one's labor (in contrast to the unfreedom of feudal serfdom) that conceals the unfreedom of having to sell one's labor to survive (which Marx refers to as "wage slavery") [for an analysis, see (Jaeggi 2008)]. Contradiction breeds crisis, the engine of transformation in Marxist historiography. Contradiction is (temporarily) resolved through dialectical overcoming – a complex process of both negation and preservation of each half of a contradictory system. This overcoming is known in Hegelian and Marxist theory as '*Aufhebung*' – sometimes translated into English as 'abolition.' I bring together this Marxist concept of abolition with a Black feminist one in this dissertation to undertake an immanent critique of the concept of safety. As immanent critique, it does not seek to rehabilitate negative security in finer, softer form (as internal critique reformism might), nor does it merely cast negative security aside as inadequate (as external critique would do). Rather, it explores the seduction and seeming appeal of negative security for carceral feminists, as well as its inevitable sabotaging of the feminist anti-violence agenda.

As such, this project nestles its exploration of transformative justice visions in the ashes of carceral feminism's failures. It narrates how the carceral logic of negative security manifests its own inner contradictions and foments (potentially productive) crises for the feminist movement. It argues that carceral feminist discourse stumbles upon its own failures to deliver what it promises: justice and safety for survivors, fairness and accountability for perpetrators, healing for communities. A feminism that fails to understand the criminal legal system's entanglement in a racist carceral state will be limited to a narrow understanding of sexual violence as interpersonal, obscuring its intersections with state and structural violence. It will fail to recognize paternalist state protection for privileged survivors as an additional form of patriarchal control and ignore how that protection is denied to many marginalized groups, abandoning or criminalizing them. It will fail to see prisons and police as locations that breed rather than end rape and abuse, mistaking the state as a vehicle for justice, rather than a perpetuator of injustice. A feminism that frames survivors as innocent victims in need of paternalist protection and perpetrators as evildoers in need of containment and disposal will always protect one group at the expense of the lives of another. These contradictions expose that carceral feminism is not only deficient as a set of practices, but also that its core concepts of justice, safety, violence, accountability, healing, and more need to be reconceptualized.

Transformative justice takes up the work of reimagining these concepts in and through practice. It does not import new principles and practices from a metaphysical elsewhere but rather draws heavily on older lineages of Black, Indigenous, and women and queer of color feminism. To recover those legacies, I was inspired by the methodology of Alexis Pauline Gumbs and Roxane Wallace's Mobile Homecoming Project, for which they

traveled cross-country road in a renovated RV to gather oral histories of Black trans and cis women, trans men, and genderqueer elders. They explain on their website how they use "baptismal listening, a counter-ethnographic approach" to "immers[e] ourselves into the lives of these visionaries, not in order to merely observe kinship, but instead in order to BECOME kindred" (Gumbs 2010a). This kind of deeply relational methodology that performs an experiential archive of a lineage shaped my own choices to study that which I practice and to support movement leaders in building their archives for future generations. In terms of kinship beyond the human, the work of indigenous and Black feminists like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and adrienne maree brown draw attention to our relationships with nature and the more-than-human. This shaped my decision to describe the cycles of anti-violence feminist history through the language of roots, seeds, and flowers throughout the dissertation.

The work of Combahee River Collective, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde informs the intersectional approach of the dissertation. This foundational work on intersectionality shapes the dissertation's approach to violence. In this dissertation, I analyze intimate and state violence as intertwined and enmeshed in various forms of structural oppression (like ableism, racism, etc.), as well as the political horizon of liberation in the dissertation, where the abolition of police entails the abolition of sexual violence, capitalism, and other systems of harm. Literature on how intersectionality is practiced and negotiated within social movements [see, for example (Luna, Jesudason, and Kim 2020)] and particularly within feminist movements (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984; Smith 2000), informs my thinking about the strategies, organizational forms, collective identities, and framing and ideology that

transformative justice activists use to build alignment and solidarity across difference, particularly with regards to identity.

I draw on the work Black, Indigenous, and women of color feminists have done to bring embodiment to the foreground in politics through healing justice (see for example Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective) and politicized somatic body work (see for example the work of Generative Somatics and the Embodiment Institute). These approaches guide the dissertation's explorations of the affective dimensions of transformative justice's work with trauma, fear, grief, and rage. My understanding of abolition as immanent critique that requires a transformation of both principle and practice has led me to focus on praxis, the dialectical relationship between the two. This is informed by generative somatics' belief that "changing our thinking alone is not enough to bring about the personal and political transformation that we seek. We need to change what it is we embody and what our conditions have embodied in us" (generative somatics 2017). Lastly, my theorizing about abolitionist subjects, agency, and responsibility was formed in close dialogue with Black and feminist of color philosophy, particularly the work of Alisa Bierria, which articulates the world in terms of relationality, rather than separation.

Community Accountable Scholarship

Just as this project aims to reintegrate theory and practice, so too does it hope to align both content and methods. I both aim to study community accountability for violence and to practice community accountability in my research, countering academia's long legacies of extraction from and instrumentalization of marginalized communities. I invoke the term 'community accountable scholarship' (Brazzell 2020; Gumbs 2012), created by interviewee, scholar, and transformative justice practitioner Alexis Pauline Gumbs. This approach holds

that "the most lasting, and appropriate transmission of knowledge is IN community through lived experiences" (Gumbs 2010b). Gumbs has been affiliated with the community accountability and transformative justice movement through her work with UBUNTU, a women of color and sexual violence survivor-led organization in Durham, North Carolina. Presumably, her concept of community accountable scholarship draws from this movement tradition to articulate an ethos and politics for academic labor.

My participatory research comes out of my own engagement in the anti-violence field over the last twenty years, which has allowed me to build trust with other practitioners. My work has been primarily in Germany with the Transformative Justice Collective Berlin and then with the What *Really* Makes Us Safe? Project, facilitating educational workshops, perpetrator accountability processes and community responses to sexual harm, as well as networking with other practitioners and researchers. As I have detailed elsewhere (Brazzell 2020), I have aimed (across a spectrum of success and failure) to define and practice accountability in my research in a few ways: relationship building and mutual benefit, giving and not taking account, approaching participants as co-creators, bringing the work home, and serving as a megaphone and not a microphone (Crunk Feminist Collective 2013).

One way of cultivating mutual benefit is by partnering with transformative justice organizations, like my collaboration with CARA and generationFIVE to gather oral histories and help build their digital archives, as well as research collaborations with Interrupting Criminalization and Just Beginnings Collaborative. I have also held research roundtables and published collaboratively with transformative justice researchers and practitioners in Australia, Canada, the U.S., the U.K., and Germany, in the hopes of building relationships of learning and mentorship across borders.

One strategy for relationship building is story sharing and collective meaning-making. I refer to this in terms of "giving account," rather than the quantitative, abstract forms of "taking account" that dominate a criminal legal understanding of responsibility (for more, see Chapter Three on accountability). In my interviews, oral histories, and participant observation, I aimed to both share my own story and receive and amplify those of others as a form of accountability.

To give research participants a role in co-creating the project's goals, methods, and outcomes, I included their own research questions in my interview protocols; shared transcripts, findings, and publications; and asked them to edit their quotations for accurate representation. However, as a solo-authored academic work, this dissertation still gives me the "privilege of the last word" [Decoloniality Europe quoted in (Exo 2014:5)]. While it was never my aim to develop a fully democratic and collective research process [for reasons I have explored elsewhere (Brazzell 2020)], I have sought to move beyond the norms of individual knowledge production in academia through other collective writing practices. This scholarship is done in alliance with efforts like wildcat strikes and campaigns to defund campus police that understand the university as an institution already infused with and contested by political struggle.

After the completion of the pilot phase of this research in 2015, I sought to bring my findings 'back home' to my community in Berlin, Germany through seminars with lectures from local activists, an anthology of activist writing, a guide to working with perpetrators of sexual harm, and workshops and other events. 'Home' for me is also the feminist anti-violence movement, leading me to focus my account of transformative justice on its relationship to that movement, despite transformative justice sitting at the intersections of

many movements (e.g., healing justice, racial justice, disability justice, and so on). The dissertation focuses on a critique of carceral feminism not because that is the best or only way to narrate transformative justice, but because, as a white person, I am particularly invested in accountability for the harms caused by whiteness within the anti-violence world. There are many other books that are being written or long to be written about transformative justice from other perspectives and lineages, and this dissertation is an offering born of its specific context, with all its possibilities and limitations.

To amplify the stories of my interviewees, I also built a website (whatreallymakesussafe.com) to share and archive findings for a wider audience, giving them access to my primary source material. If accountability is a process of bearing witness to and celebrating the interrelations that constitute us, then as researchers our bibliographies, citation practices, and use of quotations in our academic research products are our way of giving an account of and to our teachers, comrades, and intellectual ancestors. Another strategy for being "a megaphone and not a microphone" (Crunk Feminist Collective 2013) is to cite knowledge producers beyond the academy and seeking out unwritten activist genealogies (Tuck, Yang, and Gaztambide-Fernández 2015), while being sensitive about the dilemmas of bringing them "to light" in an academic context.

Theoretical Contribution: From Carceral Feminism's Negative Security to Transformative Justice's Positive Safety

These methods ultimately yield a theoretical framework for the contrasts at the beginning of this chapter between the vision of security embodied by the Alameda County Family Justice Center and the dream of safety imagined at the Restore Oakland building,

which represent larger ideological forces at battle over the meaning of violence, accountability, safety, and justice in U.S. society.

Drawing on Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive freedom (Berlin 1969a), I distinguish between carceral feminism's negative security and transformative justice's positive security. Abolitionist critical theorist Daniel Loick explicates this argument in greater detail, describing the underlying concept of sociality behind negative security as "an asymmetrical understanding of protectors and protected" and contrasting it with that of positive safety as "the unfolding of collective agency […] anchored in interdependence and community" (Loick 2021:270).

While activism and scholarship have developed analyses of particular cases of carceral feminism in different sectors, I seek to unite these analyses by looking at the logics that underpin them. Using examples of the Violence Against Women Act, the criminalization of survivor self-defense, anti-trafficking activism, and sex offender laws, I argue that carceral feminism's "wounded attachments" (Brown 1993) to a victim identity have reinforced a hegemonic concept of security dependent on the "masculinist protection" (Young 2007a) of the state. This protection relies on racialized moral geographies of safe interiors and feminized private space, which house powerless victims shielded by the state from dangerous exteriors (to both the home and the nation) where criminal male perpetrators lurk. Ultimately, carceral security is organized around separation: the individualization of harm to single, powerless victims and responsibility to "bad apples," and the strict moral and spatial division that it necessitates between victims and perpetrators. Victims are subject to conditional state protection as a more insidious form of patriarchal power, while perpetrators are subject to separation from their communities in an effort to contain and dispose of moral impurity.

Carceral feminist security is built on a liberal framework in pursuit of a "negative freedom" (Berlin 1969a), as protection from external intervention and control. I refer to this model as *negative security*, which implies an understanding of well-being in negative terms (i.e. the absence of an imposition) and in terms of negative affect (i.e. avoidance of fear or pain). Such security can only perceive violence as imposition: visible, physical, or singular disruptions of a status quo that is assumed to be just, whose structural, "slow" violence continues unseen and unchecked. The 'not in my backyard' politics this encourages is built on a landscape of privatized property in which one can exercise one's rights unhindered, activating what George Lipsitz calls the "white spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz 2011). When the state does appear in this model, it serves as a neutral, universal, and objective institution aimed at mediating between individual, particularistic interests.

I offer a contrasting concept of positive safet*y* as the conditions that enable agency, justice, survival, and responsibility. Safety is defined robustly as positive freedom, focusing not on security *from* but on safety *to* take action and realize visions. Whereas security appears fragile, constantly under threat of imposition, safety is resilient: it does not seek external protection, but rather individual and collective self-determination and action. Positive safety's operating principle is interconnection – bringing together community to support and empower survivors, engage harmful behaviors, and build the skills to heal from and transform violence. The unchosen character of social life with others (Butler 2012a) poses an ethical challenge to treat no one as disposable. Transformative justice, drawing on the Black radical tradition and abolitionist genealogies, creates safety through solidarity rather than exclusion – a "Black spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz 2011:51) that turns "segregation into congregation" (Lewis 1991). Whereas the borders, walls, and prisons of the global

security regime "screen out" the pain of others and deny the dependency of some people's security on others' suffering (Brown 2010:121), a transformative justice vision of safety affirms interdependency. In it, individual and collective safety are co-constitutive (Kershnar et al. 2007).

This model of positive safety understands violence within a complex web of relationships. It considers the fractal-like and interconnected nature of interpersonal, community, and structural dynamics. This level of complexity recognizes that survivors can also cause harm as part of their survival and perpetrators can also be survivors of others' violence, and it implodes simple binaries of innocence and guilt, good and bad, victim and wrongdoer. It shifts from the rigidity of moral identities to the ethics of everyday practice, which can change over time, opening pathways for individuals to transform violent behavior, heal past trauma, and for communities to develop new norms. This complexity embraces the lack of a single sovereign institution to adjudicate right and wrong in the face of the many dimensions of human experience, embracing the uncertain and the unknown as part of an abolitionist horizon.

My analysis of negative security and positive safety are organized around contrasts between carceral feminist and transformative justice concepts of violence, safety, responsibility, and justice itself. The thread running through each is a difference between separation and connection. In contrast to the state's logic of carceral isolation and neoliberal individualization, transformative justice's moral imaginary frames social connection both as a *method* for survivor healing and perpetrator accountability and as the desired *outcome* – communities of liberation, care, and solidarity.

Concept	**Carceral Feminism's Negative Security**	**Transformative Justice's Positive Safety**

Violence	Gender, interpersonal violence	Intersectional: interpersonal, institutional, and state violence
Safety	Security as paternalist protection of victims from external threat	Safety as empowerment, resources for survivors
Responsibility	Individual blame & punishment, containment of danger	Individual and structural accountability and change
Justice	State as agent	Community as agent

Table 1: Contrasting principles of carceral feminism's negative security and transformative justice's positive safety

Chapter Overview

The dissertation develops a theory of positive safety as an analytic for transformative justice praxis in response to intimate violence, comparing this to the negative security logic that underlies carceral feminist approaches to violence. The dissertation unfolds this story across two halves – the first more historical, the latter more contemporary. Chapters One and Two trace various threads of feminist anti-violence activism over the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries to narrate the cooptation of anti-violence activism, the submergence of grassroots, anti-carceral approaches as a result, and the rise of the transformative justice movement as a (re)vitalization of those earlier legacies. Both of these chapters are guided by a social movement studies framework which assesses five dimensions of the movement: resources, organizational form, strategy, collective identity of participants, and framing of issues.

Chapter One, "Carceral Feminist Cooptation, or Movement Success as Failure," looks at the process of cooptation by which the anti-rape and anti-domestic violence movement of the 1970s formed an unholy alliance with the carceral state. I narrate existing accounts of carceral feminism through the five aforementioned dimensions of a social movement studies lens. I track how grassroots strategies of mutual aid gave way to legal strategies that brought

anti-violence activists into ever greater collaboration with criminal legal agencies, allowing their negative security logic to saturate the movement over time. Movement frames that analyzed rape and abuse as expressions of systemic hierarchies of power transformed into liberal rights frameworks more amenable to a law-and-order politics, adopting a negative security view of violence as individual and responsibility as punishment. An intersectional collective identity gave way to a gender essentialist analysis whose pseudo-univeralism resonated with the state's negative security framework. Organizational structures shifted from volunteer, peer-to-peer labor to non-profits with professionalized staff, leading advocates to approach survivor safety less in terms of empowerment and more in terms of paternalist protection. Maintaining organizational continuity and staff required funding, leading the movement to develop a dependency on the state for resources, depoliticizing the movement into a proxy service provider on behalf of the state.

Throughout the dissertation, I argue that cooptation serves both as a troubled origin story and a source of anxiety for transformative justice practitioners, and in this chapter, I draw on theories of cooptation developed by Coy and Hedeen (Coy and Hedeen 2005) and Kim (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019). To relink the fates of struggles against gender-based violence and race-based violence, or intimate and state violence, that were pitted against one another by cooptation, I develop the concept of *collateral repression* to understand how law and order politics coopted feminist activism from the 1970s onwards as an alibi for greater repression of Black and Brown movements through the build-up of mass incarceration. I argue that the anti-violence movement's more radical, anti-carceral, and intersectional wing split off from the mainstream and went into "abeyance" (Rupp and Taylor 1987), or a period of decline where movement activity is nourished in smaller pockets and networks of activity.

In Chapter Two, "From Emergency to Emergence: The Seeds of the Transformative Justice Movement in Communities Against Rape and Abuse," I narrate the (re)vitalization of this abeyant lineage of positive safety through the transformative justice movement, which encouraged these roots of radical, anti-carceral anti-violence organizing to bloom again. I describe this (re)vitalization through the story of one of the earliest organizations in the transformative justice tradition, Seattle's CARA, drawing on unique archival research and oral histories with former CARA members. CARA was built in the ashes of a collapsed rape crisis center, and its founders decided to discontinue the center's emergency-focused direct services in favor of an emergent strategy of "organizing community" to prevent violence "upstream" before it happened. This strategic choice emphasized a positive safety approach that centers the community, rather than the state, as the appropriate place for addressing sexual violence, and it focused on empowering survivors, rather than paternalistically protecting them. An upstream approach located the causes of violence in "rape culture" and in structures of oppression, framing sexual violence in a positive safety framework as structural (not individual), intersectional (not gender essentialist), and connected to state violence (rather than state solutions). CARA's intersectional analysis emerged from its collective identity as a group of young women of color and Black women, leading it to expand its target constituency from a one-size-fits-all "everywoman" to three marginalized constituencies of survivors: youth, the Black community, and disabled people.

Through their connections with national networks like Critical Resistance and INCITE!, CARA began to explore abolitionist concepts, which were soon tested by concrete cases of sexual harassment and violence among their membership. They built "The Safety Project" to find ways to respond without turning to the state, developing a positive safety

approach to perpetrators based on humanization and accountability rather than punishment. Through these experiments and a methodology of liberation pedagogy and "grassroots philosophy" (Bierria 2020a), they developed a practice of community accountability, which was later articulated by INCITE! as focused on four areas: structural conditions, community, survivors, and perpetrators. CARA shared their learnings in an influential chapter that spread the seeds of a positive safety framework and transformative justice analytic globally. CARA, however, could not outrun some of the challenges around organizational structure and resourcing that its predecessor organization faced, and it closed because it refused to continue to accept the strings tied to its state funding. CARA tapped the roots of anti-carceral strategies that had gone into abeyance, but it also faced the same historical challenges of the 1970s anti-violence movement, attempting to make different choices and thus avoid that movement's fate of cooptation.

Chapters Three and Four bring us into the present day of the transformative justice movement and take up the four core 'seeds' laid out in CARA and INCITE!'s early framework for positive safety. I explore these core issues - violence (structural conditions), safety (survivors), and accountability (perpetrators) - in Chapter Three. I devote all of Chapter Four to the issue of justice (community), given how central yet vague the concept of community is for the movement. Each of these themes shares a similar structure. It begins with an exploration of the negative security approach to the respective concept (such as violence or justice), followed by an immanent critique of how a carceral feminist adoption of this approach is ultimately self-defeating, enacting the opposite of what the feminist anti-violence approach intends. Then I elaborate on transformative justice alternatives which rethink and refashion the respective concept, contributing to an abolitionist theory of positive

safety. I do this by interweaving practical examples from several contemporary organizations with the theoretical implications and unresolved challenges surfaced by their practice. In addition, in Chapter Three, a hypothetical story helps the reader navigate the meandering and complex pathways someone might take through a transformative justice process.

In Chapter Three, "From the Negative Security of Carceral Feminism to the Positive Safety of Transformative Justice," I describe how CARA's seeds spread to foster many new projects and initiatives for subsequent generations. These have expanded transformative justice responses to intimate violence into communities of color and immigrant communities, disability and healing justice politics, sex worker self-organizing, as well as being applied to other forms of violence beyond gender-based harm. Of this field of blooming projects, which have spread exponentially since the BLM uprisings, I aim to distill their essence into a theory of positive safety. Here, I elaborate on my distinction between negative security and positive safety in greater detail, arguing that positive safety is organized by an overarching logic of connection in contrast to negative security's emphasis on isolation and separation.

Starting with the topic of structural conditions and violence, I compare a negative security understanding of gender-based violence as individual with a positive safety analysis that links gender-based violence with other forms of violence (like racism and ableism) as well as state violence, building on the foundational work of INCITE!. I argue that a negative security approach views the subject as autonomous and sovereign, whereas positive safety offers a theory of the self as interconnected in a web of relations of both care and oppression. Using examples from the Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse, I show that this interconnected self exceeds the simple moral binary of a powerful perpetrator and a powerless victim that operates in negative security's law-and-

order politics. One consequence of the binary is that it too easily slots victims who defend themselves but are deemed unworthy of state protection on the other side of the binary, as criminalized perpetrators. In the section on survivors and survival, I draw on Bierria's concept of "heterogeneous agencies" and the organizing work of Survived & Punished to articulate a positive safety view of survivors as agents of social change rather than helpless victims in need of forced separation from a hostile external world. In the section on perpetrators and responsibility, I describe the accountability processes for persons who cause sexual harm developed by Philly Stands Up and Support New York, understanding these as embodying a positive safety approach to responsibility that I call "giving account." While negative security's "taking account" conceptualizes responsibility in terms of quantitative debt and just deserts, giving account focuses qualitatively on repairing relations with self and others through a restorying of oneself. As is pervasive in positive safety, giving account uses interconnection as both its method (through dialogue with others that interrogates the social conditions that led to the harm) and its goal (binding perpetrators back into safe relationships with others).

In Chapter Four, I build on these positive safety understandings of the self, agency, and responsibility at the interpersonal level to imagine the political unit in which positive safety can be actualized: the community. I compare how carceral feminist discourse seeks justice through the organizational container of the state's criminal legal system, while transformative justice seeks it through the vehicle of "the community." In the vocabulary of negative security, sovereign selves are miniatures of sovereign states. Sovereignty's self-sabotaging claims to universality manifest as a social ontology of enclosure and control and an epistemology of imperial knowing organized around abstraction, reason, and objectivity.

Drawing lessons from the work of the Safe OUTside the System Collective at the Audre Lorde Project, I explore the alternative world-building of positive safety. This includes a social ontology that embraces the precarity, vulnerability, and uncertainty of the body, and an epistemology of mētis that is contextual, emergent and improvisational, embodied, and learned through practice.

In attempting to organize justice beyond the nation-state framework, however, the precarity and amorphousness of community appears more as a problem than a virtue: is it constellated around shared culture or values, location, similar structural positioning (such as racialization or gendering), biological kinship, or some combination of these? In transformative justice discourse, the figure of community swings between two poles: a romanticized unity and a catastrophic sense of difference within supposed sameness. I attempt to find a grounded middle between these two using the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective's concept of *pods* and practice of *pod-mapping*. Rape cuts across many seemingly unified communities to expose their cleavages and wounds. Thus, using it as an entry point for exercises in community allows transformative justice to build solidarity in the wreckage of relational collapse.

I turn towards the movement's future in the "Conclusion: Three Possible Movement Futures." The whirlwind of the BLM mobilizations have spread transformative justice and abolition even further into new contexts, but this popularity brings the movement face to face with the questions of cooptation and power that shaped its emergence nearly twenty five years ago. Cooptation becomes the conceptual book-ends of this dissertation, offering a non-linear and cyclical understanding of movement temporality where histories recur as an opportunity to teach futures. I argue that these futures must return to the past to face their

unresolved ghosts – particularly the challenge of (re)vitalizing organizational structures and resources without being beholden to the carceral state and its proxy (the non-profit industrial complex), a challenge which CARA was not able to resolve.

"Keep TJ Wild," the first future, represents a continuation of how transformative justice was largely organized until 2020 – as a fugitive, anarchist, interstitial project building an alternative way of being and knowing that is ungovernable by state or capital. This pre-figurative work manifests in mutual aid and direct action by volunteers in low or no hierarchy organizations, but it typically lacks the organizational structure and resources to reach a larger constituency. On the other hand, a "Scale Up/State Power" future aims to reach that constituency by going through the state, which it believes is the only institution with the scale to truly make transformative justice accessible to all. This could be a "symbiotic" reformist or a "ruptural" revolutionary project, or more likely, a combination of both through the concept of "abolitionist reforms" that would democratize and reclaim the state and capital for the people. Subsuming transformative justice organization and resources under a centralized entity that is connected (directly or indirectly) to the state may, however, prove to be a repetition of the compulsion towards cooptation.

The third future, which I argue is already underway in organizations like API Chaya and Interrupting Criminalization, navigates between the challenges posed by the other two possibilities. "Scaling Out" (rather than up) does not fully resolve organizational structure or resource questions, but it does approach them in creative ways. It imagines long-term growth, thus recognizing the necessity of Scale Up/State Power's approach to scale and addressing a Keep TJ Wild's obstacle of smallness. Yet it imagines this scale as rhizomatic growth, thus recognizing the necessity of Keep TJ Wild's focus on decentralization and addressing Scale

Up/State Power's obstacle of institutional and bureaucratic inertia. By focusing on rhizomatically spreading transformative justice skills to everyday people, it maintains the Keep TJ Wild vision of mass participation through volunteer labor. It also creatively leverages multiple funding streams (philanthropic, state, and revenue) to resource people to develop those skills, addressing the need for resourced expertise without capturing that expertise into credentialed professionalization. Time will tell if these rhizomatic futures achieve their goal.

What We Stand to Learn from a Theory of Transformative Justice

This dissertation is a story about praxis, the interplay of ideas (principles, imagination, critique, and utopianism) and practices (choices, concrete material conditions, path-dependent histories, exercises of agency). It is a story of how ideas emerge out of practices and loop back to inform them, dialectically, in the context of social movements. The dissertation bears witness to the revolutionary potential of that dialectical relationship – how utopian aspirations maneuver their way through dystopian everyday circumstances and how some of the most powerful ideas come from those who are closest to practice and closest to the problems they are trying to transform. There are, however, dangers in the relationship between principle and practice, as the dissertation narrates: well-intentioned ideas can become distorted by coopted practices and the compromises forced by material conditions, and some ideas, when implemented into practice, turn out to undermine their own original intentions.

As transformative justice and abolition grow in popularity as concepts, they have expanded beyond specific issue areas (e.g. sexual violence, police violence) to signify an ethos, a worldview. Their potential relevance extends beyond the specific concerns of the movements that birthed it, and yet grounding these ideas back in their unique history and originary practices as the dissertation attempts to do can illuminate clearer contours to this emergent, contested worldview.

I have structured this dissertation as a set of contrasts, which presumes static and consistent entities. In reality, carceral feminism and transformative justice are intended here as heuristics and ideal types, with the understanding that many groups and individuals find themselves somewhere along a spectrum between these two. Moreover, the model of transformative justice I put forward in this work aims to question binaries and refashion them with more complex and interdependent models. This makes my methodology that builds clarity through contrast slippery at best, and problematic at worst.

Transformative justice is generally not organized around antagonism and the politics of the anti (anti-racism, anti-fascism, anti-sexism), or a set of polarities at war with one another. The figure of transformation in a transformative justice politics appears to be a form of turning, a movement, an arduous pathway from one arrangement of social, community, or internal forces to another with many switchbacks and setbacks (for example, from causing harm to repairing it, from mass incarceration to defunding the police). The transformation from the old world to a new one is a process driven by forces more complex than simple antagonism. Transformative justice as a term names not just a vision for a utopian future but a method and set of skills for the long slow turning away from death-making systems and towards life-giving ones.

Immanent critique shows us contradiction: how something holds its opposite within it. The fact that carceral feminism engenders the antithesis of what it intends could teach readers a lesson in purity, leading them on a search for an approach with no risk of contradiction, cooptation, or unintended consequence. In fact, accusations of "carceral feminism" are a handy tool for a politics of moral hygiene in public discourse. Contrary to this usage, however, the practitioners I spoke to affirmed for me the intuition that this search is fruitless: there is no idea or practice that is uncooptable or free of contradiction. Acknowledging that every concept contains its opposite can help us move beyond a binary language for understanding social movements.

Thus, we are invited to consider that the crisis fomented by contradiction can be a resource. Indeed, one puzzle of the transformative justice movement is why its seeds germinated in the particular setting of intimate violence, rather than a form of violence that might be less catastrophic, like low-level conflict. Perhaps because of this original setting, the crisis of sexual violence – its violation of boundaries and injury to self – has become an impetus for the counterintuitive: for opening towards interdependency at the precise moment when social relations have wounded and for seeing social connection as a resource at the moment when it appears most dangerous.

Chapter One:
Carceral Feminist Cooptation, or Movement Success as Failure[1]

The carceral feminist "common sense" that criminalization is the best protection against gender-based violence was not a given, but it was rather the outcome of a contentious process between movements and the state, one that was contingent and not historically inevitable. Early transformative justice activists inherited the outcomes of this process: a depoliticized anti-violence movement that was focused on service provision and siloed from other progressive and leftist causes. Seeking change, these activists tried to historicize their moment, find explanations for how they had gotten here, and unearth submerged legacies of struggle against gender-based violence that rejected the logic of negative security. As a result, early innovators within the transformative justice and abolitionist movements, like the national network INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence, were central in diagnosing and critiquing carceral feminism's distortions of the anti-violence project (even if they did not use the terminology of 'carceral feminism' at the time).

Similarly, for us to understand the emergence of the transformative justice movement as a praxis of positive safety, it is necessary to scroll back in time to understand the lineages the movement draws upon, as well as the material conditions and ideological formations it critiques. The latter include both those of clearer-cut "enemies" like the neoliberal carceral state, as well as more complex "frenemies" (Whittier 2018) like an anti-violence movement

[1] Title phrase 'success as failure' is drawn from Rose Corrigan's book title, *Up Against the Wall: Rape Reform and the Failure of Success* (Corrigan 2013).

dominated by carceral feminism. While the negative security of the sheriff's office may be easier to identify and rebut, that of the Family Justice Center – embodying carceral feminism's marriage between the criminal legal system and the anti-violence movement – proves a more complex figure of critique. One source of this complexity is the distinct irony in how carceral feminist approaches to gender-based violence advocate for policies that, upon closer inspection, undermine their own goals by exposing women to greater violence. Another source of complexity is the way that carceral feminist approaches blend both left and right-wing political logics, cloaking a conservative philosophy of negative security in the seductive liberal language of protection for marginalized groups. Moreover, there is moral complexity in the fact that many of the feminist movement actors who embraced negative security logics and sowed the seeds for the ascendance of a carceral feminist politics were often acting with good intentions and even radical politics, but they were doing so in high stress, low resource situations with few alternatives.

To understand how negative security ultimately came to saturate the anti-violence movement, prompting these complexities and paradoxes, one must understand carceral feminism as the outcome of processes of contention between the state and the feminist movement (among other actors in the political field like the anti-racist and victims' rights movements), as well as contention within the feminist movement itself. I start the chapter with a brief overview of this process of cooptation. Drawing on that, I offer a framework for understanding cooptation across five dimensions of the anti-violence movement: strategy, collective identity, ideology and framing, organizational form, and resourcing. Each was transformed by the influence of a more powerful partner, in this case, the criminal legal system.

Through a review of existing literature and particularly close engagement with the work of transformative justice scholar and practitioner Mimi E. Kim, I then narrate the process of cooptation through the framework of these five movement-centric dimensions. In strategy, feminist activists attempted to change the criminal legal system, but it ended up making them into collaborators with law enforcement. In terms of ideology, framings of rape and abuse as being caused by structural power faded to either gender essentialism or individual crime as causal explanations. This was because a liberal individual rights framework better fit the negative security logic of the movement's criminal legal system collaborators. The underlying negative security approach of these collaborators seeped into the movement, influencing it to understand violence narrowly as crime, and responsibility is framed in terms of individual liability and punishment, seeped into the movement. While many anti-violence activists had an intersectional understanding of gender-based violence, white women's anxieties led them to paper over differences with a gender essentialist "everywoman analysis" (Richie 2012), whose universalization of rape and abuse to all women erased intersectional differences but appealed to the liberal legalism of the courts. In terms of organizational structure, as strategies of mutual aid gave way to service provision, organizations transformed from volunteer run groups into non-profits. Collective identity shifted as professionals were more likely to treat survivors as clients, rather than as peers and fellow activists, leading to the adoption of negative security approaches that equated safety with the state's paternalist protection and physical separation from abusers. Finally, these additional legal, policy, and legislative strategies opened government funding streams, resources which entrenched the movement not just ideologically and organizationally, but

also materially in the state, upholding the state's legitimacy as an adjudicator of gender-based violence, a key feature of negative security.

Political science and social movement research suggests that the state has two options when confronting successful movements: cooptation or repression.(Backes and Kailitz 2016; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor 2014) In the case of carceral feminism, I claim that the anti-violence movement was coopted *into* the state's repression of activism for Black and Brown liberation through the "frontlash" (Weaver 2007) of criminalization and mass incarceration. I call this phenomenon *collateral repression*, in which the state offered cooptation to gendered movement actors by pitting them against racialized movement actors, leading to the anti-violence movement's "whitewashing," or centering of white identities and experiences. I argue that this cooptation pushed the alternative, non-carceral approaches that did exist into "abeyance" (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989), surviving times of political opposition within quieter "submerged networks" (Melucci 1989) as neoliberalism ascended to power in the 1980s and 1990s. These subaltern lineages of the more radical, intersectional, and grassroots wings of the anti-violence movement were later (re)vitalized by the transformative justice and community accountability movement in the early 2000s. This (re)vitalization, I argue in the next chapter, took place along the same five movement-centric dimensions, with transformative justice activists attempting to (re)vitalize elements of the original grassroots approaches in each of these areas.

How Did We Get Here? Cooptation of the Anti-Violence Movement

The irony of well-intentioned reformers actually bolstering the institution they aim to change appears often in the history of the prison. Histories of the prison document the formative role of humanist social movements in the 19th and early 20th century in the formation of modern carceral systems of discipline, surveillance, and social control. The Quakers, women reformers, temperance, and social purity movements all unwittingly contributed to the modern prison in their attempts to reform older forms of punishment (Foucault 1995; Gottschalk 2006). This system evolved into mass incarceration in the 1970s, and political scientist Marie Gottschalk identifies the women's movement as one of its unexpected handmaidens. She posits an explicit causal relationship: "The contemporary women's movement in the United States helped facilitate the carceral state" (Gottschalk 2006:115).

Both of these developments, feminism and mass incarceration, emerged out of the ashes of the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left of the decade prior. On the one hand, President Richard Nixon cemented a law-and-order "frontlash" (Weaver 2007) against radical anti-racist and decolonial activists of the 1960s by reframing them as criminals and their resistance as urban and familial disorder, thus "individualizing disorder" as Allen Feldman describes it (Feldman 1991). Public anxiety about crime thus became an alibi for policing communities of color and repressing their dissent (Oliver 2008). On the other hand, the anti-violence movement emerged as a phoenix out of that fire, part of a broader women's movement inspired by the identity-based liberation dimensions of the Civil Rights Movement (Corrigan 2013:7). At the same time, the women's movement was critical of the sexism in the Civil Rights Movement, as well as in the New Left more broadly. Women politicized in

those earlier struggles began grassroots consciousness-raising sessions, surfacing previously unproblematized experiences of sexual coercion and violence in their homes and communities.

Self-organized women's shelters and crisis hotlines were created and later evolved into anti-rape and battered women's organizations, part of a broader anti-violence movement [or sector, as this movement has largely been subsumed into non-profit service provision; see (Johnson 1981)]. In the early days, grassroots activists prioritized direct service provision via alternative women's spaces run informally out of people's homes or makeshift spaces within other institutions. These groups prioritized friendship norms and equality (Matthews 1994), and volunteers often identified as survivors themselves. They emphasized survivor empowerment and peer support. Political organizing through guerilla direct action was also central to these early movements, including speak outs, protests, and boycotts to gain visibility for issues of violence against women. Some activists took the responsibility to protect survivors into their own hands, forming anti-rape squads who used "physical resistance and extrajudicial retaliation" (Jacquet 2016) against perpetrators. Others focused on holding institutions accountable for protecting women. Early targets of these organizations were hospitals and police, critiqued for their negligence and failure to protect survivors. This early approach exhibited some elements of the logic of positive safety articulated later by the transformative justice movement, namely, a systematic rather than individualistic analysis of rape and abuse, as well as a focus on survivor empowerment.

At an organizational level, hotline and shelter services were difficult to run on a volunteer only basis, leading to constant struggles for funding, prompting a shift from volunteer resources to state and private foundation funding (Maier 2011; Peterson 1999).

Over time, these new funding sources pressured organizations to conform to bureaucratic standards of professionalization, credentialing, and documentation in order to receive grants (Goodmark 2011; Matthews 1994). As paid positions were created, widening hierarchies (bolstered by race and class) developed between trained professionals and volunteers, as well as between those professionals and the survivors they supported. Democratic decision-making was replaced by professional non-profit bureaucracy, and survivors were increasingly perceived in a pathologizing and patronizing manner as clients, rather than fellow community members and/or activists.

At a movement-wide level, the initial success of antagonism towards police and hospitals gave way to legal and legislative victories, subsequently paving the way for institutionalization (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019) that brought the movement into the fold of statecraft, in what has been called "governance feminism" (Halley 2006). In this process of what Kim understands as cooptation (Kim 2014), feminist organizations were unintentionally drawn deeper into collaborative relationships with the state, and law enforcement in particular (Lehrner and Allen 2009; Matthews 1994). As the party with less power in those partnerships, anti-violence activists were under enormous pressure to make compromises in order to receive the funding they needed to survive. Through these compromises, a logic of negative security began to take hold in the movement, for example, through its focus on the blame and punishment of individual perpetrators, rather than the transformation of larger systems, and a dependence on the paternalist protection of the sovereign state. Some critical voices in the movement drew parallels between dependency on a patriarchal state and battered women's dependency on their abusive husbands (Klein 1977:2). Others, however, believed collaboration could bring about tangible improvements for survivors and give

activists a place at the policy-making table. On the other side of these collaborations, state agents like law-and-order politicians instrumentalized anti-violence activism to fuel a pro-criminalization victims' rights agenda that laid the groundwork for the buildup of the "prison nation" (Richie 2012). The image of the battered or raped woman became a powerful affective tool for stirring up moral panic about crime (Gruber 2007). Some opportunistic movement actors took advantage of the "discursive opportunity structure" (Koopmans and Statham 1999) of crime control discourse, while others arrived there out of a lack of other options.

After years of struggling for funding and institutional status, many hailed the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 as a milestone in state recognition and resource provision to end gender-based violence. Yet VAWA was part of an omnibus crime bill that expanded the federal punitive powers of the carceral state. It appears as a contradictory success and failure. As Nancy Whittier details in her analysis of Congressional VAWA hearings, the anti-violence sector strategically packaged their advocacy for the bill in a wider crime control frame that had broader resonance in the discursive opportunity structure of the time (Whittier 2016). Activists adopted dominant discourses that framed sexual violence as a law-and-order issue and victims' rights issue (rather than one of political and social power) as part of an individual rights-based liberal master frame (Ferraro 1996; Gottschalk 2006; Richie 2012). In this way, a logic of negative security over time came to saturate the anti-violence field.

Unpacking Five Movement-Internal Dimensions of Cooptation

From this briefly summarized history, I conclude that cooptation happened along five movement-centric dimensions, as described in Table Three: movement strategies, resources, organizational forms, framing, and collective identity/participants. On the left side, the table captures the starting points of the anti-violence movement, anchored in features of a logic of positive safety, across these five dimensions. In the right column, it describes the end points of the movement, now saturated by a negative security logic after a process of cooptation. I use this five-dimension framework to review the existing literature on carceral feminist cooptation of the anti-violence movement, tracing the emergence of negative security across each of these dimensions. While many historians and feminist scholars have narrated parts of this movement history, a smaller but growing number of researchers over the last two decades have examined more precisely how and why cooptation took place. While this section proceeds sequentially through each dimension of anti-violence organizing, I assume that all these processes interact in a multicausal way, with no single dimension serving as the root cause or driver of cooptation.

	Early Anti-violence Movement	**Carceral Feminism**	**Element of Negative Security Introduced Through Cooptation**
Framing + Ideology	Systemic power as root of gendered violence	Gender essentialism ("everywoman analysis") or individual crime as root of gendered violence	Narrow understanding of violence
Collective Identity + Participants	Intersectional analysis with strategic, limited use of "everywoman" universalism aimed to	"Everywoman analysis" erased differences, concealing its	Liberal legalism: universalism of individual rights and equality

	bridge differences	particular focus: white middle class women	
Strategy	Mutual aid and direct action in antagonism towards state (hospitals, police)	Legal and policy strategies led to collaboration with law enforcement and sometimes conservatives	Responsibility as individual liability and punishment in criminal legal framework
Organizational Form	Self-organized, non-hierarchical	Professionalized, hierarchical, non-profits	Safety as paternalist protection and separation
Resources	Volunteers, survivor/peer-led	State and private foundation funding	Legitimacy of state sovereignty in addressing violence

Table 2: Five movement-centric dimensions of carceral feminist cooptation

I focus on movement internal dimensions rather than external ones, in alignment with my goal in this dissertation to contribute to an analysis of the dynamics of social movements. These dimensions also tend to be of most interest to activists themselves, since they are among the few over which activists have any measure of agency or control. For example, in the next chapter, I detail how in the early 2000s the activists who built Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) out of the ashes of a carceral feminist service provider, intentionally changed these movement-internal dimensions when designing their new organization. They critiqued the coopted methods of carceral feminism and (re)vitalized these five dimensions of grassroots approaches, laying the foundation for what eventually became the transformative justice movement.

Despite my chosen focus, it would be a mistake to attribute causal responsibility for cooptation primarily or solely to movement internal dynamics; such a unicausal analysis would overestimate activist agency. In reality, these internal anti-violence movement

dynamics interacted with adjacent or opposing movements in the political ecosystem, like the Civil Rights Movement and Black and Brown power movements, as well as the conservative victims' rights movement, which all had their own internal movement dynamics. Further, these dynamics also interacted with larger external structural and political factors, like the characteristics of the U.S. state. As an example of movement external narration, Kristin Bumiller's (Bumiller 2008) early account of cooptation focuses largely on movement external factors, such as neoliberal social policies, pop cultural representations of rape, media discourse on high-profile rape cases, and opportunistic politicians. Between these two extremes of focus and causal attribution (i.e. movement internal and external), scholars like Gottschalk, Kim, Beth Richie, and Nancy Whittier find middle ground with nuanced interrogations of the interface between movement-internal and external explanations for cooptation.

Framing + Ideology

The constellated ideas and beliefs at the core of negative security focus on isolation and individualization (of harm, harm-doer, and harm receiver) rather than on social connection. This ideology draws upon liberal political theory that emphasizes individual rights within the state; thus, it appealed to liberal reformists within the anti-violence movement. Richie offered one of the earliest scholarly explanations of the anti-violence movement's cooptation in *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* (Richie 2012). Her account focuses largely on framing and ideology. She analyzes how the anti-violence movement has failed to address Black women's needs due to ideological splintering into reformist and radical camps, with the reformists winning the day and institutionalizing their gains.

For Richie, the early grassroots and self-help phase of the movement lifted up gender as a universalizing category for understanding sexual and domestic violence in order to politicize the private. This was the beginning of an "everywoman analysis" (Richie 2012:90) that emphasized that violence could happen to any woman, regardless of race, region, sexual orientation, or age. Strategically, this analysis deracialized violence against women by universalizing it, while also appealing to sympathetic elites by explaining that violence was also their issue. As the movement built up shelters and services, more dimensions of the intersectional, multi-faceted nature of women's oppression came into view, but gender remained the dominant framework through which to understand rape and abuse.

A phase of coalition-building from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s exposed the ideological schism between radical feminists, who used an analysis of power to fight for structural change, and liberal feminists, who used a rights framework to aspire to institutional reform. Radical and socialist feminists fought for issues like "a guaranteed minimum annual wage, broad-based changes in our economic system, revaluing women's work, and elimination of male privilege within the family […] goals which have no language within the system of criminal law" (Ferraro 1996). In the conservative and victims' rights climates of the time, however, the liberal reformist wing prevailed in popularity and success, and with it, white, professional managerial class norms of hierarchy, formal education, and professionalization overtook previously democratic, self-organized service provision, part of the growing non-profit-industrial complex (INCITE! 2007). This shift was accompanied by legal and legislative reforms, such as VAWA, cementing the frame of sexual and domestic violence as crime. As this frame diffused into public consciousness and was reinforced by academic research made possible by the funding streams opened by VAWA, a radical

analysis of power and any subversive use of the everywoman analysis originally intended by activists were lost.

The universalism of the everywoman trope masked the particular women on which it now based its model of services and advocacy: white, middle- and upper-class women. It became "'every woman' as opposed to *all* women" (Richie 2012:90). As I argue in Chapter Four of this dissertation, a key feature of negative security is the frame of universalism with regards to equal protection and rights under the law, as backed up by a sovereign nation-state. This putative universalism, which conceals the particular standpoints and identities of its investments, undermines its own promise of fairness and certainty. The liberal orientation of some feminists toward equality and rights made them more amenable than radical feminists to this negative security framework.

Richie (Richie 2012) uses nuanced language around cooptation that does not reduce it to any one factor, deploying terms that attribute intentionality and responsibility to feminist movement actors (‘complacent,’ ‘uncritical’), as well as terms that reflect actors' subjection to external forces (‘externally imposed,’ ‘unintended’). Gottschalk’s account (Gottschalk 2006) similarly combines both institutional (i.e. movement-external) and ideological (i.e. movement-internal) variables, and she compares the fate of the U.S. women’s movement to those in the U.K., Germany, and Sweden, where they did not adopt carceral feminist frameworks. Gottschalk finds that the U.S. feminist movement had weaker socialist and Marxist traditions than its European counterparts, leading to greater ideological diversity. For Gottschalk, this ideological flexibility made the movement more available for compromise and cooptation, and, I would argue, more open to logics of negative security. In the U.S. this diversity of ideology (movement-internal) interacted with a state that was more permeable

than those in Europe (movement-external), including a law enforcement branch more receptive to public opinion and shifts in political weather, which are external factors that enabled closer cooperation between the movement and the criminal legal system.

Collective Identity + Participants

Why were certain factions of the movement so attached to the everywoman analysis, whose underlying universalism made it amenable to a negative security logic? It would be easy to attribute this to the predominance of white women in the movement (Matthews 1989:518–32). Indeed, some facile critiques of carceral feminism portray it as an outgrowth of "whitestream" (Grande 2003) feminism. On this view, cooptation is primarily a collective identity problem caused by white feminists who ally themselves with white liberalism and sacrifice solidarity to women and queer people marginalized along other axes like race, disability, religion, and class. This account has resonated particularly in the Trump era where a majority of white women voted against their gender interests in favor of racist, xenophobic, and nationalist interests.

Kim offers a more nuanced look at the role of whiteness in the development of carceral feminism. Kim's research is the most extensive scholarly account of carceral feminist cooptation of the anti-violence movement in the 1970s and 80s, based on archival and interview research about the institutionalization of the anti-domestic violence movement in California and Minnesota from 1973 to 1986. Kim examines four interlocking themes in the movement, finding that it had frames that were both anti-carceral and carceral, but carceral outcomes triumphed in the end.

One of these themes is the movement's analysis of race. In the early anti-domestic violence movement, Kim found a curious mix: a progressive analysis of race and class at the

ideological level, but "unresolved race, class, and regional tensions" (Kim 2014:41) at the affective level between activists. This was the ambivalent "inheritance of the Civil Rights Movement and New Left" (Kim 2014:32): a progressive analysis but a failure to form meaningful relationships of solidarity across class and race lines. This left white women in the anti-violence movement with anxieties about race. Fearful of addressing substantive differences between women, they covered over these anxieties with the gender essentialist everywoman approach, intended to focus on commonalities between women but effectively erasing difference and gender's entanglement in interlocking systems of power like race, class, and disability, among others.

Moreover, the everywoman analysis easily fit into the negative security logic of the courts because of its focus on universalist rights and equality, and for this reason, even women of color sometimes chose to use it strategically. This complicates a simplistic story in which a specific ideology (like the everywoman analysis) is attached exclusively to a specific identity (like white women), suggesting instead that ideologies circulate between several differently positioned social movement actors. Kim shares the story of the class action lawsuit *Scott vs Hart* brought in 1976 by Legal Aid lawyers against Oakland's Police Department and the City of Oakland for failure to protect survivors of domestic violence (Kim 2014:59–61). For years, the Oakland Police Department had a policy of avoiding domestic violence arrests and sending survivors to Legal Aid to address domestic violence as a civil matter, with Legal Aid sending them back and insisting that violence was a criminal issue. After one of their own office administrators showed up covered in bruises from an abusive husband, Legal Aid finally decided to end this ping-pong and press charges against the police and the city. The lawyers, themselves Black and Asian women, developed a legal

strategy based on the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1871 for discrimination based on gender, race, and class, since all the plaintiffs of the case were Black women. The lawyers suspected that the police's refusal to act against domestic violence was rooted in racial bias.

When the case brought Legal Aid more attention, however, white wealthy women began calling with similar complaints of the police refusing them protection. Eventually, the Legal Aid lawyers shifted gears in their legal approach to focus on gender alone, because they believed the legal framework of the Equal Protection Clause would be easier to leverage against one form of discrimination, rather than many intersectional ones. In the legal and political climate of the time, the everywoman analysis became the most strategic approach, even for women of color with an intersectional analysis. In narrowing the view of violence from complex, intersectional systems to single-axis ones like gender in order to be more legible to the courts, the movement succeeded in winning recognition from the courts in the short term, but long-term it made itself more available to a negative security logic with a narrow understanding of violence.

Strategy

Movement frames and ideology motivate a set of strategies, a theory of change for how the movement will succeed. Often strategic choices become path dependent, opening and foreclosing subsequent strategic choices further down the road. For example, in her study of Los Angeles rape crisis centers, Nancy Matthews views the early strategic decision to provide mutual aid to survivors as a driver for subsequent developments (Matthews 1994). It put a heavy burden of labor on volunteers which pushed organizations to seek sustainable resources, leading to subsequent transformations in strategy, organization, and framing. On

the other side of the continuum from grassroots mutual aid through hotlines and shelters, there arose advocacy and policy organizations. These organizations developed new strategies of direct contestation of the state. The success of these strategies ironically led them to closer and closer collaboration with the criminal legal system and infiltration by its logics of negative security that could only see gender-based violence in terms of crime.

Kim (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019) examines three early strategy innovations by anti-domestic violence advocates: litigation, victim-witness protection programs, and mandatory arrest policies. These were intended to pressure the police to take sexual and domestic violence more seriously and respond more consistently and aggressively. In the previous section, I discuss innovative litigation, using the example of Legal Aid lawyers in Oakland leveraging litigation to sue the city and the police department. While that section focused on the issue of race, I also want to highlight the strategic implications of using law and the courts for advancing an anti-violence agenda. Ellen Pence, founder of the Duluth Model in Minnesota shared the following with Kim:

> The reason why we focused in on the criminal justice system was not because it was the biggest one [institution] to do, but because it was the *easiest*. One of the reasons is that they were public agencies so you had a way to confront them. Who's the agency to go to in terms of medical institutions, faith communities? There wasn't a vehicle for confrontation – especially with the history of the confrontation of the law. The Civil Rights Movement was a model for confrontation of the law. And the women's movement followed that strategy, saying that the system of protection should protect us, too. (Kim 2019:13)

Kim historicizes this choice for legal strategy on the part of the women's movement as part of its inheritance of the strategies (as well as the political opportunities and legal infrastructure) made available by the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement made particularly good use of the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection clause in cases like *Brown vs Board of Education* and *Loving vs. Virginia*, the same clause that Oakland Legal

Aid attorneys drew upon for their case. The Civil Rights Movement saw law as a primary motor for social change, a "left legalism" (Brown and Halley 2002) which has been critiqued for its shortsightedness by Kimberlé Crenshaw and other critical race theorists [see for example (Crenshaw 1988)]. By adopting Civil Rights strategies, feminists centered litigation through the courts, a choice which proved to be "easy" and therefore successful, as Pence suggested. Yet at the same time, it also further entrenched the criminal legal system and its negative security logic of liability, blame, and punishment in feminist movement approaches.

Kim's (Kim 2015, 2019) second example was the development of a victim-witness protection program in San Francisco by the Coalition for Justice for Battered Women, a group of advocates grounded less in outsider grassroots mutual aid and more in insider government politics through their participation in previous projects like the local Commission on the Status of Women. They worked with the San Francisco District Attorney to set up a Family Violence Project within the District Attorney's office to provide the nation's first ever witness protection program specifically for domestic violence survivors. This enabled greater rates of prosecution and success, since the witness protection program made victims more willing to cooperate with prosecutors.

Kim describes a third strategic inheritance of the Civil Rights Movement that shaped the women's movement: ambivalence about the role of police. The Civil Rights movement had often called for federal police to protect protestors from violent local police in the Jim Crow South. As a result, the Civil Rights strategy that the anti-violence movement imported held two contradictory frames around policing: one, local police were violent, and, two, federal police intervention was a form of necessary protection. In this mix of positions both

critical and celebratory of policing, celebratory voices won out and legitimated collaboration with law enforcement.

In the Bay Area, the activists from the Coalition for Justice for Battered Women were interested in large-scale systems change, but they saw the best strategy for that change as one of *infiltration*, whereby feminist actors embed themselves within the state to advocate for transformation. This was part of an intentional insider-outsider strategy, whereby the Coalition remained a "radical flank" (Freeman 1975) and agitators who could put external pressure on the district attorney's office in conjunction with their insider infiltrators at the Family Violence Project. Over time, however, this secretive oppositional relationship softened into authentic collaboration, as Family Violence Project members collaborated with police on writing local police protocols for addressing domestic violence and eventually offered mandated trainings to police on domestic violence. Eventually, the advocates fully adopted the negative security logic of their law enforcement collaborators, who understood gender-based violence as crime and the necessary response as crime control.

Lastly, Kim looks at an institutional advocacy model which led to one of the country's first mandatory arrest policies. Pence from Minnesota used a state-wide grant to set up a Community Coordinated Response (CCR) that created a web of coordination between the services provided by battered women's shelters and the criminal responses of law enforcement. In this way, I argue that the model integrated two different strategic tendencies within the movement, both mutual aid focused on survivors and legal/policy approaches focused on perpetrators and their enabling patriarchal systems. Kim describes this as a form of *coordination,* whereby a partnership between anti-violence advocates and the state was subversively led by those advocates. A year after its creation, the CCR pushed for mandatory

rather than discretionary arrest policies for domestic violence.[2] The negative security logic that had narrowed the movement's view of rape and abuse from an intersectional analysis to a single axis focus on gender further constricted the movement's focus. While the Legal Aid case had addressed structural issues through collective rights-based litigation, the use of legal strategies brought an ascendance of negative security logics of crime that ultimately narrowed the frame of response even further to a focus on individual criminal prosecution of perpetrators.

The anti-violence movement embraced a strategy of collaboration not only with law enforcement but with other contemporary movements, for example, entering into ambivalent and "unsavory coalitions" (Whittier 2018:131) with the victims' rights and conservative law-and-order movements. Whittier disagrees with the use of 'coalition' in the latter case. She prefers the term 'frenemy' to describe relationships between ideologically opposing groups which are not properly captured by the concept of a coalition (Whittier 2018). She analyzes three cases of frenemy relationships between feminists and conservatives: anti-pornography campaigns, child sexual abuse legislation, and VAWA. Whereas coalitions involve some minimum form of collaboration, these frenemies lack deliberate collaboration but may be connected on other ways, for instance, "through a shared goal, interaction behind the scenes, subscribing to a politically neutral identity or frame, or targeting the same state actors" (Whittier 2018:197).

[2] The racial motivations for this are noteworthy: this policy aimed to increase arrest rates for white abusers in the majority white city of Duluth, and thus "equalize" the racially disproportionate arrest rates that were falling heaviest on Native American men (Kim 2014:56–61). With the benefits of hindsight, an abolitionist and transformative justice perspective might argue that this was a misunderstanding of the depths of racism in the U.S. criminal legal system, and it revealed an assumption that race and crime could be separated as analytic categories.

The short-term successes won through these anti-violence strategies became the conditions for future failure, as movement wins then institutionalized the movement in collaboration with the criminal legal system and curbed its own contestatory power. As Kim writes, "Embedded in the dynamics of contention were the conditions for its negation" (Kim 2014:62). None of these strategies built enough independent power for the anti-violence movement, leaving it the weaker partner in its collaborations with the state and with conservatives. While both the infiltration strategy in San Francisco and the subversive advocate leadership in the coordination strategy in Duluth attempted to outwit more powerful players, they both ultimately failed to win the upper hand. Whittier and Kim agree: "The more powerful participant has more influence on the outcome" (Whittier 2018:200), leading to what Kim calls a "dance" (Kim 2015) where masculinized state agents take the lead. This power differential meant that the negative security logic of the law came to dominate the dance, leaving infiltrators themselves infiltrated by crime control rhetoric.

Organizational Forms

One of the ways that the logics of negative security cemented themselves within the anti-violence movement was not only through discourse but also in everyday practices made routine by the movement's organizational containers. There are two primary organizational containers to consider, which parallel the movement's two strategies: shelters and hotlines, and advocacy organizations at state and national levels.

The first container is the grassroots battered women's and rape crisis hotlines and shelters which provided direct mutual aid by and for survivors (which were largely founded before other organizational containers). Eventually, in part through the funding streams opened by the second group of organizations, these grassroots groups began to experience

pressure to conform to state standards in order to receive grant funds. Over time, they began to restructure as non-profits (Bierria 2007), creating a layer of hierarchy of paid staff and minimizing the role of volunteer membership (Maier 2011). These staff members often needed credentialing and professional training, allowing this organizational hierarchy to amplify existing structural hierarchies around access to education along lines of class, race, disability, and more. With professional training often came professional *habitus*, treating survivors as clients rather than comrades. It resulted in greater pathologization and condescension towards survivors, who were increasingly treated as passive recipients of services rather than fellow movement activists engaged in mutual aid. This made way for the negative security logic of paternalist protection rather than empowerment, and it built in the assumption that safety required physical separation from one's partner and often one's community rather than the support of community connections. One case study of a domestic violence organization found that organizational repertoires (like the advocate training program and channels for advocates to share their grievances about law enforcement interventions directly with the police) interactionally reproduce collaboration with the criminal legal system and deny advocates knowledge of alternative responses (Weiss 2020).

The second organizational container (Kim 2014:53) is the network of advocacy organizations, like the previously discussed Family Violence Project and CCR, which formed around those hotlines and shelters with a focus on structural change, including state and national coalitions. This group also interacted with a broader field of feminist policy

organizations[3] whose national coordination and elite leadership were the result of early involvement in state and federal commissions (Freeman 1973; Gottschalk 2006:123). Their experiences made this latter container much more open to the state and comfortable with an insider advocacy strategy. Although formed with the contestation strategies of litigation, infiltration, and subversive coordination, over time these anti-domestic violence advocacy and policy organizations morphed into collaboration through what Kim calls a "carceral creep" (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019). This yielded a "hybridization of civil society with the carceral state" (Kim 2015:21) in new institutions like Family Justice Centers, housing both anti-violence advocates and prosecutors in one building for integrated services. This organizational embeddedness in the state, even physically sharing the same spaces as state agencies, made these organizations much more vulnerable to the negative security logic of their law enforcement neighbors. Paradoxically, they came to pursue structural change through a focus on individual crime.

Resources

Shifts across all five of these movement-centric dimensions were interlocking, making it difficult to identify chains of causality and to identify one of these dimensions as primary. Among the many early tactics of the anti-rape and, later, battered women's movements, providing direct services to survivors became a priority. The first hotlines and shelters were run out of activists' own homes, with rent covered by the activists or sometimes through welfare benefits and even bake sales (Anon 1977:6). Other centers were formed by professionals and housed within their existing organizations, such as the YWCA, an early

[3] Kim divides these up into three major categories of organization, differentiating between advocacy organizations and national policy organizations (Kim 2014:53–54). I've reduced them to two for clarity of argumentation.

supporter of rape crisis work (Matthews 1994). These services were largely self-managed by volunteers out of necessity. But as Matthews points out, the autonomy of this do-it-yourself ethic also reproduces social norms of women's reproductive labor going unpaid, and it served as a supplement for the state's austerity and welfare retrenchment. She writes, "Feminist ideology becomes an unwitting ally of the state's push toward privatization, relying on women's nurturing work to take up the slack as it defunds social services" (Matthews 1994:84). The "shadow state" non-profit sector (Gilmore 2007b) that this public austerity helped create was later described by abolition feminist thinkers INCITE! as "the non-profit industrial complex" (INCITE! 2007).

Funding became the most existential worry of these nascent organizations. For organizations like the D.C. Rape Crisis Center, securing funding was also necessary for diversifying the movement and centering women of color in paid leadership positions (Thuma 2019). That strategy was successful to some degree, as the D.C. center became the first African-American run rape crisis center in the country, led by renowned activist Loretta Ross. Movement activists considered various government sources for funding including mental health, anti-poverty/community organizing, social services, and criminal justice (Kim 2014). All these sources were viewed with suspicion and debated by activists.

Feminist activists who prioritized women's self-determination were skeptical of accepting mental health funding, fearful it would individualize rape as pathology and subject survivors to forced compliance with treatment protocols. Indeed, activists were prescient in perceiving an emerging "therapeutic state" (Polsky 1991; Szasz 1984), where governmental control is exercised through treatment interventions by medical and social services that pathologize non-normative and marginal populations. For example, the first federal law on

rape, part of the Public Health Services Act of 1975, established the National Center for Prevention and Control of Rape (NCPCR) under the auspices of the National Institute of Mental Health. One of Los Angeles's first rape crisis centers, a self-organized and radical group called the Los Angeles Committee on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW), partnered with the more professional Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center to win a grant from the NCPCR from 1976 to 1978. Barrie Levy of LACAAW explained:

> [T]he volunteers and staff at LACAAW didn't trust that Didi Hirsch wasn't just going to coopt LACAAW's efforts in developing the program and go off and running with it and survive financially and survive as an institution, and leave LACAAW in the dust. (Matthews 1994:51)

Their fears came true when they were abandoned by the Hirsch Center in later funding cycles. Advocates in the battered women's movement, which emerged several years after the anti-rape movement, learned their lesson from earlier mistakes (Klein 1977:1–2). Seeing that the National Institute of Mental Health preferred to fund research over service provision, activists blocked legislative efforts to link domestic violence to the National Institute of Mental Health (Kim 2014:63).

President Lyndon Johnson succeeded in getting Congress to pass antipoverty legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, thereby creating an executive agency called ACTION, which was oriented toward community organizing. ACTION was an umbrella for the Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers, and it became an additional potential source of funding for movement groups, primarily through subsidized volunteer labor. Concerns emerged in the movement, however, that funding volunteer labor would again relegate anti-violence to the realm of women's unpaid labor and trivialize the importance of the work (Kim 2014:141).

Social services funding was also an option. The Carter administration established an Office of Domestic Violence within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), but subsequent legislation to fund the office was thwarted by an unexpected pro-family backlash against the anti-domestic violence movement. Aware of the social control functions of social welfare, funding from these sources was critiqued by movement practitioners for subjecting survivors to male bureaucracy. By framing women as powerless victims in need of state benevolence, this approach reinscribed domestic violence as a pathology of poverty rather than as a public safety issue that was more broadly politically relevant. "Welfare was just seen as total death," shared Minnesota-based activist Sharon Vaughn (Kim 2014:146), whereas criminal justice funding was perceived as the “lesser of two evils” (Kim 2014:147). While this decision may be surprising to contemporary activists with the benefit of hindsight, it came at a time before the scale of mass incarceration was imaginable and criminalization became public common sense.

Thus, in its infancy in the 1970s, the movement came to accept funding from criminal justice agencies, primarily from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), established in 1968 as part of Johnson’s war on crime. The Carter administration funded the Family Violence Demonstration Project through LEAA, which funded model projects that were later diffused nationally, including the San Francisco victim witness program and the CCR in Duluth, Minnesota. Kim’s research (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019) traces how these projects started with feminist actors but were eventually subordinated to law enforcement imperatives.

Movement histories do indicate that anti-violence activists did not walk unwittingly into this process. There was intense debate within the battered women’s movement, for

example, about the dangers of alliance with the state. Some offered a critique of the patriarchy at work in both the state and the home:

> The socially acceptable power a husband has over a wife parallels the power of government agencies over projects they fund and the power of police over citizens. When considering any strategy – be that funding sources or legal reform – we must ask, will this entrench existing power relations or chip away at them? […] Depending on existing structures to sustain our programs seems like advising a battered woman to find a new husband – in neither case has the fundamental power relationship changed. (Klein 1977:2)

Activists also demonstrated some intersectional awareness of how money from LEAA in the 1970s supported systems of oppression other than sexism. Activists argued explicitly against accepting "blood-tinged monies" used by police to repress civil rights and anti-war activism (Kim 2014:55).

The contention over law enforcement funding was so great that it split the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), a coalition of largely grassroots service providers. As part of the Task Force on Family Violence, the NCADV endeavored to channel funding to grassroots service providers and not law enforcement. However, they eventually accepted a Department of Justice grant, which was then leveraged to politically pressure them away from funding any "lesbian-related advocacy" (Kim 2014:82). Frustration with these financial arrangements led the NCADV to vote to refuse the second year of the grant in 1986. A wave of leaders quit in protest of this decision and formed their own organization, the National Woman Abuse Prevention Project, to continue the grant. These histories show that cooptation was not a surprise or a given, but instead it was contested within movements along the way (Thuma 2015, 2019). Movement practitioners negotiated external pressures with their internal values and ideologies.

Through a review of the scholarly literature on carceral feminist cooptation, I have traced the permeation of the movement with negative security logics with regards to violence, safety, responsibility, rights, the law, and the state. I have pointed this out across five movement-centric dimensions: ideology and framing, collective identity, strategy, organization, and resources. I have mapped the interactions of concepts (like ideology and framing) with material conditions and practices (like organizational forms and funding). This story shows an ambivalent process marked by activists' misestimations, the ironies of unintended outcomes, and the bittersweetness of success as failure. This complexifies any simple moral story of carceral feminism that might attribute cooptation to bad actors motivated by bad ideas or bad intentions. Rather, it is a movement and not a moral tale: its lessons are about praxis, how ideas are embodied in practice and transformed over time. These praxes can also be consciously transformed in a new direction, as transformative justice activists' interest in transforming the trajectory of anti-violence organizing in a new (and yet old) direction shows in future chapters.

Cooptation as "Collateral Repression" and Abeyance

The rise of carceral feminism serves as a cautionary tale. Every movement seeks success, but at what price? Some people focus on the success, since these policy and legal efforts did inscribe recognition of gendered violence into law, one of the primary currencies for societal recognition of harm. From this perspective, the movement's transformation towards carceral feminism is a story of institutionalization, the "routinization of collective action" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998:21) whereby movement actors who accept the terms of the

dominant political order are included and others excluded. Early accounts by John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (McCarthy and Zald 1977) portray institutional bureaucratization as an almost inevitable outcome of social movement success and as a necessary stage of movement development. From this point of view, carceral feminism appears as part of a larger contested narrative about "feminist fading" (Roth 2006; Sawer and Gray Jamieson 2014) and the "decline" of the anti-violence movement (Baker and Bevacqua 2018).

Other perspectives, like those of the transformative justice movement, focus on the failures "obscured by the luster of success" (Kim 2019:4).[4] Already in 1977, the socialist feminists of Santa Cruz Women Against Rape named this process as cooptation: "Attempts at 'good relations' with the criminal justice system have served to coopt our movement" (Mcduff et al. 1977:10). Numerous scholars of the anti-violence movement join them in describing this process as cooptation, but they almost never define the term. Classic social movement literature on the topic (Gamson 1968; Selznick 1980) similarly lacks a robust definition of the concept. For social movement theorists David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow, cooptation appear to be a subset of the broader category of institutionalization, and it occurs when a movement adapts its claims and tactics to those that "can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998:21) in order to be included. Unfortunately, this definition from the political opportunity framework

[4] This raises the question of positionality and perspective when assessing cooptation, since a single event or policy can be perceived as both success and failure depending on the ideological commitments of various wings of a movement. How movement goals and outcomes are assessed depends on the point of view of the assessor. How relevant are the perspectives of movement actors themselves for assessing goals and outcomes? If a theory of cooptation does center movement actors' perspectives, though, how can it take stock of the wide range of opinions, values, and ideologies among movement actors? Moreover, activists change their stories in hindsight, or their own perceptions of outcomes may contrast with empirical fact, depending on their access to information about the event or policy in question. These questions lie beyond the scope of my dissertation as a task for future research.

presupposes a binary position either "inside" or "outside" of institutions, rather than a complex "social movement field" (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Fligstein and McAdam 2011).

Patrick Coy and Timothy Hedeen (Coy and Hedeen 2005) and Kim (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019) offer processual models of how cooptation unfolds over time. In their study of the movement for community mediation as an alternative to traditional criminal justice procedures, Coy and Hedeen develop a four-stage model of cooptation. In the first stage of Coy and Hedeen's model, opponents are engaged. In the second, opponents appropriate language and techniques via the inclusion and participation of social movement actors in their institution. The third stage marks the assimilation of movement leaders, members, and participants into an institution, resulting in a transformation of program goals. In the final stage, these newly coopted institutions are regulated and codified, resulting in some defensive reactions on the parts of the original challenger movements. This model is particularly fitting for carceral feminism since it addresses the absorption of community service providers into law enforcement institutions. It also suggests that the movement-centric dimensions of ideology and framing may be one of the first elements to change, with organizational change following in the rear. Kim (Kim 2014, 2015, 2019) develops her own stage model somewhat similar to Coy and Hedeen's, but she adds a final stage whereby new hybrid civil society-state institutions are replicated as they spread to new contexts. In this diffusion, subversive aspects of strategy and covert forms of movement control over collaborations with opponents are lost along the way.

I want to contribute two additional elements to this story of cooptation, since the case of carceral feminism yields new insights into the relationship between cooptation, repression,

and abeyance. The first is how cooptation impacts and interacts with adjacent social movements. In this case, carceral feminism represented a cooptation *into* the state's use of mass incarceration as a tool of repression of Black and Brown liberation movements, a process I call *collateral repression*. This helps explain why transformative justice emerged at the overlaps of these two movements (BIPoC movements and feminist anti-violence movements), and it contextualizes transformative justice's inherent commitment to anti-racism and prison and police abolition. Second, I explore the effects that cooptation has within a movement, sending the more radical wing into abeyance, or a state of retreat where movements facing decline or hostile conditions shelter in less visible communal spaces. That abeyant radical wing reemerged in the 1990s and 2000s to popularize a critique of carceral feminism and negative security, and it became the foundation for the transformative justice movement. This emerging movement offers not only a critique of negative security, but it also develops alternative practices, in part by (re)vitalizing those that were submerged during the process of cooptation. This partial lineage of the transformative justice movement in the abeyant wing of the anti-violence movement helps to explain some of the movement's character. Let us now consider these two contributions to the cooptation literature in detail.

Cooptation & Repression

As mentioned in the chapter's introduction, social movement theory posits that the state or another target of a movement can respond in two ways to successful movement mobilization: cooptation or repression. Activists and scholars have argued that the punitive state is an outgrowth of state repression (or counterinsurgency) against Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and decolonial radicalism by people of the color in the late 1960s (Camp 2016; CR10 Publications Collective 2008; Oliver 2008; Parenti 2000). If we understand mass

incarceration in part as a repressive response to social movements, then a unique form of cooptation is at play in the case of carceral feminism. Not only are feminists invited into governance, but they are also invited to participate in and instrumentalized to justify the repression of people of color. In other words, the movement is coopted *into* repression. These two responses, cooptation and repression, appear racialized and gendered: repression for men of color, cooptation for white women. Thus, I propose an understanding of carceral feminism as a form of "collateral repression," with white women invited indirectly into participating in state repression. This partakes of a long history of white women weaponizing their vulnerability in order to criminalize, punish, and murder men of color, and Black men in particular, through the "racialization of rape" (Freedman 2013).

It is unsurprising, then, that women of color at the intersections of both repression and cooptation would go on to critique both of these dynamics as they initiated the transformative justice movement. Black feminists and feminists of color have led the way in developing an intersectional analysis of the gendered politics of the carceral state (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2003; Haley 2016; Hartman 2019). Transformative justice emerged at the overlap of feminist and anti-racist movements, in the latter case, drawing on histories of prisoner resistance, anti-prison and prison reform organizing, and prison/police/penal abolitionism.

Cooptation and Abeyance

Cooptation fractures solidarity not only between neighboring movements but also within movements themselves. In the case of carceral feminist cooptation, it intensified the factionalism that Richie (Richie 2012) described in the anti-violence movement between reformist and radical wings. Verta Taylor and Leila Rupp (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989) introduced the concept of abeyance to describe how movements survive in periods of

decline, between peak mobilization, and/or when facing hostile political climates. During abeyance, movements retreat, concentrate their forces into pockets of activism, and shelter in free spaces (known by various terms like 'submerged networks,' 'beloved communities,' or 'abeyance structures') that help preserve movement continuity (Crossley and Taylor 2015). Rupp and Taylor's work (Rupp and Taylor 1987) documented the feminist movement in the "doldrums" between the first and second waves, whereas the history of carceral feminist cooptation addresses the gap between the second and third waves of feminism (as contested as these periodizations may be).

Can we understand carceral feminism as a kind of abeyance? On the one hand, feminists did face a hostile political opportunity structure in the 1980s under the Reagan administration, which fits the definition of abeyance. In response, carceral feminists made compromises and sought strategic alliances in order to institutionalize their activism within this political climate. In his study of British feminism, Paul Bagguley (Bagguley 2002) argues that institutionalization is a form of abeyance. He claims that "unobtrusive mobilization" (Katzenstein 1990) within institutions is the repertoire of contention for movements in abeyance. Is carceral feminism an "unobtrusive mobilization" within institutions of law enforcement? I content that this interpretation loses much of Taylor's original vision. In her formulation, abeyance is a kind of internally directed period of survival in the face of external hostilities, which is not captured by the triumphalist tone of governance and carceral feminists who believe institutionalization to be a form of success, not compromised survival (Halley et al. 2018).

Richie (Richie 2012) argues that the movement fragmented roughly into reformist and radical wings, and I posit the thesis that cooptation aided this process: while reformists

entered into institutional arrangements of compromise, it was the radical wing that went into abeyance. I suspect that this wing largely survived in the spaces and communities of Black and women of color feminists and their "intersectional mobilization" (Terriquez 2015) across anti-racist, feminist, and other movements. In her book *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence*, Emily Thuma (Thuma 2019) offers a counter-history of anti-carceral feminism in the 1970s, and she gives evidence of this radical wing, a movement that understood both romantic partners and state agents like police as sources of gender-based violence. One tactic activists used to make gender-based violence visible at many levels was through survivor defense campaigns. Such campaigns sought to liberate women like Dessie Woods, Joan Little, Inez García, and Yvonne (Wanrow) Swan, survivors of domestic and sexual violence who were criminalized for defending themselves against their abusers. Trans and sex-worker inclusive years before mainstream feminism, these anti-carceral movements displayed robust intersectional organizing that united a variety of different issues and constituencies. Thuma's work unearths a buried archive that demonstrates that many anti-violence activists did not go quietly into cooptation. This suggests that cooptation is not totalizing, and it can trigger a variety of outcomes for a movement beyond institutionalization, including sending more radical flanks of the movement into abeyance.

In her work, Thuma also names the transformative justice activism of groups like INCITE! and CARA as the inheritors of this legacy. I take up the story of how these groups (re)vitalized the abeyant radical wing of anti-violence organizing in the next chapter. I argue that they attempted to learn from and recreate the grassroots approaches to framing and ideology, collective identity, strategy, organization, and resources of the early anti-violence

movement, each of the five movement-centric dimensions I have explored in this chapter. This relationship to the past is emphasized by one of my early interviewees, Melissa Spatz of the Chicago Women and Girls Community Action Network, one of the first groups to release a report on transformative justice:

> *A lot of [the work] was looking back at old pieces from the 70s, before things in the U.S. got so state-owned. Before violence against women got siloed into the anti-rape work and the domestic violence work, and all of it funded by the state. […] So we went back to some of that, but also tried to tie it into a much more current understanding of racial justice and oppressions.* (Spatz 2013)

Conclusion

The positive safety of the transformative justice movement emerged in part as both a critique of and an alternative to the negative security of carceral feminism. This chapter's history of the complex process of cooptation, however, shows that security and safety are not simply conceptual polarities, but rather praxes (material and ideological) engaged in a dance, in which the logic with greater social power prevailed. The focus of this chapter mirrors those early transformative justice activists who struggled to historicize their movement and recover the potential of paths not taken by summarizing the most compelling scholarly accounts of carceral feminist cooptation within the anti-violence movement. I organized my account according to five movement-centric dimensions and tracked the ascendance of negative security across each: frames and ideology, collective identity, strategy, organization, and resources. Across these dimensions, the most popular and powerful sectors of the movement come to adopt and promote negative security's narrow, individualizing understanding of violence; its equation of safety with paternalist state protection and physical separation from harmdoers; its view of responsibility within a criminal legal framework of

individual liability, blame, and punishment; its liberal legalism of individual rights and equality; all of which serve to legitimize state sovereignty's right to adjudicate violence. Here, the isolating and individualizing functions of negative security are on display.

These five areas are not only axes along which cooptation occurs, but they are also areas where I find that later transformative justice activists (re)vitalize anti-violence work, drawing inspiration from earlier practices before cooptation had widely dominated the anti-violence field. I draw on Taylor and Rupp's concept of abeyance (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989) to argue for an understanding of carceral feminist cooptation as a phase of abeyance for the more intersectional, radical, and mass-organizing focused wing of the anti-violence movement, which (re)emerges with the transformative justice movement. The next chapter follows this thread, exploring what elements activists chose to resurrect from a grassroots past and how they hybridized them with more contemporary analyses, as Spatz's quote reflects. I also argue for an expansive understanding of cooptation to capture its interaction with other movements, coining the concept of collateral repression to describe carceral feminism's gendered invitation into the role of handmaiden of the carceral state, instrumentalized to justify the expansion of mass incarceration policies.

My focus on cooptation explains some of the transformative justice movement's unique qualities: its abolitionist impulses and anti-racist commitments; its radical and critical orientation to the past; and its ongoing anxieties about success, institutionalization, selling out, and cooptation. These anxieties have characterized the transformative justice movement's ambivalent relationship to restorative justice, a set of institutions and practices which have typically been far more institutionalized through programs in schools and prisons than transformative justice practices. More recently still, it colored the movement's

skepticism towards the political opportunities opened by the Black Lives Matter uprisings of 2020 and the popularization (and commercialization) of abolition and transformative justice as a result. I take up these questions in the conclusion of this dissertation. In this way, cooptation serves to bookend this project: a phenomenon that transformative justice formed in reaction to and, through its own success, now finds itself facing once again.

Chapter Two:
From Emergency to Emergence: The Seeds of Transformative Justice in Communities Against Rape and Abuse

The lime green walls of the small, two-bedroom apartment in east Seattle were plastered with political posters and homemade art (Thuma 2019:25). Shelves of books leaned against them, offering a free lending library with titles like *Soledad Brother, The Ethical Slut*, and *The Disability Studies Reader* (CARA n.d.-b). This home was a space where the political and personal were inseparable. Located on a quiet cul-de-sac at 23rd and Dearborn in Seattle's Central district, a historically Black working-class neighborhood, the apartment had been converted into an office space. Despite this, with members hanging out on couches and chatting, staff "sprawled about on the 'living room' floor" (Thuma 2006:26) rather than at assigned desks, and children occasionally underfoot, Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)'s space did not look and feel like a traditional office. Members and staff discussed recent readings together, debated polyamory, and called one another in for racism and ableism. CARA built a community as intimate (and messy) as the issues it was organizing against: rape and abuse.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the group's members felt comfortable bringing their own stories of sexual assault and harassment to CARA's "kitchen table," incidents that were often happening in overlapping Seattle communities and political organizations. There they could unpack their experiences of violence in a supportive environment, make sense of the situation with allies, map their resources, and game plan how to move forward. CARA supported members in seeking non-state, community-based responses to the harms they were experiencing, an approach the organization came to call "community accountability" (CARA

et al. 2006). These responses were also messy, pathways full of switchbacks, thorny underbrush, unexpected breakthroughs, and grueling uphill treks. In my account, what CARA harvested from these paths were a few small blooms from which they distilled core lessons, or seeds embedded with the DNA of the transformative movement that blossomed around and after CARA. The organization shared these seeds with a wider audience in their 2006 chapter, "Taking Risks: Implementing Grassroots Community Accountability Strategies" (CARA et al. 2006), allowing their blooms and seeds to germinate more widely.

Movement origins will always be contested and slippery. Black and Indigenous temporalities (Ibrahim and Ahad 2022; Rifkin 2017) include cycles of return rather than linear and progressive time, allowing movements to embrace ancestors, chosen and kin, across generations. As argued in the last chapter, the feminist approach to social movements developed by Taylor in her concept of abeyance (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989) upends conventional movement periodization by suggesting that movements exist without definitive beginning or end, but instead in cycles of mobilization and retreat. Drawing on brown's praxis of emergent strategy (brown 2017), I use the imagery of cycles of nature – roots, seeds, and flowers – to metaphorize this approach to movement temporality.

As Mia Mingus has said, the ideas behind transformative justice are ancient, even if the term itself is new (Mingus 2019a). From the broadest possible perspective, community-based responses to violence are older than the police and the state itself. Within these expansive possibilities, I choose to start the dissertation's story of transformative justice for gendered harm with CARA, not as an origin, but as a cathexis point where latent roots re-emerged in a new way, within an enduring organizational container. In my research, CARA, Creative Interventions, generationFIVE, and INCITE! were named over and over again by

interviewees as their institutional sites of introduction to the core ideas of the movement. Of these groups, CARA is the most directly linked to a mainstream anti-violence legacy and thus casts particular light on the complex relationships between different wings and generations of feminist struggle and history. Like those interviewees, CARA was also my personal point of entry into transformative justice – our Berlin Transformative Justice Collective translated CARA's formative chapter into German, which was subsequently translated into Turkish by activists in Istanbul. This is just one map; other transformative justice stories can and should embark from a different starting point.

The previous chapter concluded in the 1990s, when VAWA cemented negative security in the anti-violence sector. This chapter picks up the story just a few years later when several new organizations emerged, like flowers growing out of the long-standing but abeyant roots of anti-carceral feminist resistance to this history of cooptation. These organizations innovated the core praxis of positive safety, and they spread that DNA throughout the movement ecosystem and beyond in a decentralized way, like scattering seeds. CARA was central among these early organizations thanks to its praxis of "community accountability" (CARA et al. 2006), which INCITE! later articulated to include four parts: survivor support, perpetrator accountability, community change, and addressing underlying conditions (INCITE! 2008). CARA developed what I argue is a positive safety framework in each of these four areas. In the realm of underlying conditions, it framed sexual violence structurally (not individually) and intersectionally (not as gender essentialism), allowing it to connect to a broader and longer lineage of anti-rape activism enmeshed with anti-racist activism, as well as contemporary anti-racist and abolitionist struggles. In the realm of community, it took up a strategy of "organizing community," rather than service provision,

setting it up to adopt a positive safety view, taking community, not the state, as the vehicle for justice. In relation to survivors, it operationalized survival in terms of empowerment, not paternalist protection, through a strategy that organized survivors to action and a collective identity that lifted up survivorhood. The positive safety embedded in CARA's framing, ideology, strategy, and collective identity helped it embarked on "The Safety Project," where it actualized its praxis of community accountability. Its focus on accountability within the organization – in response to and as protection from carceral feminist cooptation – moved outwards into the development of a positive safety praxis of accountability for perpetrators and their communities focused on repair and transformation, rather than blame and punishment.

In the first section, I tell the story of CARA's formation. CARA was founded in 1999, when a new political generation was emerging within the feminist movement and the wider Left. The World Trade Organization protests in Seattle and later the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks shook social justice and Leftist movements out of their "end of history" quiescence, resulting in the convergence of new political formations around anti-globalization and against U.S. imperialist war in the Middle East. Within the anti-violence world more specifically, women and queer of color dissatisfaction with the carceral status quo in mainstream anti-violence services was palpable. The first convening by the national INCITE! network of feminists of color against violence in 2000 was filled with thousands more participants than expected, signaling a desire for a new intersectional direction in anti-violence work. In these early years, a lot of abolitionist feminist work involved articulating a critique of the status quo through INCITE!'s academic writing (many of INCITE!'s members

were scholar-activists), as well as through the labors of practitioners struggling to make change within mainstream anti-violence organizations.

As INCITE!'s Seattle chapter, CARA was uniquely positioned to articulate not just a critique of carceral feminism and negative security, but also to experiment locally with alternatives and develop a praxis of positive safety. Unlike scholar-activists working primarily in an academic idiom of critique, CARA focused on organizing community towards an alternative. Further, while other intersectional feminists struggled to slowly change the predominantly white leadership of anti-violence services dominated by negative security logics, CARA was formed in the ashes of a collapsed rape crisis center as a women of color-led experiment. CARA made several choices that set it up well to innovate community-based responses to violence outside the state. The first was to pivot from the emergency of providing direct services to survivors (as the rape crisis center before them had done) towards emergence – a space of experimentation, creativity, and expansiveness, moving upstream from cases of violence towards the source of the flood.

In the next section, I draw on the social movement framework articulated in the last chapter to elaborate how CARA's subsequent choices around framing, strategy, collective identity, organizational structure, and resources were all distinct from the carceral feminist mainstream. I argue that this marked a return to earlier grassroots and women of color models, abeyant roots that CARA found ways to tap into and (re)vitalize, while also hybridizing them with the contemporary concerns of a new political generation. I argue that the result has been a (re)vitalization of the anti-violence movement more broadly. Like earlier anti-rape activism lost to cooptation, CARA understood rape in a positive safety framework: as structural (rather than individual) and intersectional (rather than primarily

about gender). As such, it requires a social change (rather than a social services) model to address it. In so doing, CARA advocated a return to an anti-violence strategy of organizing community rather than service provision, whose urgency had so often sucked up the majority of resources and attention. CARA was nevertheless able to provide support to survivors outside the standard carceral feminist format by developing a collective identity that created a sense of family for marginalized survivors. This identity imagined survival in a positive safety logic as empowerment to collective action, rather than paternalist protection via the state.

These choices around framing and ideology, strategy, and collective identity set the kitchen table for CARA both figuratively and literally. When staff and members sat down at that table, they could unpack experiences of sexual violence not only as private experiences, but also as elements central to the organization's work itself. CARA brought the issue of sexual and family violence and the "kitchen table support" of generations of survivors out of the privatization of the home – not into the public (the state), but into the "third space" (Federici 2019) of community or commons. By choosing a strategy of "organizing community" (Stall and Stoecker 1998), CARA leaned into a positive safety framework that centered community rather than the state as the appropriate place to address sexual harm. CARA's intersectionality meant its kitchen table metaphorically spanned a number of communities. Its focus on rape, however, meant that not everyone came happily to the table, because this "cross-cutting issue" (Cohen 2009) often left deep wounds through the heart of communities. CARA's radical politics on race and the state found some allies but mostly enemies among mainstream anti-violence feminists. Its radical politics on gender, rape, and

abuse sometimes exacerbated fissures between generations of Black women and even between women of color anti-violence organizers.

Through collaborations with the abolitionist organization Critical Resistance, CARA evolved an abolitionist analysis and praxis it called "community accountability." It launched the Safety Project to address the harms members had shared at CARA's table without going to the criminal legal system. This opened up a new space of emergence and experimentation that had been foreclosed by the therapy-district attorney formula provided by standard rape crisis centers, which CARA navigated through a positive safety epistemology of improvisation, liberatory pedagogy, and trial and error. Through the Safety Project, CARA innovated a positive safety vision of accountability for both those who commit violence and the communities around them focused on repair and transformation, rather than blame and punishment.

Sadly, CARA never quite managed to outlive some of the problems of its predecessor organization and of the coopted anti-violence movement more generally. CARA aspired to an organizational structure and resourcing approach based on the collective models of earlier times that were now suppressed by a non-profit industrial complex (INCITE! 2007): "flat" or low-hierarchy structures would replace non-profits; membership would replace staff-client dynamics; alternative funding models like fundraisers and member dues would cover costs; and accountability would be to the community over funders. By the time it closed its doors in 2010, however, CARA remained caught in crises related to funding and organizational structure that echoed those that had trapped second wave anti-rape and anti-domestic violence organizations in dependency on the state (and, for many, the criminal legal system). Historically, CARA tapped the roots of anti-carceral framings, strategies, and identities that

had gone into abeyance, but it also faced some of the same challenges of the 1970s anti-violence movement regarding organizational structure and funding. At this juncture, however, it made different choices in order to avoid that earlier movement's fate of cooptation, by choosing instead to stop accepting state funding and, as a result, ultimately close.

When I speak of CARA's (re)vitalization of the anti-violence movement, the '(re)' held in parentheses marks the ambivalent temporality of CARA's process – its process was part of a cycle of return and emergence rather than linear progress. CARA (re)vitalized older grassroots strategies but also hybridized them with more contemporary abolitionist analyses. The '(re)' also marks CARA's uneasy inheritances across feminist generations: how despite its boldness and youth, it still had to dance with the ghosts of unresolved Black, women of color, and white feminist pasts. Looking forward, it also gifted the task of sustainably implementing positive safety to future generations of the transformative justice movement.

From Emergency to Emergence

Many of the transformative justice practitioners I interviewed described working within the conventional anti-violence sector and feeling frustrated by its carceral approach. CARA provides a unique example where activists incubated a transformative justice-oriented organization directly out of a failed services organization, Seattle Rape Relief (SRR), which collapsed unexpectedly in 1999. I locate this beginning within a cycle of death and (re)birth - both organizationally (SRR's demise and CARA's founding) and in a larger historical context (the end of third way centrism and the rise of an anti-globalization and anti-war Left). The

last chapter painted the broad brushstrokes of carceral feminist cooptation at the level of the movement; here, the story of SRR offers a single organizational window into that process. Within SRR, cooptation was contested; a power struggle between grassroots resistance and top-down insistence created a unique blend of both negative security and positive safety approaches within the organization. In the wake of its collapse, former volunteers critiqued its cooptation in the language of accountability, inscribing both anxiety about cooptation and the centrality of accountability into the trajectory of both CARA and the wider transformative justice movement it inspired. These critiques paved the way for CARA to (re)vitalize abeyant anti-carceral feminist lineages. CARA's story also offers an organizational window on how a praxis of positive safety evolved within a single anti-rape organization, as it moved away from the emergency of rape and towards the emergence of "abolitionist futures" (ICOPA 2017).

SRR provides an excellent case study of the internal contradictions faced by anti-violence groups coopted into non-profit structures and carceral feminist commitments. The organization was founded in 1972 as one of the first three rape crisis centers in the country (Hormann and Vivian 2004:3), originally housed in the University of Washington YWCA, a hotbed of feminist activity. Even as it moved toward cooptation and negative security logic, these transitions towards non-profit structures, reformist strategies, state funding, and narrow identities and framing were not smooth or coherent at SRR, but instead contested internally by volunteers, creating a set of contradictions. For example, as a predominantly white organization, SRR struggled with racism throughout its history, but it also aspired to an anti-oppression framework. Despite entanglements with state funders, SRR maintained a feminist social change strategy, rather than solely a service provision one. For example, it devoted

half its budget to community education (Thuma 2006:17). As SRR professionalized, it also maintained its large volunteer corps of survivor advocates, even as other non-profit anti-violence agencies in the area had dropped theirs. This cultivated a grassroots membership and a sense of community within the organization. Like many feminist organizations, SRR existed as a "hybrid nonprofit" (Hyde 2000) an uneasy mix of grassroots and bureaucratic elements, of positive safety and negative security approaches, that stood in tension with one another. SRR shows that while the story of cooptation from the last chapter offers a useful heuristic at a movement-wide level, cooptation's implementation on an organizational level was not necessarily straightforward or complete.

SRR's original grassroots organizational structure – relationship-based and low-hierarchy – created a deep "ambivalence" (Hormann and Vivian 2004) about power, authority, and leadership that subsequent hierarchical, bureaucratic structures could not assuage. These conflicts were, unsurprisingly, racialized. After a woman of color co-director resigned and was then fired by the board following conflict with her white counterpart, a white interim executive director came in to try to "rescue" the organization at the end of the 1990s. She tried to wrest control away from staff and volunteers to resolve the tension once and for all in favor of a non-profit model: firing staff, disbanding the 70 person volunteer corps, and proposing new bylaws to dispossess volunteers of their voting rights in the organization (Heyamoto 1999). The staff and volunteers resisted: remaining staff resigned *en masse*, and volunteers protested to the board. Ultimately, in crisis, the organization shut its doors in summer of 1999 after 27 years (Bierria 2007:151). The board and interim director blamed a recent funding shortfall – always a plausible explanation in the under resourced

anti-violence sector – but volunteers insisted that a 10% funding cut did not justify the closure of the entire agency (Bierria 2007:151).

SRR's volunteers thus had lived experience contesting the encroachment of cooptation and negative security logics in their organization. They rallied in the face of this sudden, shocking end that felt to some like a personal betrayal or an echo of societal violence and abuse (Farr 2022), protesting in front of the closed building (see Figure Two below). Former SRR volunteers and wider community members gathered at a local public library after the protest to discuss options for moving forward. The vast majority wanted to reclaim the agency and reopen its hotlines, driven by both the urgency of survivors' needs and their own political momentum. Some wanted to occupy SRR's office; others hoped to inherit its funding. Over time, however, the initial dream of reclaiming SRR dwindled in the face of legal complications and liabilities. In its wake, a core group of eight or nine volunteers began dreaming up a new project, which would become CARA, the "*phoenix that rose from the ashes of SRR*" (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022).[1]

[1] In this chapter and throughout the dissertation, quotations from my interviews are presented in italics.

Figure 1: Former SRR volunteer Alisa Bierria leads other volunteers in a chant yelling "What About Survivors?" in front of the closed-down office. (Heyamoto 1999)

SRR volunteer (and later CARA leader) Alisa Bierria was central among them. Perhaps due to her identities and her politics being queer and Black, Bierria had never fully felt at home at SRR and this gave her the critical distance to observe SRR's demise not primarily as a personal betrayal but also as a historical event within a lineage of second and third wave feminism. Having this broader perspective allowed her to identify all the hallmarks of carceral and capitalist cooptation in SRR's story, which Bierria and fellow volunteers articulated in a letter to the volunteer corps shortly after SRR closed its doors:

> So why is [this closure] happening now? What is happening in Seattle Rape Relief is part of a larger national movement occurring in sexual assault and domestic violence agencies. The movement is attempting to streamline these organizations into being more professionalized and less grassroots oriented. This means less critique of institutions that perpetuate sexual violence, no connection between anti-oppression theory and violence against women theory, less outreach to marginalized survivors (sex workers, prisoners, etc.), no community based fundraising initiatives, thinking about survivors as "clients" rather than people, and perhaps, most importantly, little to no organizational accountability to the community, specifically survivors. [(Bierria 1999) quoted in (Bierria 2007:151–52)]

Already in 1999, these volunteers (including future founders of CARA) articulate an incisive critique of carceral feminist cooptation (for example, "organizations […] being […] less grassroots oriented" with "no organizational accountability to the community"). They name the symptoms of negative security: for instance, the lack of "critique of institutions that perpetuate sexual violence" signals an individualized understanding of violence, and treatment of survivors as "'clients'" marks an approach of protection rather than empowerment toward them. If we bracket the negatives ('less' and 'no'), this reads as a list of demands for the anti-carceral feminist organization that CARA would become, naming an alternative program for strategy (grassroots), framing and ideology (anti-oppression theory), collective identity (marginalized survivors), resources (community-based fundraising), and organization (based on accountability to the community). While we cannot know where the authors of the statement drew their inspiration from, this analysis suggests that anti-carceral positive safety approaches to violence were already available to their imaginations and lay in wait in abeyance until SRR's collapse could enable them to be actualized.

One way that CARA allowed its collective imagination to cultivate new positive safety responses to rape and abuse was by shifting from a state of emergency to one of emergence. The organization walked away from the urgency and crisis of responding to rape (by getting rid of the hotline for survivors) and moved upstream of the problem toward a more spacious and utopian vision of preventing rape by seeding worlds free of violence. A young, white, queer activist named Emily Thuma was working in the city's Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Office as an AmeriCorps volunteer when she first encountered CARA. She recalls the first CARA community meeting she attended:

> *You walk into a space, and all of a sudden, you realize that you've been invited to something that feels life-changing. It was very much like that, I was young, I was 22*

> *[…] the openness, the enthusiasm, the ways in which it was clear that they were still figuring out what they were doing, but there was this really genuine invitation to just throw out ideas and have them be heard and have them be taken seriously. And I remember being struck by the really, really wide-ranging group of people in the room.* (Thuma and Bierria 2020)

As CARA co-founder and Disability Pride Project organizer Rebecca Farr affirmed, "*We were really paid to dream*" (Farr 2022). Over time, the organization drew in others looking for something beyond the mainstream, like Chicana artist and CARA volunteer Xandra Ibarra, who was previously pushed out of her local sexual assault advocacy job because of her abolitionist politics.

By the end of the summer, CARA had been founded (Burkitt 1999b) with the aim to create a new organizational culture and structure of accountability to protect it from SRR's mistakes. By fall of 1999, the organization had found non-profit sponsorship in the local umbrella organization Gay Committee for Social Services. It received funding earmarked for SRR from the city's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Office to keep it afloat for the rest of that and the coming year (Burkitt 1999a). CARA rented its office space in the Central District and hired staff, with Bierria as program coordinator and three organizers for each of the three marginalized constituencies of survivors it wanted to focus on: the Black People's Project, the Disability Pride Project, and the Young People's Liberation Project.

Although CARA chose emergence, it was still singed by its formation "out of the flame" of SRR's emergency (Bierria 2020b). CARA's praxis of positive safety was created as a reaction to the negative security of SRR, particularly SRR's lack of organizational accountability to the wider community, to the survivors it claimed to serve, and to the most marginalized among its staff and volunteers. CARA took from this an inward focus on

organizational accountability that it later transferred externally to rape-related accountability in its hallmark concept of "community accountability" for sexual and partner violence. Despite their differentiation in these ways, the organization remained haunted by some of SRR's and the broader feminist anti-violence movement's unresolved challenges around organization and resources; despite every effort from founders to avoid them (Burkitt 1999b), some were ironically repeated nonetheless.

CARA's (Re)vitalization of the Anti-Violence Movement

This orientation to emergence created an opening in which aspects of the anti-violence movement that had been lost to carceral feminist cooptation (as laid out in the volunteers' letter quoted at length above). I use a similar organizing framework here as in the previous chapter to explore this (re)vitalization across five movement-centric dimensions of CARA. First, I focus here on the three dimensions in which CARA was most successful at (re)vitalizing radical approaches to anti-violence: its framing, strategy, and collective identity (saving the final two dimensions, namely, resources and organization, for the section on CARA's challenges later in this chapter). In each of these dimensions, they seeded a nascent praxis of positive safety. For example, they framed rape as structural rather than individual and intersectional rather than gender essentialist, asserting a positive safety understanding of violence as woven into the social fabric rather than as individual aberration. By understanding oppression as the root of rape, CARA took up a strategy of social change rather than social services that emboldened them to understand survival in positive safety terms: not as charity or protection, but empowerment of survivors to make change. CARA

also developed a collective identity focused on the most marginalized survivors rather than the whitewashed everywoman (Richie 2012) dissected in the last chapter, creating a home for those survivors within the complex, sometimes painful web of relations of the community, rather than in the disconnection of the state's pseudo-protection through women's shelters and prisons. These innovations took as their departure earlier positive safety approaches to violence long held and advocated for by Black women, Indigenous women, and women of color sidelined by the mainstream feminist anti-violence movement.

CARA's Framing & Ideology

According to the social movement literature (Snow and Benford 1992), movement "framing" is a process of social interaction whereby social movement participants collectively create meaning about their lives, and CARA's organizing aimed to help Seattle communities frame the concept and experience of rape for themselves. As long-time Black People's Project organizer and later CARA Co-Director Theryn Kigvamasud'Vashti described, she would regularly open workshops by asking "*What do you consider to be sexual assault?*" and use this prompt to host a brainstorm among participants (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022). Dominant U.S. culture's "diagnostic framing" (Snow, Vliegenthart, and Ketelaars 2018) located the problem of rape in individual perpetrators, motivated by evil or pathology; mainstream anti-violence service providers sometimes expanded beyond this to include a structural analysis, but it focused mostly on gender, the everywoman approach deconstructed in the previous chapter. In their nascent positive safety approach, CARA wanted to move "upstream" to address structural causes of rape, rather than only providing services and intervention "downstream" after rape has occurred, and they identified "rape culture" and oppression as the source of the problem. CARA even went

through a framing battle with city council. One councilman who appeared attached to traditional diagnostic frames for rape objected to the use of the term 'rape culture' and threatened to audit CARA's funding as a result. CARA was ultimately spared, and the later popularization of the term 'rape culture' signaled that, in hindsight, CARA had won that framing battle. Years later, Ibarra drove by a boarded-up building in Capitol Hill, the gentrifying neighborhood to the northwest of CARA's office. She snapped a photo and texted it to CARA members. The photo showed the words 'End rape culture' sprayed in two colors on the wood press boards covering the building. Kigvamasud'Vashti remembers the text message: "'*What's up girl?! We did this. People are having the conversation because of CARA*'" (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022).

CARA's new set of meanings about rape and anti-rape activism drew on Bierria's acuity for feminist history (even as she was making it). In her notes for a talk commemorating the one year anniversary of CARA's founding, Bierria explains the abeyant legacies of positive safety that that predate carceral feminist cooptation that the organization drew from and (re)vitalized as the roots of its analysis (Bierria 2000). In this talk, however, she pushes beyond the typical temporal cut-offs that locate anti-rape activism's "birth" in the 1960s, troubling efforts to enclose anti-rape activism in specific feminist waves or origin stories:

> CARA's destiny is tied up with the tremendous history of the anti-rape/anti-domestic violence movements. […] We were partly owed our existence to the amazing activists from the 1960s and 1970s who took incredible risks in their work of defining rape, speaking out publicly about it, and developing rape crisis centers as a response […]. But as we thought more deeply about the moment of history where we were finding ourselves, approaching a new era of creating liberation, we became more conscious of a much broader, profound legacy that we are connected to. We recognized that anti-rape activism has been going on for much, much longer than the 1960s, longer than anyone in this room has been alive. For example, Black women who were slaves participated in concentrated and deliberate resistance of rape by white male slave owners. There are many documented accounts of female rebellion manifesting in the poisoning of rapists, burning of property, and assassination. […] CARA began to realize that looking at anti-

> rape activism done not just in 1960s and 70s, but throughout history in many different contexts, forces us to think about rape in a much more complex way. We recognized that rape is not simply a tool for male domination over women. Rape is also a tool for economic exploitation and white supremacy.

By linking rape to capitalism, ableism, racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression, CARA accomplished an intersectional "frame extension" (Snow et al. 1986; Snow, Vliegenthart, and Ketelaars 2019:624) that locates sexual violence as the throughline and weapon of choice of many oppressions.[2] CARA's wide ranging lending library – which held sections on disability, activism and organizing, body politics, class, feminism, queer studies, positive sexuality, the prison industrial complex, rape and domestic abuse, sex and pornography, and self-defense (CARA n.d.-b) - is evidence of its efforts to draw together diverse anti-oppression movements into a coherent new ideology. One staff member received a copy of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I A Woman" speech on her first day at the organization as her training manual. Multiple core members and staff of CARA were or would later enter higher education as Ph.D. students and/or professors, meaning that there was a strong link to university intellectual production. Beyond them, however, there is some evidence that regular CARA community members also found the space and its library accessible: "I feel like I can drop by and check my email, do some thangs, or just hang out and read. I like being able to drop by and check out the latest books in the library" (CARA n.d.-a).

CARA's Strategy

CARA's structural and intersectional understanding of rape shaped its "prognostic framing" of how to end rape. Its anti-oppression critique and growing abolitionist

[2] The praxis of "intersectionality" was developed in multiply marginalized communities similar to CARA's, like the women of the Combahee River Collective (Combahee River Collective 1986a), and first theorized academically by Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw 1991, 1997), whose hallmark essay defined the term specifically in relation to the shortfalls of anti-violence advocacy that focused only on gender.

consciousness implicated the state as a key structure responsible for the (re)production of sexual violence. Having learned the lessons of cooptation, CARA was intent on (re)vitalizing a social change strategy that would not be domesticated into social service provision on behalf of the state this time around. By closing down SRR's hotline, the survivors who would have visited SRR were diverted to other advocacy agencies, giving CARA the breathing room away from the emergency of intervention to incubate a different, upstream strategy for preventing rape and abuse. While the negative security framework of social services figured survivors as powerless victims in need of paternalist state protection, CARA's nascent positive safety vision of social change viewed survivors as activists who could build their individual and collective self-determination. How would they build and exercise this power, though? Drawing on both academic and movement practitioner literature about organizing, I reflect on three main theories of change in the Leftist "movement ecology" (Momentum 2022) and their compatibility with the unique contours of anti-violence organizing.[3]

The first theory of change is one of disruption and resistance to the dominant order, with the goal of rapid and potentially revolutionary change - called "ruptural" strategy by analytic Marxist Erik Olin Wright (Wright 2010) and the "mass protest" tradition by the Momentum community, a U.S.-based movement training institute (Momentum 2022). This theory of change requires public direct actions by regular people that spread virally in what Momentum calls "whirlwind moments" and attract new participants exponentially, creating a sense of crisis and possibility. These protests can shift public opinion and the Overton window of policy rapidly - and in revolutionary moments, they may lead to the collapse and

[3] Credit is due here to the philosopher Robin Zheng, who made me aware of these taxonomies, which inform her upcoming book on solidarity.

take-over of entire institutions. The Occupy movement, Me Too, and Black Lives Matter uprisings are examples of mass protest movements that have erupted in the U.S. in the last twenty years. CARA was inaugurated by an act of volunteer protest, and it cohered shortly before the anti-globalization World Trade Organization protests of 1999 in Seattle. As such, the organization was imprinted by confrontational direct action tactics, and CARA members regularly spoke at protests and rallies. "Take Back the Night" rallies at many college campuses are an annual ritualized mobilization, but, like "Slutwalks," many have been plagued by critiques of racism and classism. For similar reasons, CARA chose not to continue SRR's tradition of organizing "Take Back the Night." More generally, protest did not become CARA's main strategy for building a praxis of positive safety.

The second strategy is that of community organizing, building the political power of a designated community to pressure corporate or government leaders for policy change. Community organizing often pushes for change incrementally over a longer period of time, a reformist orientation to collaboration with elites that led Wright to refer to this approach as "symbiotic" with the existing system (Wright 2010). Rooted in the labor movement and Saul Alinsky's "community organizing" model (Alinsky 2010), this approach uses intensive relationship-building and leadership development to build a resilient organization that can wield people power. Similarly, CARA used the language of organizing (e.g., 'base-building,' 'constituencies,' 'organizers'). They developed leaders through deep internal political education, giving them the skills to organize workshops, events, and fundraisers, preparing them to speak at rallies and protests. Momentum calls this strategy the "structure-based tradition" because organizing typically builds a "base" or constituency by seeking out pre-existing "mobilizing structures" (Momentum 2022) where that community already gathers:

for workers, in their workplace; for people of faith, their mosques or synagogues; for sex workers, the streets where they solicit work from johns. In contrast, where to do survivors intentionally gather? As a "cross-cutting issue" (Cohen 2009), sexual violence is present across all communities (workers, faith, sex workers, and more). Some of the highest concentrations of survivors are found in carceral institutions that perpetuate their abuse – like prisons and immigrant detention facilities. In organizing against prisons, CARA aimed to build relationships across prison walls with these survivors. Further, CARA chose to politicize existing therapeutic spaces like survivor support and discussion groups (Thuma 2019:30), hosting these groups in the living room of its office as a way of building relationships.

These protest and community organizing strategies did not fit anti-violence movement or CARA's unique contours in a number of ways. In the protest tradition, mobilization tends to create an external villain, but unlike campaigns against corporate or electoral targets who have done wrong, perpetrators of rape and abuse are often fellow community members (Thuma 2022). Particularly as Black women and women of color, CARA was interested in transforming rather than villainizing those perpetrators, many of them men of color already targeted by the criminal legal system. A strategic use of villainization and blame did not align with a positive safety approach of accountability for harm. In the organizing tradition, policy change with government officials was a central goal, but carceral feminist collaboration with elites had already produced a disastrous policy agenda focused on the criminalization of perpetrators. On the other hand, CARA was wary of collaboration with the state and had no explicit policy agenda. It was more interested in tackling and transforming rape culture in everyday life. Further, both of these strategies face

the unique challenges of sexual violence's stigma and secrecy in society. Waves of mass protest against sexual violence have been rare in the U.S., perhaps because the trauma and shame survivors often experience make the publicity of this strategy particularly challenging; the potential privacy of digital action may have helped survivors overcome this threshold to action in the case of the largely online Me Too movement in 2018. One of community organizing's basic outreach tactics is canvassing or "door knocking" where organizers ask strangers about their biggest concerns in their neighborhood, but it is unlikely that a survivor will tell a stranger that partner violence is their biggest problem.

CARA instead took a third strategic pathway towards positive safety. Many communities who are bonded around a shared marginalized identity (like ability, religion, race, gender, or sexuality) have forms of organizing not fully captured by these two strategies. In the context of women's and feminist organizing, Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker refer to these as "organizing community" (Stall and Stoecker 1998) rather than community organizing. Broadly defined, this tradition includes forms of kitchen table labor and mutual aid (Spade 2020) often done by women and other marginalized genders. While community organizing often focuses on the productive labor of campaign wins in the masculinized public sphere, this organizing tradition tends to the reproductive labor in feminized private spheres of social and political homemaking: care, healing, conflict resolution, relationship building, and addressing survival needs like food and shelter. Marginalized groups deprived of resources have long histories of collective interdependence for survival interwoven with their political organizing and expression. These community formations include alternative institutions and infrastructures like cooperatives, freedom schools, queer bars, and people's kitchens that become sites for cultural change and personal

and collective transformation. These formations are often founded on a different logic than dominant institutions, for example, drawing on the cultural legacies of Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, or other communities of color that emphasize the self as part of an interdependent web of community with others (including non-human life), reflecting the social ontology of positive safety (Minkoff 1994).

The earlier grassroots anti-violence movement had combined mutual aid between survivors of rape and abuse with activism to address the conditions enabling that violence. The choice of mutual aid, however, had path dependent consequences for many anti-violence organizations, as it was a resource intensive strategy, tending to exhaust volunteers through compassion fatigue, secondary or vicarious trauma, and the burn-out of constant crisis. The emergency of concrete situations of violence drained resources for emergent activism targeting upstream causes of harm. A resource-intensive strategy also requires a resource-intensive organization, pushing anti-violence groups to replace volunteers with paid staff and fundraise from the state, resulting in the carceral cooptation spiral detailed in the previous chapter. In the process, mutual aid transformed into service provision on behalf of the state, as activism fell out of the budget and the priorities of established anti-violence organizations. In reviving a non-professionalized mutual aid practice, CARA was anxious not to repeat the mistakes of SRR or other coopted organizations.

While infrastructures of mutual aid often form the tissue of mobilizing structures (like churches or schools) that social movements draw upon for campaigns (Momentum 2022), they are not just inert or apolitical background material (Stall and Stoecker 1998:729–30). They must be built, hence "organizing community" as a strategy. In an early analysis of CARA, Thuma reflected on an Angela Davis' quote at INCITE!'s 2002 Color of Violence

conference which had wide resonance among CARA staff. Davis described organizing in terms of organizers "producing" communities rather than "working in the community" (Thuma 2006:43), recognizing that communities were not a given but were cultivated and organized. While "organizing community" was never a language that CARA used, Stall and Stoecker's article is in their archives, suggesting that the concept crossed their path and resonated enough for them to include it in their files.

To cultivate community, CARA used popular education tactics to build everyday people's capacity for two types of mutual aid - survivor support and accountability processes with harm-doers and their communities. Knowing that survivors turned first to their communities before going to the state for resources, CARA wanted to train community members in the skills needed to support survivors. In effect, the vision was to scale out a non-professionalized web of support resources rather than scaling up a professionalized institution for providing services (for more on "scaling out," see the conclusion of this dissertation). As explained in the next section, CARA's strategy on harm doer accountability emerged organically and experimentally as more and more cases were brought to them.

That process grew CARA's abolitionist consciousness and increasingly led them on a collision course with the state, resulting in a logic of positive safety that framed community in opposition to the state. Stall and Stoecker argue that organizing community blurs and questions the boundaries between public and private spheres and that it can utilize legacies of women of color, low income women, and Black women's experiences of drawing upon wide informal networks of care and support for survival that challenge the white bourgeois family structure (Stall and Stoecker 1998:733). Similarly, I have argued that CARA mobilized the "kitchen table" as a figure of collective support, dragging it out of the walls of the feminized

private sphere of the family – not out into the streets of a masculinized public sphere of capital and the state – but instead into a utopian third space imagined as the community or the commons.

CARA's Collective Identity

CARA faced an uphill task - building community around an identity (survivor) that many hid out of shame and an issue (rape) that carves wounds within and across communities, fracturing them. The organization focused its efforts on three groups of marginalized survivors it wanted to organize: Black, youth, and disabled communities. These communities were both particularly vulnerable to rape and at the same time neglected or harmed by mainstream carceral feminist frameworks focused on the "everywoman" (which was implicitly coded as white and middle- or upper-class). Additionally, CARA's membership drew from queer, Asian Pacific Islander, sex worker, Chicanx, Latinx, and Mexican, and punk and anarchist communities, since rape is an issue that cuts across all of those other identities. Because of stigma, survivors of rape and abuse rarely gather together intentionally. By organizing intersectionally across other communities constellated around identities like race or ideological orientation, however, CARA was able to knit together a community of survivors. Recognizing that not only community but also identity is constructed, CARA used political education to forge processes of "identification" (Thuma 2006). CARA captured the diversity of its collective identity with the use of 'communities' in the plural in its name.

This focus on marginalized survivors meant the organization was able to provide a political home to survivors who were otherwise out of place in the anti-violence world or other single-issue political communities. In keeping with the metaphor of home, several

former members I interviewed described CARA as a "*family*" (Colbert 2022; Georgena 2022), using words like '*engulfed*' and '*finally belonging*' to describe this feeling of homecoming. Members attended graduations, births, and funerals together (Bierria 2007:160). For survivors who experience violence in their families of origin, creating an alternative family can be a hopeful practice of chosen or queer kinship. Unfortunately, it can also compact group expectations and psychological entanglements to a breaking point. One staff member shared in an interview that they sometimes wanted to tell their fellow staff members, "*I am not your mother.*" The shadow side of home is not unfamiliar to movements to combat gender-based violence, which have thematized undercurrents of power and violence within the seeming comfort of the private sphere of home.

CARA's intersectional collective identity was not only about articulating sameness or alignment across difference, but it also demarcated difference within presumed sameness. Black women, for instance, have written about their experiences of exclusion in white-dominated feminist movements and male-dominated Black spaces (Hull et al. 1993) despite supposedly shared identities around gender and race respectively. In her early analysis of the organization (Thuma 2006), Thuma drew on Cathy Cohen's work to describe rape as a "cross-cutting issue" that exposes "often hidden differences, cleavages, or fault lines of marginal communities" (Cohen 2009:9). Because "many of CARA's activist projects often intentionally draw out and address intra-community differences" (Thuma 2006:23), CARA was controversial. They exposed fault lines within the anti-violence sector between themselves and whitestream carceral feminist service organizations in Seattle, and within communities of color hesitant to address the potentially damning "dirty laundry" of rape and abuse. These fault lines took on intergenerational dimensions, with youthful CARA members

pushing for a reckoning with rape and the impact of carceral feminism among an older guard. As a result, CARA's collective identity performed "boundary work" (Gieryn 1983) between the organization and outsiders, with several members calling it a clique.

In her work on the reproductive justice movement, Zakiya Luna describes two logics by which identity is formed within women of color organizing: "same difference" and "difference-in-sameness" (Luna 2016). Women of color in CARA could form a "same difference" bond through their conflicts with white feminist organizations that neglected race and communities of color that neglected feminism and gender-based violence. Despite this, there were fault lines 'at home' inside the organization, forms of "difference-in-sameness" that shared identity and ideology could not bridge. These were based on social capital and friendship, as well as larger structural factors limiting cross-community solidarity. For instance, there was often a gap between the disability community and the other communities CARA organized because the social isolation and barriers to access imposed on disabled people hindered community formation, requiring disabled people to imagine community in new ways (Thuma 2006). Class and education differences shaped debates about staff's salaries. Lastly, in the informal organizational structure of CARA, friendship could become a currency of power, a legacy of the second wave feminist movement that Jo Freeman (herself a second wave white feminist) critiqued in 1972 as "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" (Freeman 1972). I give this question of managing difference within organizational structure more consideration later in this chapter.

The Safety Project

CARA's organizing community strategy built enough bridges over these fault lines to strengthen cross-movement relationships with anti-police and prison activists, and it built enough trust that members could bring stories of current sexual harassment and violence to the organization. Confronted with the challenge of intervening into violence in real time without using the state, CARA's ethos of emergence led it through a learning process around how to hold persons who cause harm, and their communities, accountable without police. They came to call this "community accountability": a practice held by a community that combined survivor support, perpetrator accountability, community change, and addressing underlying political conditions that cause harm (INCITE! 2008:69). In the process of learning how to practice community accountability, CARA embodied an epistemology of positive safety, grounded in relational rather than imperial knowledge and based on embodied, contextual improvisation rather than pre-written guidebooks or universal rules. They drew on local relationships with anti-violence organizations for marginalized communities and anti-prison and policing organizations, as well as INCITE! and Critical Resistance, two national networks who were "crystallizing" (Snow, Vliegenthart, and Corrigall-Brown 2007) a new frame linking state violence and gender-based violence.

Emergence of an Abolitionist Analysis

CARA's formation at the turn of the 21st century overlapped with a number of seismic political transformations at the global, national, and local levels – particularly in Seattle. CARA was not only a phoenix rising from the ashes of one organization, it was also at the center of a revival that produced a new political generation (Whittier 2010) for the feminist anti-violence movement. CARA was part of a cohort of women and queers of color both

locally in Seattle and across the U.S. who were hybridizing their anti-racist and feminist work (Davis et al. 2022) and waking up dormant feminist legacies that contested the state.

CARA was networked locally in Seattle with a number of small community-based anti-violence organizations serving marginalized communities such as queer, immigrant, or Asian Pacific Islander communities. As a predominantly white city, Seattle was often a difficult climate for Black women's anti-violence organizing, which was centered at the East Cherry YWCA. CARA found allies in the API Women and Family Safety Center and Chaya, which served Asian Pacific Islander communities, and the Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse. CARA's political analysis placed it within a wider Leftist struggle, so CARA felt called to show up to rallies and marches when local police violence occurred. This regular presence connected rape and police violence not just in theory but also in a web of relationships built locally with anti-police brutality activists. These ecologies helped support CARA in developing the concept and practice of community accountability. Yet this new political generation of radicals was met with a mixed reception locally – they faced a shifting terrain of allies and enemies within the carceral and institutionalized feminist mainstream, while also experiencing intergenerational fissures within Black communities and even among their radical women and queer of color cohort. As Eboni Colbert, CARA's second generation Co-Director, shared with wry laughter, "*It sucks to be the first; it sucks to be Black and the first; it sucks to be Black, female, and the first*" (Colbert 2022).

At the same time, other webs of relationship were built nationally. The emergence of and collaboration between two national networks, Critical Resistance and INCITE!, formed the nascent buds of what flowered into an abolitionist feminist politics (Davis et al. 2022).

INCITE! was also formed at a California conference, held in Santa Cruz in April 2000. The conference drew thousands more attendees than expected, many of them women of color with critiques of the carceral feminism of the anti-violence movement. Just six years after the passage of VAWA and the seemingly total saturation of the anti-violence field with a negative security framework, INCITE!'s conference revived the abeyant legacies of anti-carceral feminism, bringing them above ground and into a new national formation. CARA quickly became INCITE!'s Seattle chapter.

Critical Resistance (CR) was formed at a national conference in Berkeley, California in fall of 1998. The organization began connecting the dots between "the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems" (Critical Resistance n.d.), which it came to refer to as the "prison industrial complex." CR popularized a radical over a reformist position towards prisons (and later policing), intentionally choosing the term 'abolition' to emphasize continuities between its struggle and the long *durée* of Black radical struggle against slavery. While living in New York in 2001, Thuma began volunteering with CR. When she returned to Seattle to accept a youth organizer position at CARA in 2002, Thuma brought those connections with her, as well as CR's explicit focus on prisons. CARA also sent delegates to a fateful convening where INCITE! and CR drafted a statement calling on "social justice movements to develop strategies and analysis that address both state AND interpersonal violence, particularly violence against women" (INCITE! and Critical Resistance 2001).

According to Bierria, CARA's founders had an understanding that the state was racist and that racial and sexual violence were connected, but it took time for this to constellate into

a clear anti-prison and police stance, which later pushed CARA down the path of improvising a positive safety alternative. CARA's founders centered Paulo Freire's idea of liberatory pedagogy as a method for learning within the organization: praxis based on cycles of action and reflection, a dialectic of the personal and political (Freire 2014; Glass 2001). Bierria describes this learning process of "practice-to-theory" (Bierria 2020a:304) as "grassroots philosophy" (Bierria 2020b), where the organization's democratic contemplative culture allowed members to develop a shared politics of positive safety. One way it did so was by organizing a CR Film Festival, a tactic CR was using in its various local chapters to spur dialogue and foster political education. CARA held the festival over several days and added their signature creative, educational, and healing formats. Poetry sessions, workshops, and a survivor group organized community through embodied and creative methods, rather than just ideological and intellectual ones. CARA also put their own spin on the festival by playing clips from the recent INCITE! conference and hosting a panel on the links between gender-based violence and the prison industrial complex (Bierria 2020a:303). According to Thuma, it marked "*our most public debut*" as an organization against police and prisons (Thuma 2022). The second annual festival was held in 2003 and titled "Both Sides of the Bars: Resisting Prisons and Building Alternatives." It explicitly marked CARA's interest in scaffolding alternative ways of addressing rape and abuse outside of the criminal legal system. CARA began talking about community accountability, transferring the language of accountability that had been an internal obsession within the organization outwards to cases of violence in Seattle communities beyond it.

CARA was also shaped by broader political whirlwinds, developing a politics attuned to U.S. state and corporate violence within a more global frame. The same fall that CARA

was formed, thousands of people from various movements and issue areas (including labor, the environment, anarchists, faith groups) found common ground on Seattle's streets protesting global corporate exploitation of workers and land. They shut down the World Trade Organization meeting and infused a quiescent Left with renewed radicalism and direct action tactics. Shortly thereafter, CARA witnessed massive transformations in U.S. statecraft in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks: the resurgence of an imperial U.S. politics of military violence internationally coupled with the militarization of policing (Schrader 2019) and the criminalization and surveillance of immigrant communities domestically. Thuma recalls that "*the state violence piece became so undeniably loud,*" allowing CARA to better link it with interpersonal violence (Thuma 2022). For example, CARA contested femonationalist (Farris 2017) justifications of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan to "save Brown women from Brown men" (Spivak 1988) by highlighting rape's widespread use as a military tactic of war.

The Disability Pride Project also expanded CARA's understanding of state violence by drawing parallels between the kinds of power and control exercised in carceral systems like prisons and jails with those exercised in supposedly "caring" institutions, where many disabled people were living. As Farr shared, "*predators […] were just swarming, especially the deeper a body went into an institution, be that prison or a psych ward or an adult assisted living home*" (Farr 2022).

Through INCITE!, CARA became involved in discussions about how to respond to gender-based harm outside of prisons and police, helping to nurture a nascent positive safety approach that reimagined responsibility for harm beyond the carceral frameworks of individual blame and punishment. This philosophizing drew on some members' own experiences of their families sitting down at the kitchen table (sometimes metaphorically but

other times literally) to address violence, because they knew calling the cops was not an option. Bierria remembers a delegation of CARA members heading to New York shortly after September 11, 2001 – symbolically, "*the smoke had not settled*" on the World Trade Center towers (Bierria 2020b) – to a convening hosted by INCITE! and Sista II Sista, a Bushwick-based Black and Latina feminist collective (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011). In a basement of a Bushwick, Brooklyn building, participants, many of them young women of color, responded to a prompt that ventured into the unknowing of abolition: "You have sexual violence in your neighborhood. The only rule here is that you can't call 911. What do you do. Go." Out of this came a wildly open and inventive brainstorm, an uncensored list of possibilities, some of which were later published (INCITE! 2003). Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo, Bierria, and Kim recount even their youthful audacity being challenged by one of the youngest women in the room: a "12-year-old sista stood with her hand in the air and exclaimed, 'Why don't we make Bushwick a liberation zone for women?'" (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011:3) What resulted was a more radical "frame transformation" (White 1999) around the term 'safety,' wrenching it out of the hands of the criminal justice system and into community in what evolved into CARA's Safety Project, a series of experiments in holding communities and perpetrators accountable when sexual violence occurred.

Interventions

CARA never went looking for situations to "test out" these hypothetical community responses. It did not put up wanted signs or recruitment flyers. Its Safety Project emerged organically because it simply opened its doors to survivors. Over time, it became known in social justice circles as a place to go if you had experienced sexual violence and did not want to respond using the police. It offered refuge for survivors who would have shied away from

carceral feminist service providers for a variety of reasons. Cases often emerged from CARA members themselves, many of them young women of color, who felt enough trust to share stories of sexual harassment and violence, often happening through their organizing in overlapping or adjacent political groups. CARA's positive safety approach had to move from theory into praxis. A long list of potential responses to rape and abuse developed in a Brooklyn basement was refined into a praxis of accountability for both perpetrators and surrounding communities that aimed at apology, reparation for harm, and the transformation of both the behavior and the underlying conditions causing harm.

One case involved the all-ages music scene, a predominantly white community with diversity in terms of gender and sexuality. CARA's Young People's Liberation Project had been organizing in this community to raise awareness about sexual violence and rape through local youth organizations and music events. Two young women came forward about being coerced into sex by a club employee named "Lou"[4] while drunk. One of the survivors and her friends even confronted Lou, who at first apologized but later backtracked and became defensive. With CARA's support, punk scene bandmates and community members became involved at this point and began organizing for accountability for both the individual case of violence and the underlying community conditions promoting it. This included a local weekly newspaper they realized contributed to the problem by glamorizing the alcohol consumption at Lou's parties. They decided to distribute fliers with information about Lou's violence, a critique of the newspaper, and a call to boycott the club where Lou was employed.

[4] CARA wrote about several of these cases in their "Taking Risks" chapter, and I use the same pseudonyms for these cases as they do in their writing. I introduce the names first with quotations ("Lou," "Juan," "Dan") to mark them as pseudonyms, dropping the quotations after the first usage.

Unsurprisingly, there was backlash – both from Lou, who threatened to sue the group for defamation, and from the newspaper, which placed itself in Lou's corner by publishing an article suggesting the survivors' decisions not to press charges indicated their stories were not credible. The group responded by recognizing that the entire community needed better education and information about violence, so it published a text that included survivor testimonies, the group's political analysis of rape, data to challenge the newspaper's suggestion that credibility comes through criminal charges, and disputing the underlying assumption that the criminal legal system provides justice. The text laid out clearly defined action steps for accountability, including an apology, counseling, and that Lou inform partners, friends, and future communities of his violence and ask for support in healing.

This statement had some effects, as one journalist for the newspaper shared with the group that her mind had been changed. Other effects were mixed: as the pressure of the boycott mounted, Lou offered to engage in dialogue with the group, but his defensiveness and an inability of both parties to agree on the terms of a meeting led this path to a dead end. Ultimately the group shifted to focusing on community work – organizing fundraisers for CARA and other anti-violence groups; facilitating educational workshops about safety and accountability; and continuing to open a wider conversation in the alternative music scene about sexual violence.

This case is a clear example of the bittersweet mix of success and failure common to many community accountability interventions. In my research, I have observed that the negative security frame of responsibility – as individual blame and punishment – is so widely accepted that it is often embodied by many as an intense fear of responsibility, leading to binary thinking that either minimizes harm or demonizes persons causing harm. When

demonizing oneself or one's community member is too painful, often blame is merely shifted, not transformed – onto the survivor, now accused of lying or overreacting. CARA's call to responsibility held a positive safety logic based on repair and transformation, but it appeared to be unintelligible to many. Fortunately, CARA had other cases where persons causing harm and their organizational allies were more responsive to accountability. A group of young women at a local Chicanx organization who were assaulted by a fellow organizer ("Juan") teamed up collectively to demand the male leadership of their organization stop sweeping this violence under the rug, as they had several times in the past when it was made known. The organization agreed to remove Juan from his position of leadership and to institute an educational program on sexual violence not just in its Seattle chapter but nationally, a curriculum that linked Chicano and Mexican liberation with struggles to end sexual violence (CARA et al. 2008:76). The original survivor who came forward switched chapters but continued to organize with the organization.

The mix of success and failure often lies as much on the side of the targets of accountability (like Lou and the journalist or Juan and the Chicano organization), as it does on the side of those organizing for accountability. Using a positive safety epistemology that they called "jazziness" or improvisation (CARA et al. 2006), CARA members described their work supporting community accountability processes as "*trial and error*" (Thuma 2022), another iteration of CARA's robust culture of learning by doing with youthful moxie. As always, CARA was trying to both practice accountability internally while also organizing for it externally. Some of this success and failure on CARA's part could be attributed to sexual violence's cross-cutting nature, slicing across existing wounds and social cleavages within a community. CARA attempted to organize community at precisely the moment it was most

needed and most lacking, when community fissures were likely to be exacerbated. At the same time, CARA's intersectional framing and identity positioned it well to be able to address intracommunity rape and abuse in the marginalized communities most endangered by a carceral feminist response.

Some of these failures hit close to home. When a CARA staff member sought a community process with her abusive partner, she invited in their shared community, part of the radical anti-violence world in Seattle. When some of their shared friends defended the abusive partner, however, the process shifted focus to safety planning and harm reduction for the survivor solely with those who were clearly her supporters. This allowed her to eventually escape her violent home, stay at a friend's house as a refuge, and move away from the city. In this case, fault lines among even CARA's comrades and allies appeared.

The Black women of CARA also experienced this cross-cutting acutely over several years of organizing for a local Black man, "Dan," to take accountability. Dan was an organizer against racialized police violence, and every summer, young women and girls from the youth organization he worked with came to CARA about his sexual harassment in manipulating young women into sexual relationships. This included sexually inappropriate conversations, taking youth to strip clubs, and bringing young women out to get drunk and propositioning them for sex. CARA made multiple efforts over many years to call for accountability from the organizations that Dan worked for, but they faced strong headwinds from other Black women, particularly older women, who felt that the accusations and call for accountability were sowing division within the Black community by demonizing a Black man already targeted by police for his activism, and therefore implicitly supporting white supremacy.

CARA members stuck by their demand that Dan's behavior needed to change, drawing on the intersectional frame they had developed that showed how rape and racism are intertwined, and both must be overcome in order to achieve justice. Historically, enslaved Black women were subjected to constant sexual violence by white masters, but they were legally defined as "unrapeable" (Estrich 1987; Sharpley-Whiting 1997) and denied the status of womanhood (Haley 2016; Truth 1851) because white supremacist law framed Black women as unworthy of the protections afforded white women (Carby 1987). This dehumanizing misogynoir echoes into the present like many of "slavery's afterlives" (Hartman 2019) in various modes of victim-blaming: the adultification of Black girls (Gilmore and Bettis 2021; Sharpe 2016:2), the hypersexualization of Black bodies of all genders (Brooks 2010; Seck 2013), and the criminalization of Black survivors' self-defense (Goodmark 2023). CARA reflected on, wrote about, and organized around the obstacles Black survivors face in naming intraracial rape: "skepticism about the credibility of black women, fear of racialized demonization, and the threat of ostracism from one's community" (Kigvamasud'Vashti and Simmons 2011:60). CARA found itself facing "this tension that had been that has been talked about by Black feminists forever" (Kigvamasud'Vashti and Simmons 2011:60), where once again race and gender, or white supremacy and rape, were pitted against one another.

CARA worked around this divide and conquer strategy carefully. The Black People's Project organized annual Nat Turner Teach-Ins to connect historical resistance against anti-Black violence (including rape) to CARA's contemporary anti-violence organizing. They screened *NO! The Rape Documentary*, a film about Black women's experiences of rape by Black men, at four different community venues in Seattle (Kigvamasud'Vashti and Simmons

2011:66–69). They continued to organize for Dan's accountability through one-on-one relationships with Black women in his community (CARA et al. 2006). Ultimately, "*there was no transformation of any sort [on his behalf]. It was a holding pattern. But they [the Black People's Project] were transforming relationships around him*" (Thuma 2022). Kigvamasud'Vashti's deep roots in Seattle's small Black community meant those relationships could survive conflict: "*I will say, by the grace of God, the relationships with the women in that room that day have healed. I love those women. They know where I stand politically. I know where they stand. It's all love*" (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022).

Institutionalization

The Safety Project was convened by an organizer within CARA for a time, but it proved difficult to institutionalize. Cases of violence continued to emerge organically and required creative, flexible responses from whomever in the organization had strong relationships with the members and organizations involved in a case. Beyond the official project, its lessons live on in the writing that CARA and INCITE! did about their work, seeds that helped spread transformative justice more widely. Typical for CARA's liberatory pedagogy approach, they added another loop of reflection and analysis after this initial organic and cumulative process of learning by doing (and failing and trying again). They documented three cases in a book chapter for an INCITE! anthology published in 2006, which has subsequently been translated into German, Spanish, and Turkish.[5] In the chapter, CARA distilled from these and other cases ten principles for community accountability work,

[5] The Berlin Transformative Justice Collective (which I co-founded) translated the chapter into German in 2014 (CARA 2014), and it was subsequently translated into Turkish by Özge Karlık and published by the organization Cinsel Şiddetle Mücadele Derneği (translating roughly to "Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence") (CARA 2019).

which lay the foundation for the concepts of abolitionist self, agency, and responsibility that I unpack in the next chapter as part of the positive safety framework.

For example, CARA's first principle, "1. Recognize the humanity of everyone involved," acknowledges violence as a behavior and not a permanent identity. The self exceeds moral binaries of "good victim" versus "evil perpetrator." This helps resist the demonization of perpetrators that annuls their human vulnerability and marks them as disposable. Their second principle, "2. Prioritize the self-determination of the survivor," articulates a vision of survivor agency rather than passive victimhood that enables survivors to join with others in collective action as agents who can transform their situation. The text continues:

> 3. Identify a simultaneous plan for safety and support for the survivor as well as others in the community. 4. Carefully consider the potential consequences of your strategy. 5. Organize *collectively.* 6. Make sure everyone in the accountability-seeking group is on the same page with their political analysis of sexual violence.

These principles affirm a social ontology of the self as enmeshed with others in webs of community, which are mobilized to action through CARA's strategy of organizing community via mutual aid for survivors.

> 7. Be clear and specific about what your group wants from the aggressor in terms of accountability. 8. Let the aggressor know your analysis and your demands. 9. Consider help from the aggressor's friends, family, and people close to her.

These principles do not elaborate on responsibility in great detail, likely because CARA's cases often involved perpetrators who took limited to no accountability. They do, however, suggest an abolitionist concept of responsibility focused on accountability over blame and transformation over punishment. CARA's last principle hints at the bittersweet failures and successes of an epistemology of improvisation, and the long winding paths to accountability: "10. Prepare to be engaged in the process for the long haul" (CARA et al. 2006:251–56).

Two years later, as part of a broader toolkit on law enforcement violence (INCITE! 2008), INCITE! published a two page handout (INCITE! 2008) on community accountability influenced by CARA's work. It categorized community accountability work into four main parts (I've also heard called 'petals.'). Along the horizontal, interpersonal axis are elements of intervention: survivor support and self-determination; and perpetrator accountability and change after violence has occurred. Prevention runs along the vertical, collective axis: changing community norms and practices (prevention); and the transformation of underlying conditions that enable violence.

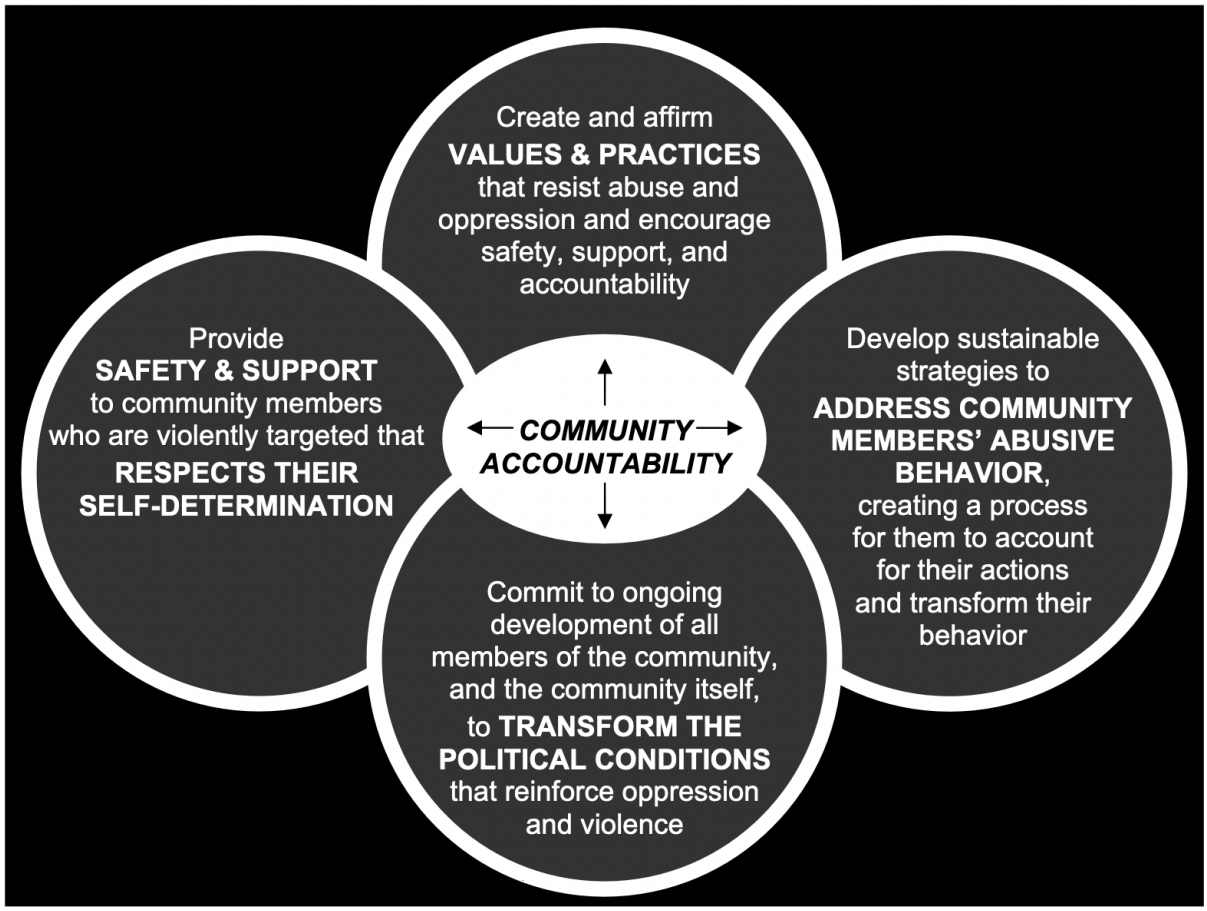

Figure 2: Illustration of the four main parts of community accountability, according to INCITE!'s 2008 publication (INCITE! 2008)

These four elements structure my subsequent analysis of positive safety in Chapters Three and Four. CARA themselves describe their ten principles as "bones" (CARA et al. 2006:69), and taken together with the four elements, I would argue that they provided some of the most potent DNA for the transformative justice movement.

Uneasy Inheritances

Using a framework of five movement-centric dimensions, I have argued that CARA (re)vitalized Black, Indigenous, and women/queer of color and anti-carceral feminist legacies that had been submerged by the cooptation of mainstream anti-violence work across three of these dimensions: their framing and ideology, their collective identity, and their strategy. They hybridized these legacies with contemporary abolitionist analyses to develop the seeds of a positive safety framework for the transformative justice movement. Unfortunately, CARA also continued to be entangled in some unwanted inheritances from the coopted and carceral movement that made it hard for the organization to fully escape negative security logics, particularly along the movement dimensions of organization and resources. While CARA dreamed about organizational structures and funding outside of the non-profit industrial complex, it never made it there, leaving that for the next generations of abolitionist feminists to figure out.

Unfortunately, CARA's founding conditions in the emergency of SRR's organizational collapse may have hindered CARA's emergence into a more radical organizational structure and funding model. In our interview, Bierria looked back bittersweetly:

> *I wish that more organizations were created as a project that communities and survivors proactively imagine, rather than create because we're in the midst of*

> *conflict and we're focused on taking something back because it was taken from us wrongly. I wonder if CARA would have been a different kind of organization if we hadn't come up out of the flame of Seattle Rape Relief. If CARA were, instead, a group of survivors who were the same constituents – women of color, people with disabilities, young people – who came together and said "What we need is a radical anti-rape organization that focuses on our lives, our communities, and our vision." Then be really intentional and caring and take our time. I just wonder if this would have made a difference in how CARA was organized and structured.* (Bierria 2020b)

CARA's Organizational Structure

CARA's organizational structure was guided by the positive safety assertion that survivors should be recognized as powerful agents of change. The organization aimed to dissolve the hierarchy and false division created between professionalized, credentialed, and expert "staff" and pathologized "clients" at mainstream anti-violence organizations. CARA recognized that everyone in its midst was a survivor of some kind of violence, and the organization was made up first and foremost of members, who cycled between formal paid staff, stipended positions, and unpaid volunteer positions. Each of the three organizing projects had a paid organizer and a stipended "Community Action Team" made up of community members, who collaborated with the organizer on events, workshops, political education, and community organizing.

CARA was explicitly aiming to not repeat the mistakes of SRR, whose "*structure created opacity and secrets and power that was super top heavy*" (Farr 2022). Farr continued, "*We really wanted to create from the ground power that was resonating in many people's hands rather than one secret leader.*" CARA used their signature liberatory pedagogy approach of taking an action step, reflecting, and taking another in order to "*allow a community to find its own structure*" (Farr 2022). This flatter organizational structure harkened back to early feminist organizing in the second wave of the 1960s and 70s, which

was often characterized by small, non-hierarchical, and informal organizational structures, like "rap groups" (consciousness raising groups) that met in women's living rooms (Freeman 1972). Feminist values of relationality triumphed over what was viewed as a patriarchal model of hierarchical power and control (Martin 1990).

CARA's founders were anxious about power, having seen it so misused at SRR. Ibarra remembers her anxiety at realizing that CARA's kitchen table also held her boss, a position she felt she could never trust as a working class woman. This fear of power as abuse animated three decades of history at SRR as well. Originally, SRR had a steering committee of staff and volunteers who made decisions largely by consensus (Hormann and Vivian 2004), but over the years, it became non-profitized and acquired a board and an Executive Director. These groups polarized around the issue of power: the board and executive director wanted formal and hierarchical structures of accountability, while staff and volunteers preferred the informal and relational decision-making of their earlier years, even if it meant "process[ing] everything to death" and rarely reaching or implementing a decision (Anon n.d.:10). This ambivalence also manifested in CARA's structure. There was no official leadership role, but the program coordinator role ultimately had all the responsibility of a director without the official authority of one. This created dilemmas when some staff expected a flat and equal compensation scheme for all, although Bierria was working nearly double the hours as some CARA employees. Some recognized this as a typical anti-Black pattern within organizations, where Black women are overworked, underpaid, and underrecognized.

While I have slightly idealized grassroots feminist legacies from earlier generations in this chapter, they were not without their own problems and dilemmas that transformative

justice activists have inherited through (re)vitalization. Freeman wrote about the dangers and difficulties of this idealized flat structure within feminist movements in her famous "Tyranny of Structurelessness" article (Freeman 1972). She argues that structureless does not actually exist; every group is structured, but some are done so formally (and thus their decision-making structures are transparent), while others remain informal (and opaque). Freeman demonstrates how an allegedly horizontal organization fails to acknowledge and counteract pre-existing structural and community power dynamics, which then determine who will exercise shadow leadership in the group. This, for Freeman, is more dangerous than formally structured organizations where power dynamics are known and can be discussed or transformed.

Indeed, the shadow side of CARA's sense of family was that some staff felt excluded or on the outside because they were not part of the inner circle of friendship that animated the project. CARA was fluid and emergent, sometimes to a fault – evading the complex structure diagrams that were housed in CARA's archives but never fully implemented. This emergent structure left confusion about the place of members who were outside of the three organizing projects' constituencies, as well as the position of projects that emerged at the seams of all three, like the Safety Project. The program coordinator was tasked with synching up all this emergence into something coherent, a task sometimes like herding cats. Farr laments understructuring the organization, which she felt was unprepared for the burden of "*holding the dynamite of violence, sexual violence in each of these communities*" (Farr 2022). Bierria wishes CARA had developed a formal collective structure, but they felt they had no non-profit models to build from at the time (Bierria 2020b). This suggests the limits of the historical archive CARA was drawing from, as well as a lack of contemporary examples to

which CARA had access. In (re)vitalizing older, grassroots models of flat organizational structure, CARA also resurrected their deep-seated problems in ways it was never fully able to resolve.

CARA's Resources

Throughout its lifetime, CARA struggled to stay financially afloat. Organizers dreamed of a resourcing strategy based on member dues, community donations, and other more democratic approaches that were not tied to the strings of philanthropy and government. "*Out of the flame*" of SRR (Bierria 2020b), CARA emerged like an raft of positive safety, but one that was adrift in a wider city, state, and federal ocean of negative security. Those dreams washed ashore on the rocky realities of Seattle's economic terrain. Earlier generations of anti-violence organizations, like SRR, had started as self-organized, do-it-yourself, volunteer-driven endeavors. While CARA did choose a less resource intensive strategy than previous generations (unlike SRR, who focused on direct services), nonetheless, their choice to have a physical space – which several interviewees described as being central to its impact – required it to garner enough money to pay the rent. It also maintained a small staff, with many members moving between paid and volunteer positions at CARA, with at least one supporting her activism through sex work. No matter the specific breakdown of funding sources at any given time, CARA members always felt the contradiction of accepting money from the state, against whose own violence they were organizing.

While it navigated the same challenges that past generations of anti-violence activists had faced, CARA confronted some of those same feminists, now "grown up," in Seattle politics. The organization inherited not only the legacies of radical, grassroots feminist organizing but also the coopted landscape of the anti-violence field. The organization had

ambivalent relationships to past political generations, particularly in the feminist anti-violence world. Older feminists who had gone the route of institutionalization, cooptation, and carceral collusion both helped and hurt CARA.

On the one hand, the organization was able to receive start-up funding from SRR's earmarked budget because of support from institutional white feminist allies and a "*Black institutional ally*" (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022) in the city's Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Office. These liberal feminists, according to Bierria, were supportive of community organizing as a supplement to medical and legal services, and endorsed a "multicultural approach" to "underserved" communities (Bierria 2007:152), giving CARA a quarter million dollar budget for its first year (2000). This office had even used funds from a Grant to Encourage Arrest Policies, a classic carceral feminist element of VAWA, to fund a conference on intersectional approaches to domestic and sexual violence, with Black feminist Barbara Smith as the keynote. Several CARA members worked officially as AmeriCorps volunteers for the office, using their hours to work at CARA.

CARA faced opposition, however, from the white leadership of mainstream (and carceral) domestic violence and sexual assault service providers who questioned their mandate and competed with them for funding. Because community-based anti-violence organizations were too small to apply for funding from VAWA, they were often dependent on larger, predominantly white organizations that hired them as subcontractors, allowing the executive directors of large service provider organizations to control the strings of smaller organizations in a dance of financial dependency. These directors appeared to have racist, ageist disdain for the audacity of CARA's young women of color fighting for their own piece of the pie, calling Bierria "incompetent" and without the "right" to the funds (Bierria

2007:153). These middle-class white women, whom one CARA member called the "white girl mafia," had the ear of right-wing city council members, and each year for at least three years they pushed for CARA to be defunded (Bierria 2007:155). City council was similarly split between CARA supporters and opponents, with one progressive city council member stepping in when CARA was threatened with an audit.

These political resources were rooted in certain relationships and once those key people left office, CARA faced a more hostile funding climate. A new mayor in 2002 shrunk anti-violence budgets, particularly for community-based organizations working with marginalized populations, like CARA and its allies: Northwest Network, API Family Safety Center, and Chaya. Councilman Richard Conlin, who objected to CARA's use of the term 'rape culture,' proposed cutting even more of CARA's budget and reallocating it to its ally organizations, assuming they would be happy for the windfall. Instead, these organizations resisted this "divide and conquer" (Bierria 2007:156) strategy and publicly stood in solidarity with CARA, who also rallied their community supporters to "deluge […] the mayor and city council with hundreds of letters, phone calls, and emails" (Bierria 2007:157). Ultimately, Conlin and his faction backed down from this strategy. In the longer term, however, the city continued to chip away at the smaller, community-based anti-violence organizations, and CARA turned to philanthropic funding; its archives indicate it applied to at least 46 grant-making agencies.

The organization also hosted a number of fundraiser events, including a Saint Patrick's Day dog parade and a Revolutionary Oscars Watch party, which promised "guerilla analysis during commercial breaks" and advertised with clever questions like: "Do you criticize the waste of the wealthy but still buy *Star* magazine to look at the dresses?" Under

Kigvamasud'Vashti and Colbert's tenure as Co-Directors, CARA developed a regular women's spoken word night called "Ladies' First" that served both as an alternative income source for the organization, while also promoting feminist of color empowerment. Eventually, however, the organization wanted to ensure all performers were paid fairly, and so even this income stream dried up somewhat. CARA was interested in alternative funding models, but archives and interviews suggest that none of these ever left the planning stage: it was "*always something that was on the roadmap*" (Georgena 2022), but never became a vehicle. Further, CARA's board had never been particularly effective because its make-up as primarily ex-volunteers or academics meant it lacked expertise in fundraising.

To survive this precarity, CARA developed what members described as "disidentification" (Muñoz 1999; Thuma 2006) and a "dual identity" (Bierria 2007), similar to code switching, substituting words like 'community engagement' for 'community organizing' or 'underserved' for 'marginalized' constituencies (Bierria 2007:157) in grant reports. Colbert began to feel like her job was non-profit management, not activism, and she became disillusioned.

Eventually she and Kigvamasud'Vashti decided to walk away from the dance of dependency altogether, declining to reapply for city funding in 2010. Both Co-Directors decided to move on to new endeavors. Kigvamasud'Vashti spoke of the pain of letting CARA die on her watch, while Colbert was more reconciled to the fact that organizations come and go, and remained clear that she did not want to pass CARA's financial troubles to another generation: "*I was not going to bring in another group of sisters to come in and clean up*" (Colbert 2022). Staff's salaries were cut and eventually the organization gave up their beautiful space on 23rd and Dearborn. The organization attempted to continue on volunteer

labor alone, but without a strong board to steer it, CARA crashed. In a tragic echo of generations past, CARA closed its doors for similar purported reasons as its predecessor, SRR: financial woes. Unlike SRR, CARA found itself in funding trouble because it made a choice out of principle. In the end, however, neither could outrun the problem of scarce resources. CARA inherited the legacy of an anti-violence sector saturated by a negative security framework committed to state sovereignty, which translated in practice into state funding via the non-profit industrial complex. In that soil, other options appeared too difficult to bring to fruition.

Transgenerational Resonances

After the organization closed its doors, its former members continued to scatter its seeds. Some members grew in their leadership in the anti-violence world, including at sister organizations like API Chaya. The majority, however, went on to careers in different fields, proving the success of CARA's efforts to create a culture of liberation that could suffuse various institutions, rather than a cadre of anti-violence professionals. Former members reported bringing their community accountability skills with them to work in disability policy advocacy, as artists and educators, at salons styling the hair of women from a domestic violence shelter down the street, or at human resource departments at tech companies. Several still do unpaid work in abolitionist feminist projects or informal community mediation. As Bierria said, "*CARA lives on as a decentralized set of learnings*" (Bierria 2020a). Farr shared, "*I feel like I'm just now catching some of those petals in my own soul - and thorns*" (Farr 2022). Martina Kartmann, who co-founded the Justice Collective in Seattle in the years following CARA's closure, described how she was able to step into a rich history

of transformative justice organizing in Seattle: "*There was lineage. I was able to come here and grow because the soil was already enriched*" (Kartmann 2020).

Those who continued organizing in the Seattle community, however, had to live inside the echo of CARA's loss. CARA's chapter, however, remains a seedbank. "*Young people use our chapter as a blueprint*," Kigvamasud'Vashti shared (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022). In our interview, Colbert named her desire that young Black women could update the text: "*My hope is that they'll add some extra flavor to it*" (Colbert 2022). One piece she felt was missing is "*What happens when you're dealing with somebody whose behavior has gone unchecked for a long time? Are they able to take accountability?*"

Though she may not have known it, this wish was granted by a new generation of Black anti-violence activists in Seattle. Shortly after CARA ended, Kigvamasud'Vashti learned through a mentor of hers that several young women of color in town wanted to speak to her. It was a rainy fall night in Seattle, and Kigvamasud'Vashti's young son was in a tap dance class, so she agreed to meet them in the parking lot outside the dance school. The young women came to her because they had experienced Dan's abuse and harassment, which had not ended despite CARA's repeated interventions. They were hurt and angry at CARA for not getting Dan removed from his position earlier.

Kigvamasud'Vashti recounted: "*This one young girl […] looked me in my face and she said, 'Had y'all dealt with him the way you needed to, then he wouldn't be our problem today. So what're you gonna do?*'" (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022) Faced with this confrontation, she chose community accountability: supporting those harmed and taking accountability for her shortcomings, including CARA's closure:

> *And I was like, "Holy shit. […] you're right. Like, you're absolutely right. […] Well, okay, first thing I'm gonna do is I'm gonna validate your complaints. I understand*

> *that, I believe you, I know that's true. I had hoped for better. I thought we had folks that were connected to him who had promised better. And our leaving meant that we can no longer follow up and continue that work. So you're absolutely right to call me out. And I'm really sorry." And then I went and continued to validate their complaints and tried to support them […] We went as far as we could at the time. But CARA died on my watch. And that's what needed to be in place. Because if the organization was in place and had our structures, then we could have continued to build on the lessons learned with that person. And stay in communications with the people that worked with him, so that we would get this information even sooner.*

Afterwards, Kigvamasud'Vashti's mentor commented that these women had come with gasoline, and she had given them the match. The former CARA leader disagrees, however, with the idea that she had exacerbated the situation:

> *If he is continuing to behave in such a way that an entire new generation of young Black women got a fire in their belly to get rid of him. Yeah, he's gone. And I am going to help them.* (Kigvamasud'Vashti 2022)

Indeed, those young women succeeded in finally getting him removed from his position.

Years later, however, the pattern repeated itself, affirming CARA's tenth principle of engaging in a process for the long-haul. Those young women, who were at this point no longer teens but adults and some of them college graduates, were still mad that Dan had not exercised any real accountability. Despite losing his job, he had found other work and was living in a nice house. "'*He's living a good life. And we out here struggling,*'" one of the young women shared, according to Kigvamasud'Vashti. She remembers responding:

> *That's the nature of the racist misogynistic country that we live in. He is gonna land on his feet. And he is going to be able to get work elsewhere. If he was a convicted felon, that would be different. But we organized at CARA because we weren't trying to create more convicted felons.*

The islands of positive safety that CARA created were a tiny archipelago in a sea of negative security, where punitive logic leads to either the minimization of harm ("He is gonna land on his feet") or the demonization of harm-doers ("convicted felons"). CARA was charting the perilous route of community accountability in between those two extremes.

Kigvamasud'Vashti concluded this story by framing CARA's unfinished mission as a transgenerational inheritance for the future:

> *I wanted to say to her, "Remember what you said to me? If I had done what I needed to do, we wouldn't be having this conversation now. I think that you are now that generation, you are the generation that needs to answer to the women who are coming behind you. I can support you to do that."*

Conclusion: A Thousand Flowers Blooming

For years, small groups of people have come together to support survivors and intervene in violent situations, particularly in marginalized communities who could not turn to the police for support. CARA, however, marked what I argue was a new era for these interventions, bringing them from the kitchen table into a more sustainable organizational structure and framing them as a form of activism. CARA's core "seeds" were spread through subsequent generations of movement activism, leading to a "thousand flowers" of countless transformative justice initiatives with regards to sexual and partner violence in the contemporary moment. Why was CARA's DNA so potent? Nearly every member I interviewed spoke of CARA as a pivotal experience in their lives. Farr described it as a "*miracle of revolutionary thought*" (Farr 2022). Another volunteer recalled, "*I became the person that I was supposed to be during my time at CARA*" (Georgena 2022). Its shadow sides – its inability to create a structure or resourcing strategy that could resolve the problems inherited from past generations – were inextricably tied to its strengths: its emergent qualities, its youthful bravery, and its uncompromising radicalism.

Chapter Three: From the Negative Security of Carceral Feminism to the Positive Safety of Transformative Justice

In the previous chapter, I argued that Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) developed the seeds of a positive safety praxis, a movement DNA that they spread. These seeds have now blossomed into what appears to be hundreds of different initiatives. I open this chapter by providing a brief tour of the evolution of the movement to the present day, looking at how transformative justice practice has branched out to different communities, focused on various forms of harm, and innovated complementary pieces of the overall transformative justice mission. From these blooms, I distill the main concepts and practices of positive safety that the transformative justice movement has innovated. I focus on three of the four areas INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence names as elements of community accountability (INCITE! 2008): structural conditions, survivors, and perpetrators (I discuss the fourth element, community, at length in the next chapter). Drawing on Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive freedom (Berlin 1969b), I distinguish between what I term the *negative security* inherent in carceral feminism, which is organized around a principle of separation and isolation, and I contrast it to a concept of *positive safety* within the transformative justice movement, which is organized by logics and gestures of connection. Negative security and positive safety offer contrasting understandings of violence, the self and its agency, and responsibility.

In the section on structural conditions, I elaborate on carceral feminism's negative security framework for defining gender-based violence, and I contrast it with how positive

safety has innovated an analysis of gender-based violence that is intersectional and includes a critique of state violence. Positive safety connects between various forms of violence rather than siloing them as separated. In the section on survival, I look at how positive safety views the self as interconnected with others, rather than autonomously sovereign, and shaped by systems of both oppression and nurturance, thus moving beyond a rigid and mutually exclusive binary of victim and perpetrator, or of agencylessness and agency. I show how transformative justice practices this interconnection by building survivor power through collective action with community rather than through technologies of separation like the women's shelter. Lastly, in the section on perpetrator responsibility, I describe transformative and restorative justice accountability processes with persons who cause harm as "giving account." This positive safety approach uses community connection, rather than the separation of the prison, as both accountability's means (dialogue towards behavior change) and ends (reintegration of perpetrators into community relations).

The Contemporary Transformative Justice Landscape

Several tendencies have emerged across the movement in the decade after CARA's founding, from 2000 to 2010, which I frame as the "first generation." Here, CARA's seeds of positive safety were spread and anti-violence activism was (re)vitalized across a variety of different movements. CARA and INCITE! were early drivers of community accountability, and they ran parallel to the work of generationFIVE in the San Francisco Bay Area, which was particularly focused on ending child sexual abuse in five generations. During this time, INCITE! popularized the phrase 'community accountability' and generationFIVE the term

'transformative justice,' and the two were used sometimes interchangeably. Some of the key texts of this period, in addition to CARA and INCITE!'s work mentioned in the previous chapter, were generationFIVE's report *Toward Transformative Justice* (Kershnar et al. 2007) from 2007 and the anthology *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities* (first published as a zine in 2008 and then as a book in 2011) (Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha 2008; Chen et al. 2011). These early innovators shared their work publicly at social justice oriented venues like U.S. Social Forum and Allied Media Conference.

Geographically, better-known organizations were concentrated in major cities, primarily in the East and West Coast metropoles (particularly Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, Philadelphia, and New York). In the Southeast, INCITE! had chapters in Washington, D.C. and New Orleans, and generationFIVE supported a transformative justice hub in Atlanta. Chicago groups like Project Nia and Young Women's Empowerment Project were using transformative justice particularly with youth and with young women in the sex trade. To date, I have not been able to find organizations focused primarily or solely on transformative justice in the Southwest; it is likely that there is more resourcing and political tolerance in progressive coastal cities and that transformative justice work is done by other names or under the radar in other places. In fact, the grassroots character of transformative justice practices means that many practitioners did not document their work or cohere into an enduring organizational shape, making their stories harder to find.

In terms of collective identity, many different marginalized communities became drivers of the transformative justice movement. Anti-violence organizing within communities of color and immigrant communities was one of the largest. For instance, Creative

Interventions in the San Francisco Bay Area offered one of the only systematic "pilot projects" on record, which partnered with a number of local women of color anti-violence groups to undertake multiple interventions into situations of violence. Queer, sex worker, and street harassment organizations (like the Safe OUTside the System Collective, featured in Chapter Four) also brought important new lessons to this first generation of the movement. For example, whereas CARA had largely been addressing sexual violence in private settings within community, these organizations surfaced public, street, and stranger-based harassment as concerns. Disabled activists like Mia Mingus and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha and disability justice organizations questioned the accessibility and urgent pace of transformative justice work. They developed analyses of how mental health, trauma, or neurodivergence might impact or impede a process of survivor healing or perpetrator accountability. Healing justice, an approach developed by the Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective (Page et al. 2005) helped transformative justice practitioners connect the dots between individual healing and community and structural conditions for health and well-being. The organization Black Youth Project 100 later created a Healing and Safety Council that melded healing and transformative justice approaches.

Early experiments in the first generation built on the strategy developed by CARA and others of community accountability interventions – extended processes responding to individual situations of violence and integrating survivor support, perpetrator accountability, and community prevention. For example, the groups Support New York and Philly Stands Up (both discussed later in this chapter) built curricula to work with persons who had caused sexual harm for up to two years (Support New York 2014). Creative Interventions documented the learnings from their pilot project in a massive toolkit for interventions that

was over 500 pages (Creative Interventions et al. 2012). This strategy, however, proved to be time and energy intensive and faced many failures. Almost all the well-known organizations of the first generation ended in the 2010s. Fatigue around recalcitrant perpetrators and communities led some in what I periodize as the "second generation" to return their focus to survivors and re-engage a community organizing strategy through defense campaigns to liberate survivors criminalized for self-defense, such as Survived & Punished, which is featured later in this chapter. Others pivoted away from interventions by expanding their understanding of transformative justice to encompass a wider range of activities not necessarily coordinated around a specific incident, including community education and harm reduction.

These pivots helped widen positive safety's realm of application to new forms of violence in what I call a second generation of the movement, running roughly from 2010 to 2020. The fruits of this expansion are evidenced in the 2020 anthology *Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement* (Dixon and Piepzna-Samarasinha 2020), where groups working on new forms of violence are featured alongside organizations and individuals focusing on sexual and partner violence, which were transformative justice's origins. These new approaches include non-police responses to mental and physical health crises (like Fireweed Collective, Trans Lifeline, and Oakland Power Projects), resisting securitization in non-profit settings, for example with unhoused youth (Broadway Youth Center), organizing safer parties for queer people of color (SOS Collective at the Audre Lorde Project), and community defense for undocumented immigrants (Mijente).

The Me Too movement of 2018 was arguably the biggest politicization of sexual violence seen since carceral feminist cooptation, and critiques of individual punishment as the response to outings of famous abusers led more people to transformative justice solutions. Because so many cases pertained to workplace sexual harassment, it also brought unions and an analysis of workers into the conversation. By far, however, the biggest spreader of the seeds of positive safety has been the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The first wave of mobilizations in 2014 lead to greater analysis of and mobilization against police and other carceral violence against Black women, trans, and non-binary people (Simpson, Walter, and Ebert 2021). This culminated in greater Black feminist and queer leadership in the BLM movement when it crested in a second, even fiercer wave of mobilization in 2020.

I would argue that the 2020 uprisings mark a "third generation" for the movement, which has yielded "a thousand flowers blooming," or countless transformative justice projects and initiatives. The uprisings also popularized the terms 'abolition' and 'transformative justice,' which many organizations have adopted as a concept, ethos, or approach, rather than a concrete praxis or campaign. This popularization has also led to movement anxiety around cooptation once again. This period saw greater openness to working within institutions like universities, prisons, and schools, with debate around the boundaries of the transformative justice framework and its relationship to restorative justice within institutions.

Mainstream anti-violence organizations also faced a reckoning with regards to their collusion with law enforcement. In light of the uprisings, 46 sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions signed a statement of self-accountability in 2020 that began in the following way:

> We, the undersigned sexual assault and domestic violence state coalitions call ourselves to account for the ways in which this movement, and particularly the white leadership within this movement, has repeatedly failed Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) survivors, leaders, organizations, and movements. (Anon 2020b)

Though it was not an original goal of the movement, I would argue that transformative justice activism has ultimately filtered back into the rape crisis and domestic violence shelters it had originally broken away from. It has also spread internationally, with a rise in groups using the term 'transformative justice' in Western Europe, Australia, and Canada. At this point, transformative justice's (re)vitalization of anti-violence activism through a repoliticization of the issue of sexual violence appears widespread.

From Negative Security to Positive Safety

The uprisings of 2020 and the surge of new transformative justice networks and projects came at the height of my dissertation research, making it methodologically impossible to track the entire universe of organizations now using the transformative justice frame. Transformative justice spread like wildflowers – wild because often hard to categorize and regularly experimenting and evolving. So I pivoted to focus on distilling core principles and practices that unite this diversity of wildflowers, which I call positive safety. I focus largely on organizations/collectives/projects started in the first and second generation. Chapter Two traces the origins of positive safety praxis, and here I elaborate on specific qualities of positive safety in greater detail (violence, survival and responsibility in this chapter; community in the following chapter), drawing on contemporary examples.

Because the transformative justice movement emerged out of critique of the mainstream anti-violence movement, contrasts between the two approaches have been central

to defining positive safety. Similarly, I highlight the negative security logic that came to infiltrate carceral feminist approaches to violence. Drawing on a Marxist critical theory strategy of immanent critique, I use transformative justice practitioner's critiques to expose how carceral feminism's reliance on negative security undermines its own self-described feminist goals to end violence. This creates contradictions that cannot be overcome through better practices (i.e. reform) but only through new practices and new principles (i.e. abolition).

While activism and scholarship have developed analyses of particular cases of carceral feminism in different sectors, I want to unite these analyses by looking at the negative security logics that underpin them. Drawing on examples of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the criminalization of survivor self-defense, anti-trafficking activism, and sex offender laws, I argue that carceral feminism's "wounded attachments" (Brown 1993) to a victim identity have reinforced a hegemonic concept of security dependent on the "masculinist protection" (Young 2007a) of the state. This protection relies on racialized moral geographies of safe interiors and feminized private space that house powerless victims shielded by the state from dangerous exteriors (to both the home and the nation) where criminal, male perpetrators lurk. It also requires a strict moral and spatial division between victims, who should be isolated in women's shelters, and perpetrators, who should be contained in prisons, psychiatry, or other carceral institutions. Ultimately, negative security is organized around separation: the individualization of harm to interpersonal violence as personal choice, impact to single, agencyless victims in need of protection, and responsibility to solo "bad apples." Carceral feminist security is built on a liberal framework as what Berlin (1969b) called a "negative freedom," as protection from external intervention and control. I

refer to this model as negative security, which implies an understanding of well-being in negative terms (the absence of an imposition) and in terms of negative affect (avoidance of fear or pain). Such security perceives violence narrowly as imposition: visible, physical, or singular disruptions of a status quo that is assumed to be just, while its structural, "slow" violence continues unseen and unchecked. The "not in my backyard" politics this liberalism encourages is built on a landscape of privatized property in which one can exercise one's rights unhindered, a "white spatial imaginary" premised on "hostile privatism and defensive localism" (Lipsitz 2011:13). Responsibility is filtered through a liability model that blames sovereign subjects for their misdeeds, evidence of their identity as either "bad or mad" [for an example of this discourse in the context of sexual violence law, see (Hamilton 2002)]. Punishment functions by *taking account* – leveraging a quantitative metric of debt to be repaid through the deprivation of one's rights and liberties through separation from the collective body contaminated through their actions.

Scholar, poet, and interviewee Alexis Pauline Gumbs offers a contrasting concept of positive safety: "Security is attached to force, the power to dominate a situation and prevent the worst outcomes from happening to us. Safety, on the other hand has to do with generating what we DO want in our lives" (Gumbs 2011). Safety is defined robustly as positive freedom, focusing not on security *from,* but instead on safety *to* take action and exercise self and collective actualization. Whereas security appears fragile, constantly under threat of imposition, safety is resilient: it does not seek external protection, but rather individual and collective self-determination. Positive safety's operating principle is connection. First, connection does its work conceptually: understanding various kinds of structural and interpersonal violence as intersectional, viewing individual subjects as shaped both by webs

of both violence and care, and recognizing agency amidst not in spite of these conditions. Second, connection does its work in everyday, on the ground practices: bringing together community to support and empower survivors and engaging rather than containing harmful behaviors by binding back into social connections persons who cause harm. Responsibility here is understood as *giving* (rather than taking) *account*: a narrative where a perpetrator connects to those they harmed through recognition of impact, apology, and reparation, leveraging social connection to restory themselves with new, less harmful behaviors. Drawing on the Black Radical Tradition (Kelley 2003; Robinson 2005), transformative justice seeks to create safety through solidarity rather than exclusion – a "Black spatial imaginary" that turns "segregation into congregation" (Lipsitz 2011:51) and treats no one as disposable. This Black Radical Tradition is rooted in Black experience, but its vision of a more just world is accessible to all.

I structure my analysis of security and safety in this chapter in three sections: violence, survival (which includes discussions of the concept of the self and its agency), and responsibility. Sections follow a similar pattern: in each, I unpack the carceral feminist approach to the respective topic and distill from it the core tenets relevant for a theory of negative security. I use abolitionist feminist analyses to demonstrate how the carceral feminist approach comes into contradiction with itself, showing how its practices undermine its own purported aims or even create the very problems it claims to solve. I then offer a contrasting positive safety approach built on both alternative principles and practices, illustrating these with vignettes and quotes from my research. Each section closes by naming challenges practitioners face while innovating the positive safety approach, with recognition that the project of transformative justice remains emergent, contested, and experimental.

Principles	**Negative Security: Carceral Feminism**	**Positive Safety: Transformative Justice**
Concept of Violence	Interpersonal or single-axis (gender) analysis	Intersectional analysis Critique of state violence
Concept of Survival	Sovereign, autonomous self Victim/perpetrator binary Quantitative, scaled agency Paternalist protection and separation	Interconnected self Beyond binaries Qualitative, heterogenous agencies Survivor power, risk, collective action
Concept of Responsibility	Containment Harm as violation of law/right Liability – quantitative blameworthiness "Taking account" of just deserts	Engagement Harm as violation of relationships Qualitative, heterogenous responsibilities "Giving account" of self in relation to Others

Table 3: Contrasting principles of carceral feminist security with abolitionist safety

Violence: From Interpersonal to Intersectional

This section of the chapter explores the first element in INCITE!'s model of community accountability (INCITE! 2008): the structural conditions of violence. To do this, I contrast how negative security and positive safety define gender-based violence and elaborate on its implications for transformative justice praxis. I start this section with some storytelling, using a hypothetical case of partner violence between two queer people of color, Jaya and Nadia. This case knits together the discussions throughout this chapter and grounds them in a more concrete case study. Next, I describe negative security's framing of gender-based violence through the individualizing lens of the law, which influenced carceral feminist anti-violence discourse. INCITE!'s early critiques made an intervention into this discourse by pointing out the intersectional nature of gender-based violence and the role of state violence in upholding and (re)producing gender-based violence. Drawing on their positive safety analysis of violence, I argue that gender-based violence has functioned as both alibi and outcome of the carceral state. I turn to transformative justice praxis at the end of this

section to show how practitioners implement a complex definition of gender-based violence in their work. I look at the work developed within Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse (often shortened to "the Northwest Network") for distinguishing between conflict and abuse in intimate relationships, by zooming out from an isolated, incident-focused "snapshot" towards a fuller picture of a violent action's context, intent, and effect.

Storytelling

Nadia is drawn to their eyes and what a good dancer they are. Nadia had just been exploring her sexuality when she met her future partner, Jaya, at a Pride event hosted by the local queer organization where her friend worked. Their relationship escalates quickly, with Nadia moving into Jaya's apartment after a few months and Jaya increasingly financially supporting her. Nadia's education plans had previously been derailed when her mother was put in jail for relapsing in her drug addiction, and Nadia had to care for her younger siblings, so now she is doing some part-time work while trying to finish her GED. Jaya has a good job, but they are on an H-1B visa that makes them dependent on their job for their residency permit status to stay in the country. Over time, Nadia notices that Jaya's care and nurturance starts to put up boundaries around what she can and cannot do. Even though at first Jaya thought it was sexy that Nadia did some webcam sex work online, they grow increasingly jealous, begging Nadia to stop and offering them more financial support. One night, Jaya gets drunk and pressures Nadia into sex, saying that she "owes" it to them for all the support they have given her. The next morning, Nadia wants to go visit a friend from that same local queer organization to talk about her relationship, and Jaya blocks the door. Nadia pushes past

them and slams the door, injuring Jaya. Together with her friend, Nadia brainstorms what she should do next.

If Nadia turns to a mainstream anti-violence advocacy organization, like a domestic violence hotline, they might offer that she join a survivor support group or go to a women's shelter. She can also take a criminal legal pathway, calling the police and seeking a restraining order. Nadia and her friend brainstorm what might happen if she were to make that call. The officers and advocates she might encounter would likely treat Jaya as the main problem, cropping out of the frame the systems of heterosexism, racism, poverty, and xenophobia that keep Nadia trapped (and that continue to fuel her partner's violence). In the narrow criminal legal framework of the law, interpersonal violence is often reduced to individual incidents of physical violence, so Nadia's stories of ongoing and complex dynamics of financial and emotional control would likely not meet the legal standards of evidence for building a case against Jaya. Moreover, going to the police could jeopardize Jaya's immigration status. Nadia gets upset about the idea of the police coming into their home and handcuffing Jaya, knowing they have had several bad experiences with the police misgendering them and using racial slurs before, both in the country where they grew up and now here in the U.S.

As previous chapters have argued, this limited menu of options is not an accident, but it is instead the historical outcome of the mainstreaming and depoliticization of the anti-violence movement in exchange for financial resources and institutional status. INCITE! tries to reframe the question for the anti-violence movement, examining its genealogy, "The question is not, should she call the police. The questions are, why is that her only option, and can we provide other options that will keep her truly safe?" (INCITE! 2003:1)

I offer this story to carry us through this chapter, a hypothetical collage of stories heard through my interviews, participant observation, and activism.[1] Because the pathways through transformative justice are many, often filled with unexpected twists and turns, using a hypothetical story allows me to bring together that diversity into a single coherent narrative. I borrow this method from philosophy, where hypothetical cases allow thinkers to specify and sharpen particular dilemmas; in this case, the dilemma is the one faced by a survivor like Nadia who wants to keep herself safe but does not want to go to the police. I map Nadia's landscape of possible choices across negative security and positive safety approaches and the differing pathways that each vision offers Nadia in the face of relationship abuse.

Negative Security: Gender-based Violence as Outcome and Alibi of the Carceral State

Nadia is right to be wary of the individualizing lens of the criminal legal system, which tends to see domestic violence as a series of isolated incidents, with spectacular and visible physical violence trumping other forms of abuse, like financial coercion or emotional degradation. Over the past fifty years, anti-violence movements in the U.S. have aimed to show how individual violence against women must be understood in the context of systemic oppression. Survivor advocates in traditional anti-violence organizations have long used consent rather than force as the relevant measure for defining sexual violence. Whereas legal definitions of rape have historically depended on the presence or threat of physical force, sometimes requiring physical resistance on the part of the victim as evidence, a consent

[1] While I prioritize personal stories from my participant observation in other parts of this manuscript, I have chosen to develop a collage of stories for the section on survivors. This is both the result of the limits of my participant observation, as I had greater access and permission to write about perpetrator accountability and community interventions than to survivor support processes, as well as a gesture of protection, a creative way to protect survivor anonymity.

paradigm acknowledges that coercion can occur in more subtle, non-physical ways (McGregor 1996). Dynamics of power on micro interpersonal levels (one partner is physically larger), meso community or institutional levels (one partner is the other's boss), or macro socio-structural levels (one partner is positioned as male in a sexist society) can lead to situations of inequality where the other partner may be coerced and unable to communicate their lack of consent. The consent paradigm has helped broaden public and legal definitions of violence considerably by departing from the criteria of physical coercion.[2] At the same time, anti-violence advocates and activists have pushed to widen our understanding of sexual violence beyond the physical to include non-physical forms of sexual harassment from speech or images.

Over the years, anti-violence advocates also refined their analysis of intimate partner violence, understood as a relationship where one partner establishes a dynamic of power and control which undermines the other's agency and exploits their resources over time (Burk 2012a). This power and control can take many shapes, including financial, emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual forms of violence. Thus, we see sexual violence as one harm that often emerges in tandem with several others. This analysis was popularized by the "power and control wheels" developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota in 1984 (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs n.d.-b).[3] All of these

[2] The federal government altered its criteria from force to consent in its redefinition of rape in 2012, and the state of California recently passed the most progressive sexual violence legislation in the country with its so-called "Yes Means Yes" statute, which requires that universities that receive state funding define sexual consent as affirmative and not merely as the absence of a no (Chappell 2014; Criminal Justice Information Services, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 2012).

[3] Ironically, the same group which created the power and control wheels to explain intimate partner violence also developed the "Duluth Model" in the early 1980s (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs n.d.-a).This anti-violence approach integrated non-proft services more seamlessly with law enforcement, resulting in the very approaches that the transformative justice movement seeks to dismantle.

forms of coercion, as the movement has rightfully and successfully argued, are deeply connected to structures of patriarchy which intimidate, control, and exploit women's bodies.

Through the intimate violence and consent paradigms, the definition of sexual violence shifted from a singular act of physical violation towards a perspective that considers many forms of harm and coercion resulting from interpersonal patterns of power and control which play out against a backdrop of oppressive social conditions. The early anti-violence advocates of the 1970s located themselves within the broader feminist movement and were able to successfully make connections between sexism as a pervasive social structure and various forms of physical, verbal, and psychological violence as articulations of that structure. In the brief history of the movement's cooptation recounted in Chapter One, we saw that anti-violence advocates strategically used an "everywoman" approach to violence that they hoped would transcend racial and class differences. It backfired, however, by universalizing a narrow focus on gender-based oppression as the single cause of rape and abuse. As a result, the movement largely ignored other axes of oppression that survivors face, as well as sexual violence's function in systems of colonialism, ableism, occupation, war, racism, and heterosexism.[4]

One of the major struggles of the anti-violence movement since the 1970s has been the fight for legal recognition of forms of sexual violence previously invisible to the general public's moral compass and criminal statutes, particularly spousal abuse and rape, sexual harassment, and acquaintance assault (popularized by the term 'date rape' in the 1990s). This

[4] Here I am thinking about a variety of interrelated phenomena, including but certainly not limited to the following: the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of colonialism and war, the specific targeting of vulnerable potential victims on the basis of their structural positioning such as disability, age, or immigration status, and the use of sexual assault to punish lesbians, gender non-conforming, and trans people, particularly trans women, for being non-normative.

analysis succeeded in reformulating the moral wrongness of rape as a violation of bodily autonomy rather than male property (Schulhofer 1998), but it failed to expand the court and the public's understanding of violence far beyond the rape paradigm of singular acts of penetration under conditions of physical coercion. I argue that the reasons for this lie not only with failed advocacy or anti-feminist recalcitrance, but also with the limits of a negative security framework of criminal liability itself, which make it unsuited for addressing issues of oppression. I believe its focus on individual blameworthiness leaves it ignorant to the structural conditions which enable sexual violence and shape its expression.

Black and Brown anti-violence activists and scholars working in a positive safety tradition have offered two critiques of the everywoman paradigm, redefining sexual violence as caused by intersectional oppressions and as entangled with state violence. Already in the 1970s through the work of the Combahee River Collective, women, queer, and gender non-conforming people of color have insisted that their experiences of gender-based violence can only be understood through an intersectional analysis that understands all forms of oppression as interdependent, co-constitutive, and sharing the same basic structure (Combahee River Collective 1986b; Lorde 2007; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984). This calls for a model of interdependent oppression, increasingly refusing to privilege any one oppression, even gender-based oppression, as the primary relevant lens for discussing sexual violence. INCITE! offered an intersectional view of gender oppression in their 2005 report, defining it as "state-sponsored violence; the effects of imperialism and capitalism on our material, social, and spiritual conditions; corporate violence; media violence; workplace violence; and violence at the level of the family and intimate relations" targeted at women and girls due to their gender (INCITE! and CARA 2005:5). Creative Interventions goes beyond the frame of

gender in their 2012 toolkit by focusing on interpersonal violence more broadly. Their definition includes intimate partner violence, family violence, sexual violence, child abuse, and elder abuse, while gesturing at further forms of violence that occur among friends, acquaintances, and colleagues in settings beyond the home (Creative Interventions et al. 2012:1–3). By looking at a variety of coercive arrangements that include and go beyond gender, this activist redefinition also loosens a number of heteronormative assumptions, making violence against male- or trans-identified persons or within queer or trans relationships visible.

In addition, abolitionist feminists have explicitly brought a critique of state violence to their definition of gender-based violence since the early 2000s and the formation of the transformative justice movement, as detailed in the previous chapter. I argue that their analyses expose how gender-based violence serves as both alibi and outcome of the carceral state, what I call governing through sexual violence or sexual violence as statecraft. In their first collection, *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, INCITE! carefully lay out how sexual violence is an inevitable outcome of state violence (including both the present day carceral state and its genealogy as a slave and settler colonial state). These chapters analyze the interwoven experiences of women at the margins, experiencing oppressions around disability, gender, race, sexuality, class, and migration status that expose them to greater sexual violence. They demonstrate how law enforcement agents like police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and corrections officers in prisons themselves commit assault and abuse (Falcón 2006; Ritchie 2006),[5] but also how these institutions systematically expose

[5] Sexual misconduct is the second most common form of police misconduct in the U.S., and limited evidence indicates higher rates of domestic violence than the general population (Cheema 2016; Ritchie 2018).

women to rape from both state agents and others by heightening their vulnerability and dependency on others.[6] Haunani-Kay Trask (Trask 2006) and Sarah Deer (2015) each link these contemporary carceral institutions to histories of settler colonialism[7] and Native genocide, and Deer cites the work of another INCITE! member, Andrea Smith, who analyzes how carceral colonial spaces like missions and boarding schools facilitated systematic rape of Native women (Smith 2005).[8] Other institutions like psychiatry and the health care industry (Rojas Durazo 2006; Ross 2006), the foster and child welfare system (Roberts 2006), the military and war machine (Al-Adeeb 2006; Erekat 2006; Falcón 2006; S.R. 2006; Tadiar 2006), and the border regime (Falcón 2006; Fregoso 2006; Saucedo 2006) are all critiqued for their intersectional violence against women of color. As these examples make clear, sexual violence is a systemic, not incidental, outcome of the exercise of state violence – a feature, not a bug.

Sexual violence – in its sanitized form as an interpersonal violation of innocence (read: white cisheterosexual women and children) – has also been deployed as cover for the violence of the state security regime. The state has facilitated and benefited from sexual violence as a technology of domination over marginalized groups, particularly marginalized genders, and at key historical moments it has adopted concern about rape as another avenue for exercising power. Think for example of how Southern politicians (and their extrajudicial henchmen in the Ku Klux Klan and elsewhere) leveraged the fantasy of white women being

[6] They also document organizing strategies against police sexual harassment, like Sistas Liberated Ground (Sista II Sista 2006)

[7] The anthology also addresses settler colonialism outside the U.S. in the case of Palestine, with several authors offering their critiques of Zionism (Erekat 2006; Naber 2006; Naber et al. 2006).

[8] In her other work, Deer draws parallels between rape and colonization: "The damage to self and spirit that rapists cause has some of the same features that colonial governments perpetrate against entire nations" (Deer 2015:xvii).

raped by Black men in the Jim Crow South (Gunning 1996; Wells-Barnett 2018). This cleverly reconsolidated white supremacist and misogynist power. It gave whites cover to murder Black people of all genders with impunity both inside and outside legal systems. It deployed misogynoir – deflecting from the long history and present of Black women's rape at the hands of white masters and bosses by portraying Black women as deviant and licentious. And it institutionalized sexism by reinscribing white wives and daughters as worthy of protection only to the extent that they conform to their given racialized gender roles. In the 1970s process of carceral feminist cooptation, this strategic concern about rape appeared again. While Chapter One largely explored how the anti-violence movement got swept up into carceral collaborations from the movement's perspective, there was also motivation on the part of law-and-order politicians and victim's rights advocates to use sexual violence (real or imagined) for their policy programs. These groups used moral panics about sexuality and gender to push through conservative carceral policies domestically (Lancaster 2011). For example, successive moral panics about child sexual abuse have demonized "a white slaver in the nineteenth century, a sexual psychopath in the 1920s, a homosexual molester in the 1950s, a satanic abuser in the 1980s, and in the years since, a pedophile or child porn producer" (Levine and Meiners 2020:44) and resulted in the present-day sex offender regime. Yet again, during the War on Terror of the 2000s when early transformative justice groups like CARA formed, the figure of the "oppressed Muslim" woman was mobilized to garner support for campaigns of war (Puar and Rai 2002; Young 2007a), a repackaging of the Orientalist colonial trope of "saving Brown women from Brown men" (Spivak 1988).[9] As I

[9] INCITE! responded with a poster showing a woman in hijab holding a baby in front of a tank, and a defiant child staring at the audience, with the text "Invading armies have never liberated women of color and

discuss later in this chapter, recent moral panics around sex trafficking (often indistinguishable from consensual sex work) have also served to heighten punitive policies.

The example of VAWA best illustrates the contradictions engendered by sexual violence as statecraft. This 1994 law increased funding for policing and prosecution in cases of violence against women and increased collaboration between survivor support services and law enforcement. While it had some positive effects in raising awareness, increasing funding for survivor resources, and dramatically decreasing rates of reported domestic violence (a point which is hotly debated), it has also been heavily criticized.[10] As part of the largest crime bill in U.S. history (the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act), it significantly expanded funding for prisons and police, criminalized a host of new crimes (including hate crimes), subjected more crimes to the federal death penalty, and mandated the development of sex offender registries. While such laws may help better provide individual or temporary safety for some survivors, many marginalized voices in the mainstream anti-violence movement pointed out that such collaboration with the state hinders widespread and long-term safety for many others. INCITE! co-founder and academic Beth Richie notes that

> what could be understood as legislative success with the passing of the VAWA came with a cost – a set of harsh laws that disadvantaged some of the same communities that the population of women who are most vulnerable to male violence come from. (2012:86)

A contradiction lies at the heart of this legislation, which purports to address gendered interpersonal violence through augmented forms of racialized state violence, rather than

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third world women/Only we can liberate ourselves" (Road 2015).

[10] For some debates on VAWA, see (Pérez 2014; Pickert 2013) and the government report on the occasion of VAWA's 20th anniversary (Office of the Vice President 2014).

seeing them as entangled problems, dooming many carceral feminist approaches to long term self-sabotage.

Positive Safety: From "Snapshot" to Full Picture of Violence

In this sub-section, I look at how the intersectional and state-critical approaches to gender-based violence developed by Black, indigenous, and women of color feminism as well as abolition feminism are expressed in concrete praxis on the part of transformative justice movement.

Intersectional analysis may shape how practitioners make sense of micro-level, individual situations of violence that may be unclear. It can expand the frame to view these individual situations as nested within various levels of power dynamics that can enable coercion: at the meso-level of the community or organization (one partner has a prominent reputation, for example, or is the other's boss), and the macro-level of institutional or structural oppression (one partner has systemic privileges). Connie Burk, former Director of the Northwest Network, explains why these structures – in this case gender – become decisive for understanding relationship violence:

> Even with the absence of "intention" to batter, even when a man is acting out of remedial skills and a lack of emotional competence – those times when a man is just being an asshole but has no intention to turn a subject into an object – his scary actions will more easily be coercive. Like it or not, those actions carry to [*sic*] weight of the history of men's coercive control of women. […] Women's actions often lack the credibility to leverage institutional supports to establish authority over men. Women can set the stage for coercive control in heterosexual relationships, but it takes a disproportionate degree of determination to do so. (Burk 2012a:5–71)

Burk insists that interpersonal actions cannot be viewed as isolated snapshots but must be understood together with their "context, intent, and effect" (Burk 2012a:5–67) in order to get a full picture of relationship violence and its complexities. I have argued elsewhere (Brazzell

2014) that a micro-level perspective on violence that only focuses on the interpersonal level may not perceive certain forms of coercion and domination that have been normalized as regular background conditions (like "a man […] being an asshole"). This micro-level only perspective, characteristic of criminal law's "incident-based focus" (Goodmark 2023:7), risks overlooking some forms of consent violations and therefore misrecognizing sexual violence itself. Thus, we need a macro-level framework of structural oppression in order to properly understand the context, intent, and effect of interpersonal actions.

This framework is also necessary because some relationship violence situations are complex; participants may contradict the binary stereotype of a monstrous perpetrator and an angelic victim. While gender indeed plays a huge role in determining who will take up the role of perpetrator in cisgendered, heteronormative forms of sexual violence, in cases of sexual violence between queer or trans persons, gender cannot be used as a reliable tool of assessment to understand who is primarily causing and who is suffering abuse. Particularly for the Northwest Network's constituency of the queer community, it can be initially difficult to discern who is causing and who is experiencing harm, and therefore how to respond properly.

Burk acknowledges the uncomfortable fact that survivors also sometimes use violence, not as part of a pattern of abuse, but in order to resist it. To illustrate this distinction, Burk explains an exercise she uses in her trainings at Northwest Network where participants receive a description of a specific behavior "Things like: *Reads partner's mail. Hits wall next to partner's head. Pressures partner to have sex*" (Burk 2012a:5–73), and they are asked how someone might use this behavior to maintain abusive power and coercive control. Then, they are asked how a person surviving abuse might enact the exact same

behavior. For example, an abuser might pressure a survivor to have sex, using sexual violence as another plank in a pattern of bodily control of the other. Subsequently, however,

> survivors might pressure their partner to have sex to head off the threat of more lethal physical violence, to prove to a partner that s/he is still sexually interested in them, to distract a partner from violence against children/or leaving to drive drunk/or escalating accusations, to "earn" money or privileges that commonly are given only in exchange for sex, to try to reconnect with some tender aspect of the relationship. (Burk 2012a:5-73–74)

While Burk does not condone this behavior on anyone's part, she warns how an abuser might manipulate this behavior on the part of the survivor to portray themselves as the actual victim and garner sympathy in the community, inoculating their own behavior from scrutiny. For example, Maya Perez, a former Northwest Network advocate I interviewed, shared that some abusers even appropriate transformative justice language to accuse their survivor of "*not being accountable*" (Anon 2020a).

The Northwest Network has an assessment tool it uses and trains other advocates to use to assess context, intent, and effect to help distinguish between abuse and resistance. Discernment is needed, rather than the application of universal and fixed laws. Through their Relationship Skills class, the Northwest Network has spread this analysis to members of the queer community. As Perez shared with me, some people even call the hotline asking for an assessment of their own behavior out of concern they have caused harm. Similarly, "*a lot of times folks call believing that they're surviving a relationship, like an abusive dynamic, and by the end, it's illuminated that they are in fact causing harm to their partner*" (Anon 2020a). Creative Interventions and generationFIVE also offer assessment tools, but not for discerning patterns of violence as much as for planning an intervention into violence or developing a safety plan for a survivor. They do, however, include intersectional dimensions of violence and power as important concerns when planning a community response. To return to our

story, if Nadia had access to transformative justice-informed support, she could do an assessment of the larger pattern of power and control in her relationship with an advocate, like those offered by the Northwest Network. Upon assessing that the relationship is indeed violent, the advocate could help Nadia map her needs and risks across these various levels of context (i.e. community, institutions, structures) in order to develop a safety plan [see, for example, (Creative Interventions 2012)].

This expanded definition of violence, however, poses some challenges for practitioners.[11] Some have warned that an expansive analysis risks an inflationary use of the terms 'violence' and 'trauma,' making it difficult to distinguish between violence and conflict (Schulman 2016). I've heard a number of transformative justice practitioners state over the years that we need to better distinguish between conflict and violence (brown 2020), and that not everything needs an accountability process (Kaba 2022), but I have yet to hear anyone articulate the difference clearly. Perez shared that the Northwest Network has done assessments in which they find a high-conflict but not abusive relationship, and they communicate this finding to those involved. They do not frame this as fact-finding or truth, but just a way of staying clear about what they offer and ensuring the right people are receiving the right offers of support: *"We don't have a stake in the game of naming people's experiences for them, but we do want to get really clear on which services we can provide for each person's experience as to be supportive as possible and not collude with violence"* (Anon 2020a).

[11] I owe much of my thinking on these questions to conversations with fellow abolitionists and transformative justice practitioners, particularly a reading group in Berlin with Zoya, Todd, and Farzada.

Facilitators of such processes are challenged to hold multiple levels of violence (micro, meso, and macro) at once and identify which are most salient in a given setting, making it difficult to clarify the appropriate responsibility of relevant actors based on their actions (or lack thereof). When people expand from a carceral to a broad transformative justice definition of sexual violence without also expanding their definition of responsibility beyond a carceral approach, there may be a mismatch between someone's harmful behavior and the consequences people want to impose as a result. Demands for accountability may not be proportionate or right-sized (to use Shannon Perez-Darby's terminology). For Perez, it helps to "get specific" on both support and accountability:

> *How do we support the variety of different types [of violence] in a very specific way that's actually meeting people's needs? […] The types of harm that people label as sexual violence may range from catcalling to rape, which the response to would look so different. We're attending to those experiences in a very different way.* (Anon 2020a)

Survival: From Paternalist Protection to Self-Determination

This section of the chapter addresses survivor support, the second of the four elements of community accountability named by INCITE!'s model (INCITE! 2008). As ever, I contrast negative security's focus on separation – in this section, in its conceptions of the self and agency – with a positive safety vision of interconnectedness. The first part of this section critiques negative security's view of survivors through the lens of a rigid binary between good victims and bad perpetrators. I argue that, as part of its cooptation, carceral feminist discourse in the anti-violence movement adopted this binary, developing "wounded attachments" to a specific performance of the good victim. This binary is grounded in a model of the subject as atomistic, autonomous, and sovereign. I propose an abolitionist

model of self to counter it that is rooted in interdependence with other beings – through socialization into systems of violence and oppression, as well as networks of care and nurturance. I am particularly interested in the figure of the criminalized survivor, whose use of violent self-defense against abusers or attackers violates the presumed norms of the "innocent, powerless victim" and exiles them from recognition as victim, exposing the dimensions of racial, class, and other privilege that attend to socially authorized victim status. In particular, carceral feminist efforts to increase criminalization have ricocheted back onto survivors, criminalizing their survival and creating contradictions for the anti-violence agenda. I look at transformative justice-oriented campaigns to free criminalized survivors from jails, prisons, and detention, including the work of the organization Survived & Punished, as an older tactic the movement has (re)vitalized as a way of repoliticizing survivor support.

In the second part, I look at the concepts of agency that stem from both negative security and positive safety's competing models of the subject. Negative security sees agency in a quantitative framework of scaled agency, with violence and oppression seen as "limiting" agency and privileged people implicitly held up as the norm, thus preserving the carceral subject. I summarize Alisa Bierria's work as a positive safety concept of agency, a qualitative framework that argues for "heterogenous agencies," rather than a single measure of agency. This offers a conceptual schema for making sense of criminalized survivors: agents who are authors of their actions, even if their actions have not been socially authorized by dominant systems.

In the third part, I look at negative security and positive safety's prescribed responses to support survivors after violence occurs. I look at community-based models for survivor

support, returning to the story of Nadia and Jaya. These illuminate three ways that positive safety responses differ from negative security. Positive safety praxis focuses on survivor power, risk, and collective action, whereas negative security emphasizes paternalist protection, shielding survivors, and individual separation. In this part, I also unpack several challenges to collective action with survivors, and I conclude by suggesting that these praxes might help us move beyond carceral feminist "wounded attachments" to a victim identity.

View of Survivors: Beyond the Good/Bad Binary

I showed up groggy eyed with jet lag to INCITE!'s fourth and final "Color of Violence" conference in 2015, surprised at how chilly Chicago could be in late March. The conference, titled "Beyond the State: Inciting Transformative Possibilities," opened with a panel of criminalized and formerly incarcerated survivors of relationship, sexual, and anti-queer violence (or their parents). Cece McDonald, Marissa Alexander and her mother, Mrs. Helen Jenkins, Renata Hill, and Yvonne Swan (formerly Yvonne Wanrow) took the stage to share their experiences of surviving not only the violence of partners, neighbors, and strangers, but the violence of incarceration for defending themselves or their families (Alexander et al. 2015). Alexander joined via video-call from her home in Florida, where she was still under house arrest but remained defiant: "When you walk in your purpose, you don't apologize for it." Hill agreed, "Why are we being hunted for deciding to survive?"

I am particularly interested in survivors like Hill, McDonald, Alexander, and Swan because the complexity of their experiences – both surviving violence and using violence in self-defense – pose a dilemma for the negative security framework. This framework presupposes a mutually exclusive juridical and moral dichotomy between victim and perpetrator: victims are innocent and powerless; perpetrators are powerful and their violence

stems from evil or pathology. In the imagination of negative security, the carceral self is atomistic, a cell alone against a hostile world that impinges upon him, facing a set of options (in theory, freely available to all) and choosing rationally based on self-interest. I say 'him' intentionally, because this model of a sovereign or self-governing subject originates in 17th century Europe in the Enlightenment philosophy of Immanuel Kant, in response to the rise of capitalism and a secular, modern world. In this world, only property-owning, European/white, cis men were seen as rational and thus sovereign. These men justified their oppression of marginalized groups by portraying them as unable to govern themselves, comparing them to children or animals. The carceral imagination is a way of seeing that trains us to see objects and people as discrete and bordered units, ignoring the webs of relationship between them. The individual swims to the surface and the structural remains murky or invisible.

In the 1960s and 70s, the feminist anti-violence movement aimed to politicize sexual violence, which was by and large normalized, minimized, or blamed on survivors. As Chapter One documented, this political goal was increasingly consumed by a legal strategy for greater criminalization, leading the movement to adopt liberal legal frameworks and their underlying negative security logics. While the rigid victim/perpetrator binary is partly encoded in law, its popularization is also the legacy of movement – in this case, the conservative crime victims' rights movement during the 1970s and 1980s. Like the anti-violence movement, the victims' rights movement was an unexpected civic motor for the punitive turn (Gottschalk 2006:200). Scholars Aya Gruber and David Simon have both argued that the crime victim has replaced the rights-bearing individual as the model legal subject (Gruber 2007; Simon 2007). They describe the ideal crime victim in law-and-order

politics as an agencyless object of a hyperculpable and dangerous perpetrator. This victim is then empowered by the male protectionism of the courts to seek voice through vengeance. More specifically, the ideal battered woman supports criminal remedies for her harm – if she does not, it is assumed that she has been brainwashed by abuse, and she is once again without agency (Gruber 2007:814). The subject imagined by this victims' rights discourse appears as a kind of funhouse mirror inversion of the fantasy of the sovereign subject, where rational self-governance is flipped into irrational powerlessness.

Just as the victims' rights movement used the sentimental spectacle of powerless victims to mobilize power behind their policies, so, too, have certain strands of identity politics used the affective power of victimization to buttress their claims for state retribution, redistribution, and protection. I argue that carceral feminist discourse inherited and benefited from the power of victims' rights discourse, but not without a cost – it has left the anti-violence movement with a "wounded attachment" (Brown 1993) to victim status. When victimization is understood to mean permanent agencyless, carceral feminism turns to the power of the state and its paternalist protection, to keep survivors safe. In her groundbreaking article on wounded attachments, Wendy Brown describes how many demands for rights and recognition by oppressed identity groups are built on claims of exclusion from liberalism's implicitly white male ideal of universal personhood. These demands thus require and reinstitute this ideal via a relationship of *ressentiment* "that retains the real or imagined holdings of its reviled subject […] as objects of desire" (Brown 1995:60). Brown mobilizes Friedrich Nietzsche's account of slave morality as characterized by *ressentiment* in order to illuminate identity politics' curious affectations. She asserts that it is "deeply invested in its own impotence" (1995:70) and morally reproachful of power in general. Suffering becomes

the sign of virtue in such political cultures, repetitively performed for the sake of constituting identity and gaining recognition. These cultures are "more likely to punish and reproach […] than to find venues of self-affirming action" (1995:71). Brown ascribes to this politics a collective desire more concerned with inscribing its pain into law than in gaining power for itself. In turning to the state for recognition, identity political groups also legally institute dependency on state protection through measures like hate crimes legislation, special services, and limits on hate speech.[12] For Brown the rise of wounded attachments is inextricably connected to the loss of class-based politics in the 1970s, after which refuge was sought in the bourgeois norms of liberal citizenship, and political anger transformed into desire for that norm's implicit middle-class standard of living. Radical aspirations to reorganize society and redistribute its resources have been domesticated into claims of exclusion from a naturalized normative "good." Like victims' rights discourse, they gain their affective force through testimonies of injury, suffering, and privation, reinforcing the image of the powerless victim.

Wounded attachments are not available to all marginalized genders equally, however. Race and other factors determine who can be recognized as a victim at all. The ideal rape or abuse victim is a particular performance demanded of those deemed worthy victims, mostly

[12] Elsewhere in *States of Injury*, Brown offers a historical overview of such appeals to the state by feminists:

> Nineteenth-century feminists' appeals to the state included campaigns for suffrage, protective labor legislation, temperance, birth control, and marriage reform law. In the twentieth century, the list expanded to campaigns for equal opportunity, equal pay, equal rights, and comparable worth; reproductive rights and public day care; reform of rape, abuse, marriage, and harassment laws; and in the last decade, labor legislation concerned with maternity, as well as state regulation of pornography, surrogacy, and new reproductive technologies. (Brown 1995:168–69)

white, middle- and upper-class women.[13] As anti-carceral feminist and queer organizations have pointed out, many women disproportionately subject to sexual violence are not perceived as victims because they do not fulfill the mainstream ideal of a survivor (INCITE! and FIERCE 2008; Love & Protect and Survived & Punished 2017). That ideal is reserved for "women who are both racially and behaviorally non-threatening and do not engage in self-defense, self-medication with controlled substances, commercial sex, gender non-conformity, lesbian sexuality, and other deviation from gender norms" (INCITE! and FIERCE 2008:66).

INCITE!'s Color of Violence 4 conference highlighted the long history of this racialization of access to victim status. The panel with criminalized survivors was hosted by Mariame Kaba, a long-time organizer local to Chicago working on a variety of overlapping projects that epitomize the Black feminist intersectional tradition (Kaba 2022). Kaba had recently curated an art exhibition together with fellow activist Rachel Caidor (Kaba 2014b)[14] and an accompanying zine (Kaba 2014a), which served as a fundraiser for Alexander's legal defense fund. Both were titled "No Selves to Defend," and they featured the stories of women of color criminalized for defending themselves against gendered violence. The title referenced the idea that Black women, due to slavery and its "afterlives" (Sharpe 2016), were denied personhood, given "no selves to defend." The exhibition used the contemporary story of Alexander and a historical story of a woman known as Celia as bookends. Celia was an

[13] This is the legacy of racist constructions of womanhood as always/already white. Femininity was a sexual vulnerability exclusive to white women, designating Black women as unrapeable (despite their constant exposure to rape under enslavement) and "queer" before the term was used to denote homosexuality (Haley 2016:5–6; Hartman 2019).

[14] Portions of the exhibition were featured at the conference's exhibition "DISRUPT the STATE" (INCITE! 2014)

enslaved Black woman who in 1855 murdered the master who had repeatedly raped her. Despite Celia's home state of Missouri permitting self-defense claims for resistance to rape, the judge in Celia's case refused, arguing that she was property and therefore unrapeable (Goodmark 2023:3); she was murdered by the state at the end of that year.

The racialized victim/perpetrator binary of the victims' rights movement and its uptake by anti-violence activists as part of carceral feminist cooptation has resulted in the criminalization of some survivors, showing one tragic way that the carceral feminist push to expand criminalization has boomeranged back onto those it claimed to protect. Anti-violence activists were exasperated by the fact that police who were called into abusive situations often gave the abuser (typically cis men) a slap on the wrist and left. Through VAWA in 1994, activists succeeded in coupling grant funding to the requirement for laws that encouraged or mandated arrest when police respond to domestic violence calls. Given their negative security understanding of violence as narrow and incident-focused, however, police lack the ability to accurately assess when violence constitutes abuse and what constitutes resistance or self-defense. Arrests of women increased in jurisdictions with mandatory arrest laws (Goodmark 2023:10–11), as the push for criminalization ricocheted back onto survivors, such that when they exercised their agency and thereby contradicted the powerless victim avatar, they became ensnared on the wrong side of the victim/perpetrator binary. These carceral feminist legal interventions ironically become the basis for survivors' criminalization (Miller 2005).

In light of this impasse, I offer two alternatives from the transformative justice movement. One is conceptual – a positive safety model of the interconnected subject; the other is practical – an organizing model for collective action to liberate criminalized

survivors. On the conceptual side, I argue that the "hologram" of an angelic victim that supports governance through sexual violence is troubled by the messy reality that survivors also cause harm and violence as resistance to their abuse (Burk 2012a) and as collateral damage to children, family, and friends while surviving (Burk 2012a; Perez-Darby 2011). While acknowledging this runs the risk of victim-blaming, Burk of the Northwest Network insists that this reality must be addressed "to meet survivors in the full, messy, broken, heroic, petty realness of the actual choices that survivors have made" (Burk 2012a:5–72).

A positive safety concept of the subject aims to encompass the complex mess of survivor reality through an expanded concept of the self, more layered and non-binary than the carceral self that is bounded, isolated, and sovereign. Over many generations of struggle, new subjects (Black, indigenous, migrant, trans, non-binary, women, disabled, mad) have fought to be recognized as worthy of sovereignty, self-determination, and agency. Why fight for a white man's concept of sovereignty, though? Rooted in their communities' experiences of resistance, some of those subjects have held a radically different concept of who people are. This forms the basis of what I argue is a positive safety model of the self: socially constructed both within relationships of intimacy, recognition, and care *and* through relationships of power, violence, and oppression. Subjects are shaped by different levels of intersubjectivity, ranging from family to community to institutions to social structures, that traverse time (the intergenerational imprint of ancestors) and space (the experience of migration and diaspora). The individual and the structural both come into view together as co-constitutive, like an optical illusion or a "Magic Eye" autostereogram.

On the practical side, efforts to free criminalized survivors from state capture cohered at the INCITE! conference and evolved into coordinated campaigns. This (re)vitalized an

earlier strategy from the 1970s while also pivoting transformative justice activism in the direction of organizing and a renewed focus on survivors. The 2015 conference featured several campaigns to free criminalized survivors, a new focus of the movement, which had previously been more intent on creating spaces to address violence outside of the state than on facing the state head on to liberate those it held hostage. The conference brought together organizers working to free Alexander, those advocating for another criminalized survivor (Nan-Hui Jo), and the ongoing work of the California Coalition of Women Prisoners, giving birth to a new organization called Survived & Punished (S&P) in 2016 (with the local Chicago chapter retaining its earlier name 'Love & Protect'). Like INCITE!, S&P is a national volunteer run organization with local chapters (as of 2023, in Chicago, New York, and California) (Survived & Punished 2018a). The organization has run successful campaigns to free survivors from various tentacles of the carceral state, including pre-trial detention, prison, and/or immigration detention, building solidarity across prison walls. S&P also encourages anti-violence services to support criminalized survivors (Survived & Punished 2018b), arguing that many are unable to because cooptation has made them dependent for funding on collaboration with prosecutors and district attorneys, limiting their ability to challenge those very offices when they prosecute survivor self-defense (Bierria et al. 2015; Goodmark 2023). This new strategy was influenced by the first wave of the BLM movement in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, and it moves transformative justice praxis closer to prison and police abolition organizing. Kaba's hybrid identity, working at the intersections of abolition, youth organizing, and anti-violence services, emblematize this new era for me.

Despite this seeming newness, I learned that survivor self-defense has had a much longer history, as Kaba's zine emphasizes, and that survivor defense campaigns became a

popular feminist tactic in the 1960s and 70s, as Emily Thuma's book *All Our Trials* emphasizes. INCITE!'s panel, which brought together a criminalized elder (Swan) with younger criminalized survivors, represents a passing of the torch of this tactic to a new abolitionist feminist generation (Thuma 2019:67). This is yet another example of transformative justice's (re)vitalization of tactics obscured by the ascendance of carceral feminism. Here, the old approach of mass participation survivor defense campaigns, including protests, jailhouse visits, and letter writing campaigns, has hybridized with new analyses in this political era which include queer and trans survivors targeted for their gender or sexuality.

Understanding of Agency: Carceral and Abolitionist Agencies

As argued previously, negative security's rigid victim/perpetrator binary is overlaid with a set of assumptions about victim and perpetrator agency – that victims are powerless and perpetrators all-powerful. I use the word 'victim' rather than 'survivor' intentionally, since mainstream anti-violence advocacy has too often portrayed and treated people who experience harm as agencyless objects of pity, shock, and tragedy. Indeed, some argue that violence or oppression does indeed leave oppressed subjects with a failed agency, while others see this as a paternalistic excuse that disrespects a person's autonomy (Hirsch 1976). What both sides of this debate share, however, is the assumption that oppression or violence can only be seen as an extenuating circumstance, an impingement which might limit the sovereign, carceral subject's agency. The implicit norm is an unhindered, able-bodied freedom. Responsibility becomes an either/or: either you are fully responsible or you are not at all, with no in-between (Hudson 2000:192). Being a victim of sexual violence is figured as

something that permanently diminishes one's agency, justifying the idea that others must act on your behalf.

Organizing around criminalized survivors has created new paradigms for thinking about agency, particularly from Alisa Bierria, former co-founder of CARA. Bierria got involved in the campaign to free Alexander in 2014, returning to an abolitionist feminist politic but with a new focus on 'criminalized survivors,' a term she and her fellow activists popularized (Goodmark 2023:19). Bierria also happens to be a feminist philosopher, rearticulating the dilemmas of the criminalized survivor in a philosophical frame. Bierria recognized that many survivors of color have found themselves put on the wrong side of the victim-perpetrator divide because of a framework of all-or-nothing agency: victims having no agency, perpetrators having all agency. When law enforcement codes women of color's bodies and everyday behavior as threatening, projecting "excess agency" and "phantom intentions" onto them (Bierria 2014, 2018), they flip their perception from no-agency victim into full-agency perpetrator. Expanding the carceral feminist frame of powerless victims to include women of color would be a reformist gesture; rather, Bierria wants to question the entire model of agency that underlies this frame.

Bierria describes the common "scaled account of agency" (Bierria 2014:135), exemplified in the work of Sharon Krause, where agency is dependent on its social uptake by other agents. This intersubjective understanding of agency argues that the distortion of recognition that oppressed subjects experience "undercuts" or "disables" their agency, leaving them with less or even "failed" agency in comparison to subjects not subject to oppression [(Krause 2012) quoted in (Bierria 2014:130,136)]. This resonates with common sense in certain ways – it seems intuitive that people of color's agency is constantly limited

by racist policies and people, or that women being abused have their options limited by their abuser and the oppressive systems that enable him. Despite this, the "common sense" view quietly reinforces the liability model's sovereign, autonomous subject as our aspiration; it celebrates the subject of negative security who is not impinged upon by others' needs or limitations. The sovereign subject, as I have shown, is privileged and so in the scaled model of agency, imagined to be somehow less influenced by social structures.

Bierria uses Black feminist epistemologies to question the implicit norm of autonomy and efficacy attributed to privileged subjects, against which oppressed subjects' agency is measured. "Instead of a binary or scaled model of agency that gauges subjects as having more or less, abled or disabled, or successful or failed agency, I propose a heterogeneous framework of agency – agencies" (Bierria 2014:137). The implicit norm of agency by subjects who are backed up by institutional power is marked by Bierria as merely one kind of agency among others, which she terms *hegemonic agency*. In contrast, there are agencies which seek to collectively undermine oppression, for which she coins the term *transformative agency*. Bierria invokes the image of a map, rather than a set of measurements, to assess heterogeneous agencies. Heterogenous agencies affirms that our agency is not only limited by social structures, but it is also enabled by them. The structurally privileged are therefore not less shaped by systems of power than those who are structurally oppressed, but simply differently shaped.

Bierria shares the story of Janice Wells, a Black woman who called the Georgia police out of fear that someone was prowling around her house. When white police officers arrived, they assumed without evidence that she was the victim of domestic violence, drawing on racist stereotypes about Black families. They questioned Wells about who was in

her home, and she refused to answer. This attempt at protecting herself from police harm was misinterpreted by the officers as a refusal to cooperate, reframing her as a perpetrator. The police then tased and arrested her. According to Bierria, oppressed agents like Black women exercise agency, but their actions are "defined away from them" (130) by dominant perceptions of Blackness as inherently criminal, making their agency illegible in dominant frameworks of meaning. They are nevertheless "authors" of their intentions, even if not socially "authorized" (Bierria 2014:132).

Bierria's analysis helps reframe agency away from an either/or, scaled model, which inherently privileges the liability model's norm of the sovereign, autonomous subject, imagined to be somehow less limited by social structures. A positive safety framework, in contrast, asserts a social ontology of persons shaped through interconnection. In this model, the agency and responsibility of both those who cause harm and those who experience it are understood to be not only limited by social structures but also enabled by them in various ways. Those who are structurally privileged are not therefore "less" shaped but simply differently shaped by structures than those who are targeted by structural injustice.

Response to Violence: Paternalist Protection or Survivor Collective Action

These differing approaches to the subject and agency shape the concrete practices called for by a negative security and positive safety framework. Power-building and risk-taking are easier to imagine when a survivor is conceptualized as having heterogeneous agencies, whereas paternalist protection and shielding survivors from danger become the fitting choice if survivors are imagined as without agency. Similarly, support as collective action is easier to imagine for an interconnected subject, whereas the autonomous subject lends itself to a response of individual separation in the wake of harm.

When survivors are framed as powerless, state power is not far behind as a solution. In "The Logic of Masculinist Protection" (Young 2007a), philosopher Iris Marion Young examines the gendered, heteronormative logic of the post-9/11 security state. She describes two faces of masculinist power: the dominating and repressive face it turns towards its "enemies" and the seemingly benevolent face it turns towards its "friends." These parallel the Janus-like faces of the state as punisher and protector. Both patriarchy and the security state function as "protection rackets" (2007b:131), according to Young. "Good" women/citizens are protected by "good men" from "bad men" so long as women/citizens are obedient to male authority. Young theorizes this protection as *pastoral power* (Foucault 2007), a form of power often made invisible by its seeming virtuousness. Nevertheless, it demands respect to its authority and "grateful dependency" on the part of the protected (Young 2007a:129). Masculinist protection is productive in the Foucauldian sense: it produces the vulnerability that it requires, generating the desire of the protected subject for protection. As the feminist movement entered into greater relationship with law enforcement, critical voices drew parallels between the anti-violence movement's dependency on a patriarchal state and abused women's dependency on their abusive husbands (Klein 1977:2). Carceral feminists either failed to recognize protection as paternalist power, or they made a canny choice to use state power to trump the power of individual abusers and rapists.

An example of this paternalist protection in the realm of gender-based violence is in relation to sex workers. It is assumed that someone who chooses sex work over other forms of non-sexual, exploitative, low-wage labor is inherently irrational and incapable of self-determination. This field has witnessed the creation of a moral panic around sex trafficking, often undistinguished from sex work. Elizabeth Bernstein (Bernstein 2007, 2012)

understands anti-trafficking activism to be the inheritor of anti-porn and anti-prostitution feminists, who lost the sex wars in the 1990s and rebranded themselves as international humanitarians. Bernstein first coined the term "carceral feminism" in her critique of this activism and its strange bedfellows, including evangelical Christians. She is critical of "rescue and recover" missions in the Global South which allow the masculine U.S. state and individual men to take exotic vacations and stage themselves as white saviors against perceived sexual slavery. Trafficking is often definitionally blurry and undistinguished from consensual sex work, and women's lack of desire to be "rescued" or preferences for sex work over other forms of low-wage labor are generally ignored. According to Bernstein, this activism obscures the structures that systematically expose migrant and/or sex workers to violence and shifts blame to individual men, often men of color, criminalizing and racializing them (Bernstein 2012:245). As such, it partakes in the imperialist trope postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak succinctly describes as "White men saving Brown women from Brown men" (1988:296).

In resistance to this protection, positive safety recenters survivor agency and power, rejecting carceral feminist paternalism and the externalization of security as a product or service. According to Morgan Bassichis of Communities United Against Violence,

> we will not look to people, spaces, policies, or institutions to "make us safe" but will instead look to the resources that rest in ourselves and our communities that can decrease our vulnerability to harm and increase our ability to make grounded choices that will foster our wellness. (Kim et al. 2012:5)

This gesture also views survivors as powerful movement-makers, returning to the grassroots peer-based models of early anti-rape and abuse centers and shelters. For instance, survivors liberated by California Coalition of Women Prisoners and S&P go on to become members of the collective and "pay it forward" by helping to free others.

In Nadia's case, transformative justice-informed support can help her identify small ways in which she has agency to make choices despite her partner's objectification and abuse , and to exercise and amplify that agency like building a muscle. Shannon Perez-Darby, also of the Northwest Network, writes searingly about the disasters she caused as a part of her own survival of an abusive relationship (Perez-Darby 2011). While her behavior did not alter the fundamental power and control dynamic that gave that relationship the character of abuse, the abuse also did not serve as a "free pass" to refuse accountability for her actions. Perez-Darby defines this responsibility as "survivor self-accountability": taking responsibility for the consequences of one's actions and aligning one's actions with one's values (Perez-Darby 2011:110). For her, this entailed a process of addressing the effects of her actions, even when her choices were limited by the conditions of abuse, and attempting to understand and repair harm where reasonable and possible. By focusing on her own actions and agency, Perez-Darby moved beyond a "victim" status caught in a loop of attention on what was done to her:

> Domestic violence is a pattern of power and control that by design limits survivors' choices. But even within this pattern, survivors make a million little choices everyday. Recognizing these choices is an essential step towards creating a different life for ourselves. The solution to breaking a pattern of abusive power and control that limits choices lies in an increased ability to act powerfully and make choices on your behalf. (Perez-Darby 2011:105)

This practice insists that the power to make choices (even tiny ones) and the responsibility for those choices exist, even in cases of violence and oppression, and that survivor empowerment involves recognizing and cultivating this self-determination.

Positive safety distinguishes itself through a gesture of connection, whereas negative security focuses on separation. In the case of domestic violence, it prescribes separation and containment, not only of perpetrators in prisons but also of survivors in domestic violence

shelters. For instance, if Nadia chooses not to walk down a criminal legal pathway and focus instead on her own healing, the other main option offered to her by mainstream anti-violence services is a women's shelter (if there is even a bed for her). Nadia likes the idea of having a few days for Jaya to cool off, but long-term separation would also mean losing the financial and emotional support of her partner, and it would "displace"[15] her from her neighborhood and friends in a shelter in a different part of town. While separation might address some of Nadia's short term needs, like an end to abuse, it alone cannot address her longer-term safety needs – the well-being of both herself and Jaya, the need for financial security, and the desire for Jaya to change (rather than go to jail or be deported). Mimi Kim has referred to this evocatively as the "fetishization of safety in the anti-violence movement," which channels "legitimate desires for safety […] into interventions requiring shelter and arrest" (Kim 2011:21).[16] Emi Koyama has also critiqued shelters for exercising dominance and social control over survivors (Koyama 2006), such that they appear in some cases as yet another carceral enclosure, one focused on containment of survivors (rather than perpetrators). My interviewee, philosopher and activist Sarah Tyson shared:

> *This is what mainstream anti-violence work gets so wrong, the idea that people* have to *leave abusive situations, and shelters are the model for individualizing people and breaking their connections. When somebody says, "I don't want to leave the person that is abusive in my life, I need to change that relationship, that situation needs to change and the conditions of it need to change," mainstream anti-violence work is like: "You are pathological, your form of life is degenerate, this is trauma speaking." I think it is really hard in the face of that to actually listen to people and say there might be something to the idea of not always severing connection as the answer to those issues.* (Tyson 2014b)

[15] The terminology of displacement was used in a workshop at Color of Violence 4 Conference by Heijin Shim (Shim 2015).

[16] Transformative justice practitioners recognize that survivor needs vary and that forms of separation are often necessary, even if only provisionally and especially when a community response is not available.

To stay in relationship – rather than going to a shelter – requires collective action and support from community members. Transformative justice's expanded sense of self implicates those in a web of relationships in situations of violence, as violence has an impact on the safety of many people in different ways and degrees: "We acknowledge that when someone is sexually assaulted, everyone in the community is harmed; everyone needs to heal; and everyone has a responsibility to support a survivor and hold a perpetrator accountable" (Kelly 2011:50). Transformative justice work seeks to bring these different actors from the community together to take collective action to support the survivor and increase overall community safety. In Nadia's case, for example, she might receive support in this process from transformative justice-oriented professionals or a team of experienced community members, who have been given various names in the transformative justice context like 'healing circles' (Russo and Spatz 2007:24), 'solidarity teams' (MataHari: Eye of the Day, De la Cruz, and Gomez 2011), or 'allies' (Creative Interventions 2012). Nadia's support team can undertake a process of collective goal-setting and decision-making to assess risks, develop safety plans, map allies and obstacles, and plan action steps (Creative Interventions 2012:4.B-4.F; Kershnar et al. 2007:39–46). These collective processes make space for negotiating different, even counterintuitive, desires and needs. Options for action emerge through collaboration which had not been visible or available beforehand. Melissa Spatz describes a healing circle she held as part of Women and Girls Community Action Network in Chicago, where the survivor at the center of the circle explains her process from treating her assault as an individual to a collective matter:

> Until we were all in the room, I kept thinking it was just my problem and I wasn't sure what steps to take to make sure other people would be safe. […] Through our healing circle, we came up with strategies to create accountability for the violence. We wrote a collective letter to the perpetrator and we alerted people who might be

> working with him about the incident and the potential for future violence. (Russo and Spatz 2007:24)

While individual and collective safety are imagined as co-constitutive rather than in opposition, in reality, conflicts between participants happen. In the Creative Interventions model, conflicts between different individual needs were addressed by mediation with a facilitator, but Creative Innovations coordinator Kim admits that balancing the various needs of participants involved was a struggle (Kim 2011). Transformative justice facilitator Anna Vo shared,

> *Sometimes it's a difficult matter of confidentiality, where a community may be needed to support the outcomes of a survivor's requests, but it is part of the request that people don't speak of the event, or of the specific details of the incident*. (Vo 2010)

A controversial issue in need of further exploration within the movement is the extent to which survivors' needs should have primacy in a process and how to address conflicts between survivors' and allies' needs, or between survivors' needs and emancipatory political commitments (Creative Interventions 2012:3:12, 4E:29-30; Kershnar et al. 2007:28; Kim 2011:27–28). Ejeris Dixon, formerly of Audre Lorde Project's Safe OUTside the System Collective describes how her team worked with the mother of a Black gay man who was murdered. The mother, whom Dixon described as *"generous, brilliant, and kind,"* also wanted the murderer to be locked up, which stood in contrast to the Collective's political beliefs. Dixon describes how they managed these differences:

> *So we would just show up to all her stuff, even though we had different political goals. We would show up and even when we didn't necessarily agree with her politics. We would be like, "We're here, we think safety looks differently or that safety is outside of the court system." So we were never saying anything that could be offensive, because we wanted to make sure we were still supporting her leadership, particularly as a Black woman born and raised in Bed-Stuy and many of us were not. But the important part is that we showed up and were of service while maintaining our beliefs*. (Dixon 2015c)

Survivor support in a positive safety framework may also entail risk. Nadia's support planning process may lead her to decide to prioritize her economic safety by staying with her partner, while seeking out resources to reduce her partner's harm or encourage them to change. Or, with enough support from allies, Nadia may decide to take a short-term risk by leaving her partner if she sees it as necessary for her longer-term safety. She may decide to share her story with others out of concern for their safety in future interactions with Jaya. Nadia might also choose to confront Jaya and other community members. The team will need to carefully consider the potential consequences of any actions they take, such as Jaya's resistance or retaliation. Risk-taking is an uncommon pairing with the term 'safety,' and it is the inverse of paternalistic protection. Despite that, generationFIVE points out that "resistance to abuses of power and exploitation – in both individual and collective manifestations – will inevitably require some risk to our safety" (Kershnar et al. 2007:28).[17]

On the other hand, Nadia may choose to turn to police if she has no better options, which poses a different set of risks to herself, Jaya, and their community. In either of these pathways, her support team may offer compassionate criticism or alternatives, while respecting her self-determination. While transformative justice activists want to include connection as an option for survivors, they are also aware that survivor goals and needs vary. A process may not include work with a perpetrator or their reintegration into community, but at its most basic includes a process of engaging the community to address conditions causing harm, thus shifting responsibility from an individual to a collective level.

[17] generationFIVE emphasizes that such risks need to be decided by those potentially most affected and made with careful planning of potential consequences.

Section Conclusion

The goal of positive safety is to imagine survivor power and agency strong enough to relinquish carceral feminism's lingering wounded attachments. My interviewee Maura Bairley talks about a vision of wholeness that transformative justice practice can offer:

> *We still have a real attachment to "victim" as an identity and I wonder how it serves us. So I appreciate and I participated in work to claim 'survivor,' and to name victimization, to not hide from that, to look at the ways in which we stigmatize the experience of having been victimized. At the same time, we have so much invested in what it means to be a victim, and I wonder what is the opposite? What is it* not *to be a victim? I think we have very poor language to think about that experience of wholeness, and [are] less invested in thinking about what wholeness looks like, what repair looks like, what healing looks like. (Bairley 2014)*

Responsibility: From "Taking" to "Giving Account"

In this section of the chapter, I turn my attention to the third of the four elements of community accountability named by INCITE! (INCITE! 2008): people who cause harm. Here, I compare negative security and positive safety approaches to responsibility. At their most basic, positive safety's ethos of social connection seeks engagement with harm-doers, while negative security's ethos of isolation and separation opts for containment of harm-doers (and sometimes survivors as well, as the previous section outlined). Many abolitionists have pointed out how this strategy of containment, predominantly in the prison but also in psychiatric institutions, is self-defeating. Meant supposedly as a deterrent to crime, prison is itself "criminogenic," begetting more crime (Cid 2009).

Particularly for the feminist agenda of ending sexual violence, incarceration appears self-sabotaging, given how the prison systematically exposes prisoners to sexual abuse. As Spade has said in response to the question of "What to do with the serial rapists and

murderers?': "Prisons *are* the serial rapists and murderers" (Spade 2012:168, emphasis added). Containment not only in prison but afterwards has been a prominent carceral feminist strategy towards the figure of the "sexual predator" or sex offender (Meiners 2009; Wacquant 2009). One of the legacies of VAWA was the creation of sex offender registration and community notification laws.[18] These require that those convicted of sex offenses be registered in a publicly accessible database, making them objects of surveillance by other community members or state agents. Residential restriction laws in some states require that sex offenders not live within a certain distance from places like schools and parks where children play, making it difficult for them to find housing or jobs and to socially reintegrate. This segregation can lead to homelessness (Wooten 2021) as well as bizarre situations where sex offenders set up encampments with other offenders in the few rare spaces available to them (Aleksander 2010) while neighborhoods build tiny "pocket parks" expressly to make their local area unavailable to offenders (Tyson 2014a). Most research, however, has shown that registration does not prevent recidivism of perpetrators and may in fact encourage it, because social exclusion contributes to the likelihood of repeat offending (Letourneau et al. 2010; Prescott and Rockoff 2008). Sex offender registries appear to be failed tools of negative security that play on public anxieties, an affective but ineffective performance of control.

So what other alternatives are there for holding persons who commit sexual harm accountable? As the Spade quote shows, rapists (as well as serial killers) are often held up in

[18] Although the original targets of the registries were child sex offenders, the wide definitional scope of "sex offenses" means that it has often been wielded as a tool of social control by police. In some states, sex workers, unhoused persons urinating in public, and gay men engaging in public sex have been labelled as sex offenders and placed on registries (Kershnar et al. 2007:15).

popular debate as the litmus test for abolition. In this section, my goal is to clarify the praxis of responsibility in positive safety that makes an effort to answer this litmus test. I call this approach to accountability "giving account," and I explain how it differs from "taking account," which is negative security's framework for responsibility. First, I discuss how each defines and approaches harm – for positive safety, it is the violation of relationship, whereas for negative security, it is violation of law or rights. I then turn to how each model attributes responsibility. Revisiting the model of self and agency articulated in the last section, I look at how each model responds to the cycle of violence theory, which suggests that perpetrators often have earlier trauma and survivorship that motivates their violence. This model blurs the boundaries of good survivor/evil perpetrator, challenging a negative security view that attributes responsibility according to individual autonomy. Lastly, I look at the response to harm each model prescribes. Negative security's model of taking account measures responsibility quantitatively as a kind of debt paid through retributive punishment. Positive safety seeks to replace this model with one of transformative repair through giving an account, as perpetrators restory themselves and their relations to others. In a transformative justice model, change occurs through connection and relationship, not through carceral isolation.

Throughout this section, I trace the historical evolution of positive safety work across both restorative and transformative justice approaches, exploring differences and similarities between the two with regards to their work with persons causing harm. I illustrate the praxis of giving account by looking at the work of two groups from the first generation of transformative justice: Philly Stands Up and Support New York. I continue to use Nadia and Jaya's story to narrate what giving account could look like. While working with persons who

cause harm is only one of the four elements named by INCITE!, it can sometimes take the limelight because it is one of the areas where activists have the least experience, wrestle with the most dilemmas, and court the most controversy. Thus, I also name some limits and challenges in this work and consider how practitioners manage them, including questions of due process; the use of coercion; the model's limits of scope and the gaps that leaves for abolitionist politics; how people navigate punitive desires; and how practitioners define and measure success.

Definition of Harm: Violation of Rights or Relationships

Indigenous justice models now popularized as *restorative justice* are part of the lineage of current experimental processes of working non-punitively with persons who cause harm. Maori, Indigenous nations on Turtle Island (which includes present day U.S.), and elsewhere in the Global South (like sub-Saharan Africa) have long perceived harm primarily as the violation of relationships, rather than laws or rights (Zehr 1990) as negative security assumes. This violation creates not only physical but also spiritual and emotional rifts that call for repair, both for people directly involved and for the wider community. These needs cannot be met and are in fact undermined by negative security's retributive, punitive response focused on a single individual. On a restorative justice approach, harm calls for a community- and context-specific response, rather than the application of universal laws to a particular case, in order to repair and transform specific relationships that have been damaged. This Indigenous frame is part of the lineage of transformative justice's radically different concept of the self than the carceral model, viewing humans as interdependent in webs of relationship (with both human and non-human beings). In this model of self,

violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned, not an innate identity (as negative security would posit).

In the 1970s, elements of these justice models resurfaced, reinterpreted by predominantly white faith communities and other criminal legal reformers in Europe and North America, who offered collaborative, consensus-focused alternatives to the adversarial criminal legal system, for instance, through victim-offender dialogues and restorative circles (McCold 2007). While restorative justice practices range widely, some core principles include the idea that everyone closely connected to a harm should be seen as a stakeholder and participate together in formulating a solution to the problem. While victims' needs take first priority, there is an important role for the perpetrator to play in developing a solution where they are given the opportunity to take responsibility, make reparations, and change their behavior. This happens primarily through circle dialogues of various types: formal or informal, with different constellations of stakeholders (family, elders, etc.) depending on the circumstances.

Abolitionists and anti-violence activists who sought alternatives to carceral modes of addressing sexual violence in the early 2000s at the beginning of the transformative justice movement found much to learn from in the restorative justice tradition. At the same time, though, they also developed several critiques. For some restorative justice practitioners, the term 'restorative' indicates that a resolution to harm should restore harmony within the relationships that have been broken and heal the harm that has been done, while also serving to strengthen the social bonds within the community and address the social conditions which gave rise to the harm in the first place (Sullivan and Tifft 2007:5–6). The word 'restorative' suggests restoring a system that has been thrown out of balance by harm. In contrast,

generationFIVE, among others, uses an anti-oppression lens to argue that the status quo is permeated by systems of harm. Given this, justice for survivors comes not through restoring but rather transforming this baseline condition, hence the organization's coining of the term 'transformative justice' (Kershnar et al. 2007:21). In addition, some have critiqued mainstream practices of restorative justice that "exoticize and romanticize the aboriginal cultures from which the main restorative justice principles come" (Critical Resistance Abolition Toolkit Workgroup 2004:51) without adequate solidarity with Indigenous struggles against colonialism and for native sovereignty. Smith of INCITE! describes the irony of restorative justice circles being forced upon the Indigenous people credited with creating them: "In many Native American communities, these models are often pushed on domestic violence survivors to pressure them to reconcile with their families and "restore" the community without sufficient concern for their personal safety" (Smith 2011a:40).

Like the anti-violence movement, restorative justice has also often overlooked the role of state violence in interpersonal violence, and it underwent cooptation and mainstreaming. The result is that some restorative justice organizations work closely with district attorneys' and prosecutors' offices to divert certain cases, particularly youth crime, into restorative justice programs. Such cooptation mobilizes the community as "a supplemental resource, repositioning it to legitimize state intervention rather than to serve as the central agent" (Bierria, Kim, and Rojas Durazo 2011:9). This has led transformative justice practitioners to distinguish themselves through an abolitionist politics and a commitment to working outside of state institutions and formal organizations.

Over the last decade or more, however, restorative justice has been more responsive to transformative justice critiques of racism, appropriation, and state collaboration.[19] BIPoC-led and abolitionist-aligned restorative justice programs have become more visible, blurring the boundaries between transformative and restorative justice. For example, in the Introduction, I featured the organization Restore Oakland, which trains people in conflict mediation and circle keeping practice (among other projects). It operates a community resource center in East Oakland that houses several local organizations for housing justice, worker rights, and racial and economic justice. Restore Oakland uses the terms 'restorative justice' and 'healing justice' because they are more resonant with their elders and community members; they don't call their work 'transformative justice' because the idea of transformative justice that is being practiced within nonprofit institutions is contentious. Beyond terminology, however, the organization also holds an anti-oppression, abolitionist politic that manifests in campaigns to redistribute police and prison funds to community welfare initiatives and supports economic cooperatives and development among BIPoC small business owners through the REAL People's Fund (REAL People's Fund n.d.). Similarly, when Martina Kartmann co-founded Collective Justice, an organization that holds long-term circles with people imprisoned in Western Washington, she described her approach as "restorative justice methods with a transformative justice politic" (Kartmann and Montag 2018).

By defining harm as violation of relationship, rather than right or law, positive safety foregrounds social connection rather than mediation of those connections through the state.

[19] I owe these insights to a conversation with restorative justice researcher Monica Ramsy.

These alternate models, however, are limited to individual actors and interpersonal harm, leaving a gap in abolitionist praxis: how to address harm by the state and corporations. The field of transitional justice aims to address large-scale conflict and violence after regime change, including attempts like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa and in Gacaca courts in post-genocide Rwanda. Increasingly 'transformative justice' is also used as a term to critique reformist or liberal models in that field.

Moreover, without the state's monopoly on violence at the ready to coerce participation, transformative justice processes built around connection rather than law are also limited in scope to those who consent to participating. Practitioners have shifted language from 'holding someone accountable' to 'supporting people being accountable' in recognition of this. Social pressure has sometimes worked, but it can be hard to identify when that borders on coercion. Support New York members shared,

> *In one case, I was working with someone [a perpetuator] who had an initial meeting with us and was really defensive, like "Fuck this, I don't want to be put on trial, blah blah blah." He didn't follow up and then left town and came back to New York to find more of a hostile environment for him. I think he burned a lot of bridges with people he'd lived with and started to realize that there are social consequences to not dealing with this and not being accountable. So I think that social pressure is a really big push for people.* (Todd and Spencer 2014)

A fellow Support New York member explores the paradox of using pressure to teach consent:

> *It's tough because you're trying to teach people how to not do coercive behaviors but you use mildly coercive behaviors to teach them how not to do coercive behaviors. It's really a weird thing that we struggle with all the time and always question, but at the end of the day it is kind of like[…] There are different forms of coercion and there are different forms of […] I don't know, I don't have the theory, I'll let some academic figure it out […] I guess one thing is an individual exerts pressure to advance a selfish goal that directly traumatizes the recipient and the other is when a group or a community exerts pressure for a broader community goal.* (Hagendorf 2014)

Restorative justice approaches have had wider, better resourced, and better documented implementation than transformative justice efforts, likely due to its collaborations with the state. Restorative justice programs that collaborate with the carceral state to offer programming to people who are incarcerated or on parole have worked with a literally captive audience who had much more incentive to participate. As Staci Haines, co-founder of generationFIVE shared, "*At this point, we have a lot to learn from restorative justice processes, because the processes have been working. But they have a totally different leverage point, someone's already incarcerated"* (Haines 2021). For transformative justice efforts that eschew all state involvement, there is less leverage for perpetrators to participate. Haines describes the difference when doing community-based work with someone who was not systems involved:

> *when I look at this one person who we tracked for a while, it was so hard to find a leverage point for accountability and change, because he'd just pull a geographic, quit his job and go someplace else. And, you know, my worry is over time that our community capacity to track him and work with him runs out. And then what level of self harm will he do and harm to others will he do? […] When we started thinking about work with perpetrators, we thought we'd have more relationship leverage, but we discovered a lot of these people were very isolated.* (Haines 2021)

As a model that relies on perpetrator consent, transformative justice has little to offer in situations where someone refuses to participate and no amount of community pressure will reach them, such as members of who live in different communities or even places. In these cases, transformative justice practitioners may turn to harm reduction strategies, like "community restraining orders" (Pegues 2021; Piepzna-Samarasinha 2008:90), publicizing someone's name and actions to protect potential future survivors, or pressuring involved organizations (just as music scene members connected to CARA's Youth Project boycotted a club where sexual assault occurred, as narrated in Chapter Two).

These harm reduction strategies can veer into revenge, as the line between punishment and consequences may become blurry if a perpetrator is recalcitrant. Activists have written about the need to acknowledge rage, fear, and desires for revenge while channeling their power into a politics of transformation rather than retribution (Creative Interventions et al. 2012:1:32-34; Kershnar et al. 2007:60–61). This requires practitioners to expand and develop their emotional capacities for responding otherwise (Kershnar et al. 2007:6–8). CARA's first principle of community accountability praxis was to respect the humanity of all involved. After her work with generationFIVE, Haines went on to develop models for somatic therapeutic work with trauma through generative somatics and cofounding the organization Generative Somatics. In our interview, she describes the "*understandable and even predictable traumatic reactions to child sexual abuse"* that community-based responders are up against: *"No, that didn't happen"* – Denial. Minimize – *"it wasn't that bad*." Vigilantism – *"Kill the mother fucker and do violence." […] And then blame the survivor. Right, which of course is the one everyone is really, really good at. […] what TJ asks us for is deeply developed politics and vision, and a lot of emotional and trauma healing capacity. We need both to truly practice TJ. (Haines 2021)*

When framing harm in terms of relationship, rather than law, a different set of skills must be developed by transformative justice practitioners that attend to the emotional elements of relating.

Responsibility Attribution: Liability vs Heterogenous Responsibilities

Returning to the story that animates this chapter, with sufficient survivor support (as described in the last section), Nadia can turn to questions of what she wants from her abusive

partner. Nadia does not want to separate from Jaya but for Jaya to change. She describes her desires for justice not in the language of law or rights but of repaired relationship, an affective and somatic language about trust, safety, and healing. She knows Jaya's abuse is rooted in traumatic patterns related to their experiences of transphobic violence in their family and community. While Nadia has asked them to get help, Jaya is hesitant to seek treatment for fear of a therapist that will pathologize them and reinforce racist assumptions that people of color are more sexually violent. Jaya's experiences as a survivor and a perpetrator in different settings does not fit into the binary. Just as negative security's rigid, moralized, and mutually exclusive victim/perpetrator division does not accommodate survivors who defend themselves or violate the image of an angelic, powerless victim, it also cannot accommodate perpetrators' own past experiences of harm that may motivate their current behavior. In what follows, I explore positive safety modes of responsibility attribution that aim to meet the complexity of Jaya's experience.

Research suggests that early childhood exposure to domestic violence can increase one's likelihood of both experiencing and causing intimate partner violence as an adult (Abramsky et al. 2011; Ehrensaft et al. 2003). Some may be survivors of earlier violence as well as perpetrators in a current situation. Building on this, transformative justice discourse often asserts a provocative universalism: that everyone is vulnerable to both experience and cause interpersonal violence and structural oppression, while recognizing that structural positioning does impact how that vulnerability is distributed and how violence and oppression will "play out." Kiyomi Fujikawa, an anti-violence organizer in Asian Pacific Islander, Queer and Trans, and punk and DIY communities, explained:

> *I haven't worked with a single person that has been like "Actually, I'm trauma-free and that violence was just coming from nowhere." […] I want us to move towards*

> *looking at how are we all capable of causing harm, and asking: how do we form a community where we can still prevent harm from happening even though each one of us has the capacity to do harm?* (Fujikawa 2014)

Many transformative justice practitioners have shifted terminology from 'perpetrator' to 'person causing harm' or, in Support New York's case 'perpetuator,' to emphasize the cycle of violence theory.

The negative security approach to attributing responsibility is the liability model (Young 2011). It undergirds our criminal legal system, and it cannot easily accommodate a biography like Jaya's. Liability works like a debt; Jaya incurs debt by treading on the rights of others. This form of moral accounting relies on a Kantian view of the sovereign subject as having an autonomous will: the offender intentionally, voluntarily, and knowingly chose their crime (so long as they had fair opportunity to avoid that choice) and therefore fully deserves the fruits of their choices. This model also relies on an attributivist account of moral responsibility, which views our actions as expressive of our deepest self and values. Gary Watson calls this the "self-disclosure" (Watson 1996:261) view of responsibility, in which our actions are not just causally attributable to us, but they also express something about our moral capacity to govern ourselves: to form beliefs and conform our actions to them (Watson 1996:270). For negative security, law-breaking is a reflection of poor self-governance by autonomous subjects.

In this model, a perpetrator's trauma can either decrease blame (a quantitative measure) or be ignored outright. For example, some judges will reduce a harm-doer's sentence because of "extenuating circumstances" or "hardship," a recognition that the cycle of violence decreases someone's blameworthiness. Many people, however, balk at the idea that one's own trauma should let a perpetrator of sexual harm "off the hook," suggesting that

past trauma should not be an excuse. A more theoretical iteration of this argument is offered by criminologist Barbara Hudson. She explores the idea of poverty being a type of 'hardship' that could decrease blameworthiness for bad deeds. She ventriloquizes the critics, who argue that this would confer decreased moral agency onto the poor, thus reinscribing their discrimination by framing them as inferior moral agents (Hudson 2000).

What both sides of this debate share, however, is the assumption that forms of structural injustice like transphobia or poverty can only be seen as an extenuating circumstance, an impingement which limits or decreases the sovereign, carceral subject's agency. This returns us to Bierria's arguments from the previous section, this time from the point of view of the harm-doer. The liability model can only attribute responsibility to people who intentionally, knowingly, and voluntarily cause harm, and the implicit norm here is an unhindered, able-bodied, autonomous subject. The perpetrator poses a dilemma if they are also a survivor, and their agency is impinged upon by past experiences of violence, injustice, and marginalization. In this debate, responsibility becomes an either/or: either you are fully responsible or you are not at all, with no in-between (Hudson 2000:192). In the case of sexual violence, such an either/or can lead to either demonizing the person causing harm or minimizing and excusing their behavior (Creative Interventions 2012:1:5), with no room left in-between for the three-dimensionality and complexity of violence.

A positive safety understanding of socially connected and constructed subjects (rather than self-governing individuals) and Bierria's concept of *heterogenous agencies* help radically reimagine agency away from a quantitative measure. Information about how perpetrators are/were shaped by oppression and violence in their lives does not need to increase or decrease blame. Rather, it offers qualitative information relevant for healing and

transformation by providing a more detailed topography of experiences of agency and harm in their lives. It serves as explanation, not excuse. And like much of transformative justice theory, it aims to think through the interconnections between structures and individuals. My interviewee Colin Atrophy Hagendorf, who worked with perpetrators for years through the organization Support New York, describes the difficulty of thinking about socialization within structures of oppression together with individual responsibility when we are accustomed to a liability model:

> *It is hard to explain that everybody is still 100% responsible for everything they do but also the way we are all socialized is super toxic and super traumatizing, and people act out this trauma in different ways.* (Hagendorf 2014)

Positive safety reimagines responsibility away from guilt and blame, quantitative debts owned by the kingdom of the sovereign self, accrued for failure to properly self-govern. It moves instead towards responsibility as responding – a qualitative mode of relating and responding to the web of being in which we are embedded. No one is ever "excused" from responsibility because no one is ever banished from kinship. Just as agency can be understood as heterogeneous, so, too, can responsibility. Transformative justice practitioners call for responsibility at multiple levels: the individual, community, and structural level.

Response to Harm: Retributive Taking Account or Transformative Giving Account

What are experimental non-carceral models for supporting these heterogenous responsibilities on the part of those who cause harm? I lay out a number of potential models for someone like Nadia, explore the political education models of Philly Stands Up and Support New York in greater detail, and argue that the underlying approach to harm in positive safety is of giving rather than taking account.

In Nadia's case, she might seek a dialogue with Jaya if she does not feel that direct contact would be retraumatizing; her support team might look into restorative justice style circles with the perpetrator, survivor, and community (Jashnani et al. 2011). If Nadia and her team's assessment indicates that Jaya's colleagues at the local organization where they work are best positioned to hold Jaya accountable, Nadia's support team might research accountability processes embedded within formal organizations (INCITE! and CARA 2005). shorten Lastly, Nadia could ask Jaya to engage in long-term therapeutic and political education meetings with an accountability team like those developed by Support New York and Philly Stands Up (Kelly 2011; Kelly, Peters-Golden, and Philly Stands Up n.d.; Support New York 2014). What some transformative justice practitioners would not suggest, at least not early on, is a circle with Jaya and Nadia in one room. Many, both inside the transformative justice movement and in the mainstream anti-violence movement, have questioned the safety and efficacy of survivors and perpetrators meeting face to face, as is common in some restorative justice modalities. I have heard several anecdotal, perhaps apocryphal, accounts from the first generation of transformative justice (in the first decade of the 2000s) about failed efforts to bring community members, a survivor, and a perpetrator into a circle. Creative Interventions specifically advises against restorative mediations in such cases "because mediation is based upon equal power of both sides to negotiate" (Creative Interventions 2012:1–9), but "domestic violence and sexual assault generally take place within or create a relationship of unequal power" (Creative Interventions 2012:3–10). Philly Stands Up has worked for many years in processes with perpetrators and simply draws a red line:

> Our work departed from traditional RJ [restorative justice] practice mainly in that we never asked the survivor to sit down with the person who caused harm. In the

> aftermath of a sexual assault, this experience would be tremendously retraumatizing and unproductive. (Kelly 2011:49)

In response to this limitation, transformative justice experiments moved in the direction of working with persons causing harm separately and one-on-one. The groups with the most sustained practice and success in this time were collectives with clear missions – two stand-outs are Philly Stands Up and Support New York. They were both small, tight-knit, volunteer-run collectives that emerged out of the punk and anarchist scenes in their respective East Coast cities. Each worked closely with survivor supporters, either in a parallel collective (Philly's Pissed) or within their own collective (Support New York collective members would create one team for survivor support and one for perpetuator accountability). This likely contributed to their success by enabling regular communication between teams' deep trust between the two "sides" of the process; and survivor feedback to ensure the process did not go off the rails.

I argue that the model underlying both the restorative and transformative justice work with persons causing harm that I studied is one of *giving* (rather than taking) *account*. Taking account views harm as a debt that must be repaid through "an eye for an eye" retribution. In this model, Jaya should be deprived of their rights in proportion to their wrongdoing, thus receiving "just deserts" (known in criminology as "desert theory"). Accountability here becomes a mathematical calculation where violence is extracted out of its relational context in order to make equivalencies between different kinds of harms. This moral calculation distributes moral guilt and divides up the ownership of misdeeds in a moral economy of powerless victims and mad/bad perpetrators. Punishment is similarly made universal and measurable in the form of money (fines) or time (incarceration).

Giving account, in contrast, is a form of relating by narrating the self as part of its bigger web of relations, both oppressive systems and nurturing networks of care. As Gumbs shared,

> *I have really been very literal about accountability […] being able to give an account: can we tell each other what's going on. When it comes to responding to the spectrum of sexual violence and gendered violence in our culture, that becomes really important to me because silencing is such a major factor in sexual violence […]. Often it is like "Oh, accountability […] is doing the right thing." But there has to be […] communication, a way that we can witness and be a record and share with each other.* (Gumbs 2014)

To create these forms of communication, witnessing, and sharing, both Philly Stands Up and Support New York would form teams of two or three that met regularly (twice a month, usually) with persons who caused sexual harm for up to two years. Philly Stands Up describes meeting in public places that nevertheless provided some anonymity, like "parks, train stations, hotel lobbies, food courts or outdoor cafes" (Kelly 2011:54). Their work focused on story-telling, writing, Theatre of the Oppressed inspired role plays, and visual material like movies (Kelly 2011:56). Both Philly Stands Up and Support New York improvised materials and formats over time depending on the needs of the people they were working with. Support New York began to include somatic body exercises to tap into levels of emotion inaccessible to words; Philly Stands Up used drawings, word maps, and recordings of readings (Kelly 2011:55) to reach beyond the written word. Groups tried to model the behaviors they were trying to support in persons who had caused harm - respect, empathy, communication, boundaries, and consent.

With time, both groups developed a clearer sense of how accountability could be built. Philly Stands Up captured these in their "Roadmap of an Accountability Process" (Philly Stands Up 2012), a winding road that nonetheless has five major milestones:

identifying behaviors, accepting harm done, looking for patterns, unlearning old behaviors, and learning new behaviors. Support New York's curriculum (Support New York 2014) describes its process: after a phase of trust-building and story-sharing, the Support New York members steward the process through a phase of political education focused on the perpetuator's socialization into oppression and violence, through explorations of power, control, and entitlement and how these play out in gender and sexuality specifically. The curriculum helps perpetuators build healthier skills through units on communication, relationship dynamics, consent, and boundaries. Another of those skills is empathy for survivors through an exploration of the trauma of sexual violence. Revisiting the actual situation of violence and taking accountability only happens very late in the process after all these other skills have been developed. Threaded throughout is the implementation over time of survivor demands, as well as a process of writing an apology letter to acknowledge harm, document learning, and commit to actions in the future to change behavior (Support New York 2014:8).

This apology letter and the meetings that help it to be written are examples of giving an account of oneself. Imagine Jaya undertaking such a process and writing such a letter – an account, a restorying, an explanation, or an apology – that accepts responsibility for their choices and the consequences for those harmed, who are their audience. It allows Jaya to critically examine the web of relations and structures that underpin their story and constitute them, and it enables them to restory themself with new lines of agency to make new choices without violence. This is not a story of starting over clean and new, isolated from past selves and mistakes, but of building muscle to make better choices and shift habits over time. This model of responsibility draws in part on the philosophy of Jewish French philosopher

Emmanuel Levinas, who framed responsibility in terms of response and relation to an Other. Judith Butler expands on Levinas's concept of responding to an Other by understanding accountability in narrative and rhetorical terms (Butler 2005). For Butler, accountability means giving an account of oneself, a mode of address to an Other where one offers one's reasons for doing the things one has done. One reconstructs one's being, often in the shape of a narrative. That narrative, according to Butler, includes our dependency on caretakers in our earliest moments in life. Butler uses psychoanalysis and Levinasian philosophy to describe the experience of impingement by the desires and language of these Others. This produces an otherness at the root of the self, an opacity, which means that one's narrative starts in *media res* and is always interrupted (Butler 2005:39): "I am authored by what precedes and exceeds me" (Butler 2005:82). This experience of dispossession, however, does not foreclose the possibility of being accountable: "On the contrary, [dispossession] may well be the condition for moral inquiry, the condition under which morality itself emerges" (Butler 2005:8) because responsibility is a form of response to an other and is thus inherently social.

The agency of individuals who have caused harm to change their behavior, to re-shape or re-author themselves, comes not from a denial of the fact of being shaped by socialization, but precisely through an investigation of that shaping, of the hinge between self and structure. Political education within an accountability process allows people causing harm to examine the familial, interpersonal, institutional, and structural conditions which shaped their behavioral patterns. Haines described how generationFIVE trainings explored these layers of social training in abuse:

> *A question we would talk about in our training is: for the people who hurt you, what, trained them to do that? […] No one is born a sexual offender. So what trained them to do it? […] What was it at the level of social conditions that trained them? What about institutions trained them? What about community trained them? What about*

> *their family trained them and then all of a sudden, you're like, holy shit, it all trained them to do it. (Haines 2021)*

This may be training in domination, marginalization, or both. The cycle of violence theory was mentioned previously as an explanation for causing harm, a commonly held opinion among transformative and restorative justice practitioners, many of whom work with people who have caused harm that are highly marginalized (many of them formerly incarcerated). In contrast, Bay Area men's integrity coach Mischa Byruck works with many men in the tech and Silicon Valley communities who are privileged in terms of class and race (Byruck 2022). He contests the idea that everyone who commits sexual harm is doing it from a place of trauma, as many of the men he works with are committing sexual harm from a place of entitlement and privilege. Organizations like Philly Stands Up and Support New York thus need to assess the root causes of someone's violent behavior in order to craft a successful accountability process.

In their work, Butler suggests that giving an account necessarily turns one into a social theorist, as one must narrate the social connections that made one's own life possible and, in so doing, critique them (Butler 2005:7, 134–35). Todd Augusta-Scott, a therapist who has worked with men who commit domestic and sexual abuse at Bridges Centre in Canada for almost thirty years, sees this as a first step to a person causing harm re-narrating their own story about themselves: "Re-authoring has involved noticing the traumatic experiences in [the perpetrator's] life in which he was recruited into a negative story about himself. This negative story has contributed to and reinforced his destructive behavior" (Augusta-Scott 2006:252). This practice of analysis strengthens moral agency and self-determination by

helping people better align their values with their actions;[20] recognize choices in places where there may have felt like there were none; and make new choices available through collective political action.

Giving an account thus unites both the harms that an individual directly causes (those covered by the liability model) and larger harms in which one participates as part of a social structure, like the harms of capitalism, sexism, or transphobia (Young 2011). generationFIVE brings these two levels together in its definition of perpetrator accountability (Kershnar et al. 2007:29). Perpetrator accountability requires

- the acknowledgment of harm done and its consequences for others, even if unintentional, and the cessation of current harm;
- making reparations to harmed parties; and
- changing attitudes and behaviors to prevent harm and to shift social conditions away from violence and oppression.

This restorying work not only grapples with social connections in its *content*, but social connection is also its *method*. The work happens in and through relationships, rather than through a sovereign self that remakes itself as infallible for future mistakes. Dialogue with Philly Stands Up or Support New York members is the embodiment of this form of relating, where social connection becomes a means for reintegrating persons who have caused harm back into right relationship. This work was deeply personal, but it was distinguished from therapy and understood to be more about political education towards behavioral change. Leah Todd from Support New York explained,

> *What we do is not counseling, and everyone that we work with are all meeting with counselors. That's something that we think is valuable and does dovetail with what we*

[20] Similarly, Bassichis of Communities United Against Violence and Perez-Darby of the Northwest Network both define accountability as this aligning of values and actions (Kim et al. 2012; Perez-Darby 2011).

> *do, but we're there to challenge people and get them thinking on the political side of it.* (Todd and Spencer 2014)

Bench Ansfield from Philly Stands Up reflected on the difference between political restorying and therapy:

> *The biggest difference is that you don't have just one person's internal state in mind, you are always holding at least two people and usually many more than that. And so your mandate is really different than like "help this person be well," it's about helping the survivor and the community be well.* (Ansfield 2022)

How does a perpetrator actually change their behavior, though? Those I spoke to who had facilitated such transformation processes described success as a shift in perspective, a "click" where the perpetrator begins to understand the situation through the eyes of the survivor. Hagendorf of Support New York explains:

> *We read all the stuff [in the curriculum], and we have all these conversations; we talk about people's childhoods; we talk about our own childhoods; we talk about how we got into punk. Somewhere in there it just starts to click that "Hey I harmed somebody and I need to do right by them. And the way to do right is to stop being so concerned about how the way that I harmed them has impacted* me." (Hagendorf 2014)

This empathy performs the ideal of sociality, as the person taking accountability does so by imaginatively embodying the Other.

Philly Stands Up and Support New York offer a curriculum, but accountability processes are typically emergent and responsive to the specific situation of harm, as well as the needs of survivors, persons causing harm, and community members, which often shift over time. Fujikawa compares positive safety's qualitative and contextual model with negative security's quantitative, universal approach:

> *Accountability ends up being tailored to what specifically happened, so that not everyone is necessarily going through the same: "Okay, you'll do ten years in jail." The state way of dealing with violence is based on a one-size-fits-all form of reform and punishment[…] So I think that makes sense, to measure accountability by what would actually be specifically helpful for that person.* (Fujikawa 2014)

Accountability processes with persons causing harm are described as often involving painful inward refection, as well as phases of backlash (Kim 2011). Creative Interventions suggests we must be "flexible enough" to understand forms of avoidance and denial as part of the process and "strong enough" to weather such storms and enable accountability over time (or know when it is time to quit and transition to other safety and accountability strategies) (Creative Interventions et al. 2012:2–42). As one practitioner I interviewed exclaimed,

> *It is a human thing. It is not like we are de-programming blade runners, you know what I mean? We are interacting with a human, so the curriculum is a loose framework. You can't just force the curriculum down and say "Ok we'll go through this and that, and you are healed! By the rules of the patriarchy, I now heal you," boom, like televangelists, "Your body is cleansed of sexism. Be on your way!"* (Hagendorf 2014)

Given the emergent nature of accountability processes, 'success' cannot be guaranteed. As I explore in the next chapter, positive safety embraces a methodology of emergence and a social ontology of uncertainty and vulnerability. Philly Stands Up members Ansfield and Jenna Peters-Golden wrote an article cheekily titled "How We Learned *Not* To Succeed in Transformative Justice" (Ansfield and Peters-Golden 2012), talking about the dangerous allure of success as a form of closure and certainty – both for perpetrators who wanted a gold star to clear their reputation, and for facilitators who wanted "adrenaline [and] dramatic victories" (Ansfield and Peters-Golden 2012). They acknowledge that they have goals, primarily of harm reduction to alleviate some of the past harm and prevent future harm. They resist the idea of a non-profitized concept of success, however, in favor of a movement approach. They write, "Success is conventionally understood as signifying completion and resolution, as opposed to reflecting the jumble of small victories, uncertainties, and defeats that typify organizing work." When focused on success,

> we found ourselves approaching the work in ways that we associate with the nonprofit industrial complex: looking for easy, marketable victories with the goal of generating statistics, and glossing over contradictions and inconsistencies that might call our work into question. (Ansfield and Peters-Golden 2012)

Fujikawa has also questioned the framework of success:

> *I'm not the cops, I'm not here to tell you such-and-such did their time and they get the gold star and they're "safe" to be back in community. I want to move away from this assumption that some people are inherently "safe" because of their past actions and other people are "not safe" because of their past actions. I want us to move towards looking at how are we all capable of causing harm, and asking: how do we form a community where we can still prevent harm from happening even though each one of us has the capacity to do harm? It is not like folks are necessarily just bad people until they're accountable and unsafe until they're accountable. I want to move away from this, because it is the very framework or logic of the prison system, that some people are criminals until they do x, y, and z or pay their time.* (Fujikawa 2014)

I have argued that positive safety approaches harm through engagement (rather than containment), defines harm as broken relationships (not rights); attributes qualitative, heterogeneous responsibilities to abolitionist agents (rather than quantitative degrees of blameworthiness to carceral subjects); and articulates a transformative justice response of giving account (not the taking account of retribution's just deserts and debt). Throughout, social connection, rather than isolation, are both the content and the method for perpetrator accountability. These commitments set positive safety up for a number of challenges with regards to implementation that it has yet to resolve, some of which I explore in greater detail in the next two chapters with regards to the potential and limits of the community in adjudicating violence beyond the law and rights framework of the state.

Conclusion

While the first two chapters of this dissertation tracked within the anti-violence sector the emergence of negative security logics in carceral feminist praxis and positive safety in transformative justice praxis, this chapter devoted itself to unpacking what exactly negative security and positive safety mean – conceptually and concretely – with regards to assessing violence, supporting survivors, and holding perpetrators accountable.

I have argued that negative security's logic of separation creates contradictions for feminist goals of ending gender-based violence. Negative security approaches that define sexual and domestic violence according to criminal legal frameworks as individual violence from "bad apples" are ill-equipped to address the oppressive structures that are the root causes of rape and abuse. Negative security logics that rest on a mutually exclusive binary of powerless, innocent victims and powerful, monstrous perpetrators will be unable to address the messy realities of survivors' use of violence to resist and survive harm, and they will in fact contribute to law-and-order policies that criminalize survivors' use of self-defense against their abusers. Lastly, negative security beliefs frame perpetrator responsibility as requiring retributive punishment and containment away from society in the prison, a hyper-violent environment where sexual violence runs rampant. These carceral feminist solutions to sexual and domestic violence ironically undermine their own efforts and in the worst cases, further enable sexual violence. These contradictions cannot be resolved through a reform of practices alone; rather, both negative security principles and practices must be transformed and overcome. They must be abolished (in the Hegelian sense as both negation and overcoming of a dialectic).

I have argued that positive safety gives us an abolitionist alternative, an alternative set of practices and principles that can better address the oppressive root causes of gender-based violence. In this chapter, I have argued that positive safety understands subject formation as interdependent because individuals are understood as being shaped both within systems of oppression as well as within communities of care. Moral binaries of victim and perpetrator are made more complex by understanding an individual's trauma history of both causing and receiving harm. Interpersonal ethics in a positive safety framework are understood as giving account rather than taking account of a debt, using narrative to take accountability, re-story oneself, and repair or build relationships that have been broken through harm. Drawing on Bierria's work, I argue for a view of agencies and responsibilities not as quantitative, measurable scales but as a qualitative, interconnected map. This interdependency culminates at the political level in the figure of the community. Because social connection interweaves these three dimensions (individual, interpersonal, political), transformative justice is impossible at any one level without cultivating justice at the others:

> Individual justice and collective liberation are equally important, mutually supportive, and fundamentally entwined – the achievement of one is impossible without the achievement of the other. The conditions that allow violence to occur must be transformed in order to achieve justice in individual instances of violence. Therefore, TJ is both a liberating politic and an approach for securing justice. (Kershnar et al. 2007:5)

Transformative justice melds social and individual justice as intermingled and inseparable.

Despite this, transformative justice praxis also faces a number of contradictions that it has yet to fully overcome. These include questions about managing conflict between different assessments of harm, between survivor and community needs, and the lines between punishment and consequences, investigation and assessment, coercion and consent when dealing with perpetrators. These questions are easier to manage in the negative security

framework because they are managed by a tradition of law and rights, implemented by the state. By turning away from the state, the transformative justice movement opens the Pandora's box on all these questions, transferring them to an alternate political unit, namely, the community, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four:
Community Beyond the State

Alix Johnson of the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC), describes how she was trained to think about justice at a mainstream anti-violence organization:

> *I think that most people's vision of justice was more relational and interconnected than we thought it would be. We were sort of trained to not recognize that or to see it as wrong. I would hear from people, "This person assaulted me, but he's my husband and I love him, and I don't want him to go to jail." Or "My dad abused me, but it's complicated […] I still care about him." The way that I was trained to respond to those feelings was "You're delusional […] he hurt you, he's in the wrong, the appropriate feeling for you to have is anger and to want revenge and retribution […]." I remember hearing that so much and being so trained to shut it down. That sticks with me around people's visions of justice, that they are actually so different from the kinds of justice that we are trained to shovel them into.* (Johnson 2013)

As Johnson describes, carceral feminism's negative security approach frames justice for sexual violence in terms of retribution. This individualist vision of retributive justice, or an eye for an eye, turns to the state as the primary agent and arena for adjudicating justice. In contrast, Johnson found that the form of justice that survivors often wanted was far more relational, uncertain, and emotionally complex (or even messy). This messiness is captured by the transformative justice approach, which understands justice in terms of repaired relationships, not debts paid. As such, its underlying positive safety framework affirms what these survivors gesture towards: a social ontology of interdependency rather than the autonomy of sovereigns (be they selves or states). Departing from the masculinist liberal paradigm of rights, duties, and formal equality, transformative justice builds instead on a feminist ethics of care that emphasizes shared vulnerability and interdependency as embodied in the figure of the community. Community, or the social networks of family,

friends, colleagues, and comrades around those causing and experiencing harm, serves as both the method and the ultimate goal, the means and the ends of transformative justice. This chapter explores major themes that emerged in my interviews and participant observation of how transformative justice practitioners imagine community and justice. I approach these themes philosophically to clarify the terms and concepts at play, put them into dialogue with other political and philosophical lineages, and articulate a normative framework for linking these practitioner's intuitions into a larger theory of positive safety.

The previous chapter outlined a theory of positive safety by exploring the themes of violence, survival, and responsibility, three of the four elements of INCITE!'s community accountability model. This chapter devotes itself to the fourth element: community. Whereas the last chapter illuminated the underlying assertions a positive safety framework makes about individual subjectivity and interpersonal ethics, this chapter widens the view to the level of the political. This multiplies individuals and their interpersonal relationships into dense social networks of care and intimacy as well as violence, mediated by institutions and structures of oppression, which transformative justice practitioners navigate in their work. While negative security anchors its politics through the nation state, positive safety conjures an alternative polity of community, whose contours I trace in this chapter.

To bridge between these two chapters, I use the trope of sovereignty, a conceptual schema that names both a form of individual subjectivity and a state formation. Theorist Wendy Brown draws these parallels explicitly:

> Liberalism presumes sovereign individuals and states, both as units of analysis and as sites of agency. […] Both state and individual sovereignty require fixed boundaries, clearly identifiable interests and identities, and power conceived as generated and directed from within the entity itself. (Brown 2001:10)

Playing with the term 'sovereignty' allows my work to explore connections between carceral selves and carceral states, both of whom claim to be rational, non-contradictory, unified, and transparent to themselves. They fashion themselves as self-made and self-governed, controlling all that is in their domain and exercising agency over and against other selves/states.

From a positive safety point of view, sovereignty is a delusional denial of interdependency. This denial undergirds the carceral logic of the criminal legal system in which justice for sexual and partner violence can only be framed as individual retributive justice. In the previous chapter, I explored how this denial of interdependency effects isolation at the level of the subject. By individualizing violence, it isolates the causer and receiver of harm into discrete entities, and it conceptually frames their complex social webs out of the picture. It also reinforces isolation at the interpersonal level, as responsibility typically requires the isolation of harm-doers from others through carceral strategies of separation (like the psychiatric hospital, the prison, etc.) Throughout this chapter, I explore the isolating effects when feminists and survivors pursue justice through the criminal legal system. The law limits them to individual retributive justice, and in its pursuit in the courtroom, they bump up against a central feature of state sovereignty: its self-defeating claims to universality. This universality appears as both a social ontology that seeks enclosure and control, aiming to make life impervious to harm, and as an epistemology of imperial knowledge, based on rational abstraction and the idea of objective truth.

Positive safety questions these criminal legal understandings of the individual and of responsibility – the fantasy of *individual* sovereignty and autonomy. So, too, does it question *state* autonomy and sovereignty, giving us a lens that functions like an optical illusion to blur

borders, question fixed identities, and recirculate power. Transformative justice practice joins the long lineage of rebellion against this hegemonic sovereignty and its material articulations in enslavement, enclosure, exploitation, dispossession, colonialism, the devaluation of care labor, the imposition of binary gender and sex, and the pathologization of non-normative bodies. In contrast, positive safety emphasizes interdependency in all the aforementioned dimensions: individual subjectivity, interpersonal ethics, and collective politics. Transformative justice praxis paradoxically conjures this interdependency at the very moment it is most put in peril. The crisis of sexual violence – and the violation of boundaries and injury to the self and to social relations that it involves – becomes an impetus for the counterintuitive: for opening towards interdependency at the precise moment when social relations have wounded, and for seeing social connection as a resource at the moment when it appears most precarious or risky.

In the first section, I unpack carceral feminist alliances with retributive justice and how these sabotage feminist aims to end gender-based violence. These approaches must comply with the criminal legal system's ruling logic: a predominantly retributive concept of justice rooted in a negative security framework and guaranteed through state sovereignty. I argue in section one that these logics seed irresolvable contradictions that self-sabotage feminists' own efforts, because seeing the state, and particularly the criminal legal system, as the avenue for justice for sexual violence overlooks the state's (re)production of that violence. Drawing on feminist legal theory, I uncover the contradiction at the heart of this state sovereignty – its supposedly universal law protects very particular interests, reasserting misogyny, racism, and other oppressions under the guise of objectivity. Carceral feminists' "cruelly optimistic" (Berlant 2011) efforts to reform criminally legal responses to gender-

based violence only address the failed practices of the legal system for survivors, not its inadequate underlying principles. For that, one needs a transformation of both practice and principle; in short, abolition.

I explore these alternative principles and practices in section two, using the community violence prevention strategies of Brooklyn's Safe OUTside the System (SOS) Collective to explore the concept of community as a figure oppositional to the state. SOS's work training local businesses and institutions in Brooklyn to serve as "safe spaces" for queer people and to prevent and intervene in anti-queer violence is grounded in what I argue is a social ontology of interdependence and shared vulnerability. This cultivates a positive safety rooted in precarity and uncertainty, in contrast to negative security's aspirations for certainty and closure.

SOS's methods for training local leaders in non-carceral bystander responses to harm emphasize the agency and knowledge of community members over experts. This epistemology of embodied and practical knowledge – or *mētis* (Scott 2004) – is the focus on section three. Every transformative justice response is uniquely responsive to the contours of its context, in contrast to the imperial, abstract knowledge of the state and the formal rules of the criminal legal system. Ultimately, this transformative (rather than retributive) justice aims at transforming not only individuals but entire systems through the collective subject of community. Thus, in a positive safety model, community stands in opposition to the universalism of state sovereignty through differing social ontologies, epistemologies, and concepts of justice.

'Community' as a term, however, is vague and overdetermined on both a symbolic and a practical level. In part four, I unpack some of the tensions within the concept of

community used in transformative justice discourse: between descriptive social connections often based on place (neighborhoods, workplaces, etc.) and normative ones based on shared values, culture, and identity (like political organizations), and between ancestral pasts before and beyond state sovereignty and a present where community is nonexistent and must be built. Each of these binaries has one pole that tends towards a rosy picture of community and another that tends towards a more divided, chaotic one. In the tradition of Black women's organizing, transformative justice organizes community, or solidarity, across the differences exposed by the wound of sexual violence. To address any enduring vagueness of the term community, I draw on the BATJC's pod-mapping approach, which has encouraged people to make their community ties more concrete and visible. I conclude by looking at the questions about community-based justice that remain unanswered by the movement, leaving these as tasks for future practitioners and theorists.

The False Universalism of Negative Security

When a survivor seeks justice for sexual violence in the criminal legal system and a perpetrator enters a courtroom, they are viewed in the eyes of the law as rights-bearing individuals. These eyes belong to Lady Justice, whose image hangs on the walls of courthouses across the country: holding scales, blindfolded. Her eyes are unable to see difference, premised on an egalitarianism that treats all individuals "equally" under the law. In the word 'equal,' survivors bump up against a core feature of negative security: the framing of the law as universal, and by extension the state as law enforcer and as a neutral institution that can adjudicate from a place of objectivity and fairness. Equally noteworthy is the focus

on the individual: because the criminal legal system can only perceive responsibility in individual terms as liability [(Young 2011) see previous chapter], justice, rights, and equality are limited in a criminal legal framework to individual justice. These properties of law and the state are captured in the genealogy of "sovereignty," a juridical and political concept that emerged alongside the bloody realities of nation-state formation in the modern era to explain a state's right to control of territory and people (Loick 2018). In traditional theories of sovereignty, the state is the ultimate decision-maker (Bodin 1992), the protector from the anarchy and violence of the state of nature [Thomas Hobbes, see e.g., (Hobbes 2018; Thornton 2005)], the servant of a higher law of rationality [Immanuel Kant, see e.g., (Kant 2006)], and the representative of a common interest, like the "general will" [Jean-Jacques Rousseau, see e.g., (Farr and Williams 2015; Rousseau 1968)] of a people. Sovereignty frames the sovereign ruler as decisive and absolute, and in a modern liberal state, that sovereign is the nation-state.

Survivor advocates across the political spectrum regularly acknowledge that the criminal legal system "fails" survivors due to systematic misogynist bias (Campbell and Raja 1999; Epstein and Goodman 2018). In effect, one could say that they see the veil of sovereignty's universalism slipping and the particular interests of misogyny and oppression peeking out underneath. Feminists invested in the legal system, however, have located this problem at the level of practice and not principle, seeking to reform the system's sexism. Indeed, advocates have succeeded in the last decades in changing federal and state laws to expand the definition of sexual assault to include marital rape (Hasday 2000), gender-neutral language (Rumney 2008), and consent rather than force as the threshold for rape (Boon 2000:650; Dowds 2020). Sex crime units among police, victim/witness assistance units in

prosecutors' offices, and training for law enforcement, medical personnel, prosecutors, and judges is intended to sensitize institutional actors who come into contact with survivors. While these improvements to procedural and individual rights for survivors offer harm reduction for those who engage with the system, they fail to address the structural dimensions of misogynist and other biases that plague survivors in the courtroom. These structural dimensions are difficult to accommodate within a liability framework focused on individuals.

Despite these deficiencies, advocates of carceral remedies to violence appear so invested in the criminal legal system, the only options they can imagine are to reform it to better include survivors' concerns, rather than to upend its foundational assumptions. Why? That answer may best be found in the affective and somatic dimensions of carceral feminism's contradictions, not merely in rational or materialist analyses. Frontline survivor advocate and transformative justice activist and scholar molly ackhurst writes about the stuckness she and her colleagues experienced within a legal system approach:

> In this work I have consistently felt as though myself and my colleagues are trapped in a carceral frame – held there as if by gravity (Weil 1997) – while we support survivors navigate what justice is and can be, in the crisis infused present they and I reside within. This is despite the fact that everyone I have worked alongside has disagreed with the premise of police and prisons in one way or another, and also known carceral systems do not provide the majority of survivors with justice. And yet we all continue to do the work, continue to celebrate the rare guilty verdicts that come in. Rarely if ever do we speak about the roles we as support workers play in the immovable place we have found ourselves in. (ackhurst 2024:2)

ackhurst describes the carceral system as having a "gravitational pull" (Russo 2018:21) that keeps anti-violence activists stuck in a holding pattern (Nash 2018:27). Advocates' continued hopes that the criminal legal system can be reformed and that the state can be a site of justice appears as a "cruel optimism" (Berlant 2011), designed to repeatedly disappoint.

These feminist and survivor-friendly reforms aim to make criminal legal practice live up to its espoused principles of universalism. Drawing on an abolitionist critique of reformism, I would argue that these reform efforts fail because not only the practice of the criminal legal system but also its underlying liberal principles of negative security – in this case, (pseudo) universality and objectivity – are deficient for addressing sexual violence at its roots. They create paradoxes and contradictions that can only be resolved through a transformation of both theory and practice, of which transformative justice gives us one such example.

The universalism of the law unmasks itself as a pretense within a society saturated with hierarchies of power and oppression. Feminist legal scholars in particular have deconstructed the farce of formal equality within the law, concealing as it does the specific identity interests of privileged or dominant groups within a supposed universalism (Gotanda 1995; Harris 1993; MacKinnon 2011). Arguably the first critic of this pseudo-universalism was Karl Marx in his essay, "On the Jewish Question" (Marx 2016). Marx surfaces a distinction relevant for many feminist generations: the construction of private and public spheres. He demonstrates that the public sphere of the state, premised on egalitarian, universal rights for all individuals, is conditioned by the private sphere of the market, in which the inequalities of class reign supreme and particular class interests dominate.

Feminist theorists and activists have offered parallel critiques of the public/private division, while drawing the boundary between the two in a different place: the state and the market, as well as productive labor, belong together within the public sphere, coded masculine and white; domestic life and reproductive and care labor belong to the private sphere, coercively feminized and racialized. In both the Marxist and the feminist critiques,

the seeming universalism and independent sovereignty of the public sphere is sabotaged by its constitutive relationship with a denied, unequal other, through which inequality persists even within supposed universalism. Rape and abuse have long been relegated to the private sphere as a personal issue that does not rise to the level of public concerns for justice. In accordance with the feminist slogan "the personal is political," efforts over the last decades to criminalize rape and abuse have shifted the red line between public and private by exposing harms in the domestic sphere to the light of public, state-based justice. By extending state-based criminal justice into arenas that were once designated as part of the private sphere, however, these laws also import the contradictions of sovereign universalism and its concealed white male particulars into efforts to adjudicate rape and abuse.

The failures of universalism feature prominently in Brown's affective explanation of why identity politics that highlight a group's victimization (in her psychoanalytic reading, masochism) tend towards punitive politics (again, in her reading, sadism). In the previous chapter, I turned to Brown's concept of "wounded attachment" to explain carceral feminism's toxic identity politics around victimization. In that work, Brown uses Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* to explain the structure of desire that marginalized subjects develop towards privileged ones, desiring what they possess but morally reviling their power, thus cultivating a politics of powerlessness. In *Politics Out of History*, Brown reads these tendencies slightly more charitably, turning to Sigmund Freud rather than Nietzsche to revisit the question of wounded attachments (Brown 2001). In her psychoanalytic reading, underneath the hate of the powerful and privileged lies a hidden lost love. In Freud's "A Child is Being Beaten," that lost love is for the Oedipal father; in Brown's political allegorical reading, it is for liberalism. "This [liberal] ideal would be a site of love because it is the

foundational frame of hope and possibility for a liberal subject; it would become illicit once the falseness of the foundational frame is revealed" (Brown 2001:52). This love is lost because liberalism's promises of sovereign subjectivity and just democracy have proven to be thoroughly marked with forms of dominance and privilege parading as neutral universals.

This fall from liberalism, as Brown conceives it, leaves politicized subjects with an attachment to the broken ideal that promised love and social belonging, but delivered injury instead. As a result, politicized subjects guiltily clutch the ideal of sovereign subjectivity while simultaneously hiding their humiliated attachment to what they cannot let go of. With their desire for the ideal rebuffed, victimized subjects associate love with punishment, oscillating between political masochism (victimization) and sadism (punitive politics). Brown's ultimate concern is the way this leaves political subjects "at the very heart of desire [with] a broken solidarity with oneself and/or one's compatriots" (Brown 2001:52). Caught in a sado-masochistic loop, these subjects are hindered from seizing power for themselves and their comrades in order to remake social relationships towards community and away from state sovereignty.

Unfortunately, even the feminist legal reform efforts regarding rape and abuse that have acknowledged and tried to combat this pseudo universality have failed. Feminist legal scholars have argued to replace formal equality or universal rights with a concept of substantive equality or group rights that address group-differentiated discrimination (Brown and Halley 2002:423; Fredman 2016; MacKinnon 2011). In particular, feminist anti-violence activists attempted a legal strategy focused on group rather than individual rights, drawing on

a civil rights framework to frame rape and abuse as discriminatory against women.[1] For example, advocates pushed for 1994's VAWA to include provisions for a civil rights remedy for survivors, allowing them to sue perpetrators in civil court on grounds of discrimination.[2] This provision was struck down six years later by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional, thus foreclosing a group-based civil rights approach and leaving the only viable legal avenues for survivor justice as individual criminal and civil cases. This meant that both the structural dimensions of rape and the structural changes needed to address it were framed out of the scope of justice, which remained an individual, retributive form of justice. At this political conjuncture, renewing a feminist legal strategy of advocating for substantive equality or rights for specific groups (like "women" or "survivors") would likely create its own problems. Brown has referred to this as the "paradox of rights": group "rights that entail some specification of our suffering, injury, or inequality lock us into the identity defined by our subordination, and rights that eschew this specificity not only sustain the invisibility of our subordination but potentially even enhance it" (Brown and Halley 2002:423).

Given a positive safety framework, the underlying problem of universalism cannot be addressed through reformist efforts within state sovereignty but only outside of it in an alternative political unit. At its core, the carceral feminist approach invests responsibility and authority for adjudicating sexual violence in the hands of the U.S. state. Yet transformative justice discourse has argued that the state (re)produces violence. The shape of this violence has transformed over time but not necessarily lessened: in the modern era, the U.S. nation-

[1] Even carceral feminist approaches include recognition that rape and abuse correspond to gendered group identities, thus offering some form of group or structural analysis, albeit typically gender-exclusive rather than intersectional (see previous chapter).

[2] Violence Against Women Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1902 (codified in relevant part at 42 U.S.C. § 13981 (1994) (struck as unconstitutional by United States v. Morrison, 529 U.S. 598 (2000)).

state built out a bureaucratic apparatus (Weber 1978) to manage its welfare biopolitical (Foucault 2010) control over populations; in the postmodern era, this has increasingly become a carceral necropolitical (Mbembe 2003) strategy for abandoning whole populations to fast or "slow death" (Berlant 2007). The past chapter gave examples of the state's (re)production of sexual violence, including sexual violence perpetrated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents or prison guards, survivor criminalization by police, and the prison's function to enable rather than deter rape. Transformative justice analyses assert that the state's role in (re)producing the structural injustices that enable interpersonal sexual and partner violence mean that it cannot truly provide justice in individual cases of harm – as justice at these two levels (interpersonal and structural) is mutually interdependent. If the state is both punisher and protector, bad cop and good cop, agent of repression and cheerful cooptation (Meiners 2009; Young 2007a), a social movement cannot choose to engage with one side of the coin without inevitably encountering the other.

Interdependency as the Social Ontology of Positive Safety

A sci-fi movie about aliens may seem like an unexpected place to find an articulation of positive safety's social ontology of interdependency. Nevertheless, in 2013 I made my way up to the fourth floor of a building in Manhattan's Chinatown to a screening of an action film. It was one of the first events of a nascent network called Transform NYC, made up of members of different local transformative justice-oriented organizations including Ejeris Dixon of the Audre Lorde Project and RJ Maccani of the Challenging Male Supremacy Project. The group aimed to open up conversations locally in New York City about transformative justice responses to violence. It was a few days after Halloween, so they chose

an alien invader movie as a playful lesson in "community responses to intergalactic violence" (Audre Lorde Project 2013). The film *Attack the Block* follows a cast of youth of color for one evening of their lives in South London public housing. The film is bookended by the youth's encounters with police, but in the intervening hour and a half, their actions shift the audience's perception of them from petty thieves in a "gang" into neighborhood heroes. This is because they defend their building against an alien attack. They hold tight to their apartment block as a community worth defending, despite their community and their modes of surviving often being underinvested in and pathologized as criminal.

Just the year before, this criminalization had resulted in a widely publicized and protested murder that some identify as the origins of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) wave of mobilizations that peaked repeatedly throughout the 2010s: the death of 17-year-old Black youth Trayvon Martin by an armed civilian running the local community watch. Martin was perceived as dangerous in part because he was walking with his head covered by a hooded sweatshirt; protestors wore hoodies in solidarity with Martin. In their advertising for the film screening, Transform NYC proclaimed: "The young folks in hoodies are the heroes!" (Audre Lorde Project 2013). Philosopher and transformative justice practitioner Sarah Tyson argues that this transvaluation of life, particularly Black life, otherwise marked disposable by the carceral state is central to transformative justice's vision of community:

> *Community accountability spends a lot of time trying to say there are forms of life in which people are creating connections to one another that are seen as criminal, degenerate, less than in all of these different ways. The genocide of trying to destroy those forms of life, we have to address that.* (Tyson 2014b)

In my subsequent interview with Dixon, one of the event's cohosts, they narrated methods for building relationships grounded in solidarity across lines of difference, offering an example that parallels the film (Dixon 2015c). She described her own experiences living

in a historically Black but rapidly gentrifying neighborhood in Brooklyn. Rumors were circulating in their building about an initiation happening next door for a street organization that might involve an attack on a gay person or a woman. She developed a safety plan not reliant on police but instead on the thickness of community, asking friends to stay over or to hang out on the first floor of the building to keep an eye out. Then an event happened that Dixon says "*shifted everything*" – a police shooting of a young Black man just a few blocks down the street. They described it this way:

> *The next day, the whole community was out. They were pissed off, they were fucking angry, helicopters overhead, all of that. [...] So I just walked around talking to people, being like "What do you wanna do? What do you think we should do? How can we prevent this type of stuff? Do you want to get involved?" And some of the folks I met turned out to be some folks who lived next door, who then were like "You're cool, I'm cool with you." And those guys looked out for us and even intervened in some harassment that occurred against one of my roommates.*

Dixon's language suggested a form of solidarity, how a united anger against racist police violence allowed people entangled in horizontal violence against marginalized members of their own community to recognize police power as their real enemy. This allowed her to build enough fragile trust to create an alliance of protection for her and her trans roommates. They acknowledged that this was not a full transformation of the violence circulating in the situation and that part of their new friends' form of protection was to use threats as a community-based strategy. Yet she still saw this as a step towards "*building even the scary relationships*" necessary for community-based alternatives to the carceral state. While the term 'scary' has been used to criminalize Black and Brown youth, Dixon did not use it to refer to people but to an experience of reaching beyond one's comfort zone to find solidarity. Dixon named other types of relationships that organizers can build that may involve personal or political discomfort: with unfriendly neighbors; the families of those murdered in anti-

queer violence who want to pursue prosecution; or learning from mainstream anti-violence organizations or prosecutors who do not share abolitionist values (Dixon 2015b). Dixon insisted on holding the ambivalence that "*we can disagree, and we can show up for each other.*" This harkens back to Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)'s work building relationship and political alignment across difference, hence the use of 'communities' in the plural.

Social connection appears here not only as a method at the interpersonal level for survivor healing and perpetrator accountability, but also as a broader goal at the political level, as the political realization of connection. Restorative justice discourse lauds community as both an anthropological fact of human life and a normative good, a context that humans need to thrive but one that is often lacking in contemporary society. Transformative justice brings a structural and historical analysis to this story of the disintegration of social bonds, understanding it as the result of oppressive forces like displacement; dispossession; forced migration; gentrification; corporate exploitation of labor and land; pathologization and criminalization of non-normative intimacies and bodies; disposing of people into carceral institutions; the devaluation of care and caretaking labor; and the divide and conquer strategies that pit marginalized groups in competition with one another, breaking their ties of solidarity. In transformative justice discourse, community is figured as a force of resistance and counter-power to these forms of violence. Practitioners speak often of the vision of building healthy, liberatory communities through their work. If isolation is a contributing factor to causing or experiencing violence, then community is framed in transformative justice discourse as its antidote.

Community functions in positive safety as a political imaginary of interdependence. It functions in transformative justice discourse as an alternative to both the state and to capital, as well as to those liberatory political units that have proven insufficient or exclusionary for progressive change, like the political party, the working class, or the union. Many frameworks have kinship with transformative justice's nascent model of community. These include Indigenous concepts of sovereignty which radically rethink the relationship between a people, land, and governance. They also include Arturo Escobar's vision of a pluriverse (Escobar 2020), where many diverse forms of life and ways of being thrive, rather than the universalizing hegemonic norms of life instituted through a centralized, bureaucratic state. Sylvia Federici advances a vision of the commons (Caffentzis and Federici 2014; Federici 2019) a third space beyond the public (state and capital) and private (domestic) spheres, like CARA symbolically dragging the "kitchen table" of queer femme care strategies out into the street as a community organizing strategy. Other kin concepts include abolitionist care, liberated from the gendered and racialized reproductive labor done in the private family or in social services (Boodman 2020; Medel 2017; Spade 2020; TallBear 2019; Thompson 2021b; Woodly et al. 2021; Yazzie and Spade 2021) and feminist care ethics (Gilligan 2016; Kittay 2020; Noddings 2013; Tronto 2013).

I am particularly drawn to Judith Butler's theory of precarity to explain the social ontology underlying a positive safety concept of community. Butler's *Precarious Life* takes loss, emergency, and injury (particularly the attacks of 9/11) as its starting point for meditating on precarity and using it as a concept to imagine building communities in which precarity is more justly distributed (Butler 2006). In grappling with the trauma and vulnerability of sexual harm, transformative justice builds a praxis out of Butler's questions:

> If we stay with the sense of loss, are we left feeling only passive and powerless, as some might fear? Or are we, rather, returned to a sense of human vulnerability, to our collective responsibility for the physical lives of one another? (Butler 2006:30)

Rather than succumbing to the corrosion of social bonds caused by gendered violence and asking the state to step in as mediator, transformative justice uses this woundedness as an opportunity to organize community.

Precariousness is, for Butler, a fact of our bodily existence as beings that are constantly exposed to potential bodily harm and injury from others. This shared exposure is, however, differentially distributed by political processes that determine which lives are valuable and which are disposable. In this process of precaritization, the state (among others) produces and exploits "group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Gilmore 2007a:28), either through active killing or "the slow death" of abandonment (Puar et al. 2012:169).[3] This maldistribution of recognition and care for different people's vulnerabilities calls upon us, indeed imposes a demand upon us,[4] to respond to our mutual precariousness and differential precaritization by more justly organizing the social and political institutions that meet our needs and sustain our bodies. While injury can drive us to the narcissism of the victimization-fixated politics that Brown critiques, Butler insists that it also has the potential

[3] Butler distinguishes between *precariousness* as a social ontology of all living beings and *precaritization* as the political distribution of means, both material and symbolic, for meeting needs and nourishing life (the form of precarity emphasized in Chapter One's discussion of neoliberal governance). Precarity, which traverses the two and thinks them together, "exposes our sociality, the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency" (Puar et al. 2012:170).

[4] Butler draws on Emmanuel Levinas's notoriously cryptic work on responsibility to emphasize the imperative and unchosen quality of the fact of our social ontology and the responsibilities it generates. Levinas emphasizes these elements through his focus on the requirement to respond to the Other as a form of accusation or even persecution (Butler 2005:83–101).

to lead us outside of ourselves, to bring us to reflect upon how others experience injury – towards Dixon's praxis of solidarity.[5]

Butler's distinction between precariousness as an abiding social ontology and precarity as an effect of social structures that can be politically transformed helps to unpack a curious paradox within transformative justice discourse. On the one hand, practitioners strive for a world where people's needs are met and care is justly distributed, a harmonious utopia. At the same time, however, practitioners acknowledge that experiencing and causing harm is universal and will not disappear after the revolution, suggesting a greater focus on resiliency (surviving and working through difficult conditions) than on making ourselves impervious to harm. Through Butler, these two claims appear to operate on different registers: the embrace of harm as universal is an embrace of our social ontology as vulnerable beings within webs of interdependence (precariousness), whereas the utopian vision of an abundance of care is a call to politically reorganize precariousness such that it does not fall unjustly on marginalized people (precarity).

To those marked as worthy of protection, sovereignty aims at the absolute certainty that no harm will occur, believing that eradicating vulnerability is a means to this impossible end. This negative security logic denies and exploits the vulnerability of the person who has caused harm by excluding them from society or marking them as disposable life (for example, via the prison). It eradicates the vulnerability of the person who has experienced harm by walling them off from all exposure to injury, shielding or weaponizing their

[5] In cases of injury such as the attacks of 9/11 or other moments where those who thought themselves invulnerable discover they are not, Butler reminds us of the generative power of this displacement from First World privilege to bring us to look at those who live constantly in states of exposure (Butler 2006:xii).

vulnerability (for example, via the women's shelter).[6] This denial, however, misrecognizes the fact of human fragility: "No security measure will foreclose this dependency; no violent act of sovereignty will rid the world of this fact" (Butler 2006:xii). In so doing, it perpetuates the cycle of violence by annulling mutual vulnerability. Tyson puts Butler's concept of precarity into dialogue with the work of early transformative innovators generationFIVE: "*Revenge attempts to master the injury, settling the score, but the very fact that we can be acted upon and act upon – our mutual susceptibility – forecloses the possibility of mastering injury or our vulnerability to it*" (Tyson 2014a:429). The precarious of Butler's approach lies in its embrace of uncertainty, unmastery, and Dixon's "*scary relationships.*" Positive safety paradoxically builds its praxis of community, as both political home and political force, on the shaky grounds of vulnerability.

Mētis as the Epistemology of Positive Safety

Dixon set out to build community as a political force. In my account, she used a positive safety epistemology of what James C. Scott calls *mētis*: emergent and improvisational rather than rule-bound, local rather than imperial, contextual rather than universal, embodied rather than abstract, informal rather than formalized, and learned through practice, not instruction manuals. Under the umbrella of the Audre Lorde Project, Dixon launched the SOS Collective, a member-based group focused on community-based safety for lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming people of color

[6] By 'weaponizing,' I'm thinking here of the victim-oriented identity politics described in Chapter Three, where vulnerability is used as a justification for retributivism and mobilized as a weapon to bolster the prison industrial complex.

in Brooklyn (Audre Lorde Project 2007). The project addressed harm its members were facing from many angles – law enforcement, strangers in public space, as well as in intimate relationships. Dixon came to the Audre Lorde Project as a long-time organizer who had spent the previous five years organizing low-wage workers, primarily women of color. Like CARA had done, she brought organizing back into the lexicon of anti-violence work by talking about base-building and campaigns. Similar to CARA's experience, they seemed to discover that organizing around feminist and queer issues often meant "organizing community," or building lines of solidarity and infrastructures of community, rather than "community organizing," where a pre-existing community is activated to enact a policy campaign against a clear corporate or governmental target (Stall and Stoecker 1998). Thus, rather than target the police through a campaign (a community organizing approach), Dixon focused on organizing community bonds strong enough to make the police unnecessary. She reimagined relationship building away from conventional community organizing methods:

> Relationship building doesn't have to involve old-school door-knocking. […] It can be the act of talking to your noisy neighbor as opposed to calling the cops. It's about the necessity of meeting the businesses and storeowners in your immediate areas and on routes that you frequently use. (Dixon 2015b)

The SOS Collective built community internally among its members through CopWatch work and cultural organizing, and even formed their own step team (Dulani 2020). Beyond that, the collective also launched efforts to build community – as well as community safety – throughout Central Brooklyn as their members moved through the neighborhood. One SOS member shared a story of walking home at night in the Crown Heights neighborhood with their friend when a man started talking to them. After ignoring him, he got angry and began to follow them home, asking "What are y'all, lesbians or something?" They narrate their experience:

> I looked across the street and saw the 24 hour laundromat that I pass every single day and was wondering that what would it be like if, on this day, I could just walk into that laundromat and have whoever was in there support me and my friend, no matter if I was some white straight professional or a little queer Black girl living in Crown Heights. No matter how I looked or how they perceived me if they just valued my safety unconditionally. (Dulani 2020).

Dixon launched the "Safe Neighborhood Campaign," which organized local businesses and institutions in the Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights neighborhoods to commit to becoming "Safe Spaces" for queer people (Rodriguez 2022:177). The vision was for "Safe Space" businesses and institutions to form a network across the neighborhood willing to engage in non-police bystander interventions if queer and trans people were experiencing violence inside their businesses or on the streets outside. Business owners and institutional leaders were organized into joining a "How To Be Safe OUTside the System" training that informed them about basics of heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia, and shared information about community violence, as well as police violence happening in the neighborhood. As most of these spaces were already very aware of law enforcement violence, according to Dixon, SOS's role was to educate about LGBTQ+ issues, bridging between the owners and the queer community's shared safety concerns, building lines of solidarity across difference. A fellow activist at Safe OUTside the System, scholar SM Rodriguez describes how the "Safe Neighborhood Campaign" also created queer support for local Black-owned businesses in return, building a network of mutual aid between local queers of color and Black business owners. Rodriguez writes:

> I remember holding our cyphers – casual, topic-based political consciousness raising events – in the space to support her business. I remember her rent rising in the following year and community members going out of their way to buy goods from her location. (Rodriguez 2022:178)

Transformative justice discourse has often critiqued mainstream anti-violence work for being "one size fits all," an articulation of sovereignty's universalism, choosing instead a contextual approach that embraces diversity. Transformative justice practice is, thus, deeply context dependent. As the SOS Collective's campaign shows, it requires an analysis of the specific power dynamics and culture of participants and appropriate adaptation to those contours. This specificity means that transformative justice principles are articulated into praxis differently in different settings. Some organizations focus on different forms of violence. For example, the SOS Collective has focused on the range of violence towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming people of color from state to stranger to interpersonal violence. In other contexts, transformative justice has been employed in cases of rape and domestic violence, leading to community prevention efforts by teaching healthy dating, sexual consent, and communication skills (see, for example, the Northwest Network and API Chaya, who are discussed elsewhere in this dissertation). Other projects focus on different settings for violence, for instance at work rather than in personal relationships. For example, sex workers have developed non-state mechanisms for keeping one another safe from sexual and other forms of violence from johns, pimps, and police (Major, Yee, and Passion 2011). Others have written about how to address sexual harassment in social movement non-profit workplaces "beyond firing" (Aguilar Shank 2020), just as CARA's early case within a local Chicano organization did. As transformative justice has grown in popularity, people have expanded its use, applying its principles in cases where potentially no violence has occurred but with the aim of minimizing state involvement, as with community responses to medical or mental health crises that hope to avoid the police involvement of a 911 emergency call (Oakland Power Projects 2020; The Fireweed

Collective 2020; Trans Lifeline 2020). In each case, community is defined differently (a neighborhood, the friends and family around a romantic relationship, a workplace, etc.) and different lines of solidarity are activated (geographic, filial and friendly, collegial).

Particularly in the face of concrete incidences of violence, practitioners must apply political principles in emergent, complex environments where conditions are quickly changing (CARA et al. 2008:77). CARA called this improvisation and experimentation "jazziness," drawing from philosopher Cornel West (CARA et al. 2008:78, footnote 3). They understood a "jazzy method" to balance "improvisation and structure" (CARA et al. 2008:78), flexibility and discipline (CARA et al. 2008:64), an open-ended practice grounded in a set of principles based on liberatory political analysis.

> Much like jazz music, a community accountability process can incorporate many different and diverse components that allow for the complexity of addressing sexual violence while also respecting the need for some stability and careful planning. Also, like jazz music, an accountability process is not an end point or a finite thing, but a living thing that continues to be created. (CARA et al. 2008:78, footnote 3)

Dixon's training explored how participants have improvised in the face of emergent violence in their businesses or institutions: "*So, if a fight broke out in your space, what would you do? If this happened, what would you do?*" Dixon observed that many participants had community-based strategies that were not visible to them:

> *Many of them would assume they had no safety strategies, but they did but were not explicit to them. They were not written down, they were just in their head as "this is what we did." So we wanted to do that to make it more explicit to them*.

Through roleplaying and safety planning, Dixon explains, "*we wanted to make sure those [existing] strategies included queer and trans folks of color,*" such as intervening in low level trans and homophobic violence like verbal harassment before it could escalate. Rodriguez adds detail from their own trainings in 2014 for an owner of a local cafe: "We ran through

tactics of de-escalation, what to do when you hear antagonistic language yelled outside (deployments of 'faggot' or rape threats, for example), and roleplayed some strategies that she [the business owner] could use" (Rodriguez 2022:177–78). The training scaffolded a set of liberatory principles around these existing, emergent responses.

As the Safe Neighborhood Campaign exemplifies, transformative justice draws upon informal, embodied, and local/vernacular knowledges about violence prevention and response among community members, rather than the accredited social service protocols of anti-violence professionals (Bassichis 2011:18; Kim 2011:20).[7] In his work on failed utopian social engineering by authoritarian states, Scott describes this form of vernacular knowledge using the Greek term *mētis*. Mētis, or "practical knowledge, informal processes, and improvisation in the face of unpredictability" (Scott 1998:6), stands in contrast to the rational, abstract, standardized knowledge required by sovereignty. That oversimplification is necessary to render highly complex networks of land and people legible to bureaucrats and experts for regulation, surveillance, and administration. Scott insists, however, that sovereignty's "imperial knowledge" is "parasitic" (Scott 1998:310) on the mētis it displaces and obscures. Indeed, he credits this ignorance in part with the downfall of many utopian state projects that underestimate ecological and human complexity, like Soviet agricultural collectivization or high modernist cityscaping. In parallel, transformative justice practitioners have critiqued mainstream anti-violence service provision models for an imperial knowledge that often disempowers survivors and their communities through expert-client relationships

[7] Given that a large number of early transformative justice innovators were and continue to be connected to higher education, transformative justice also draws upon academic knowledge production. This is largely the case for theoretical frameworks, as the pragmatic details of practicing transformative justice are rarely a topic for academic work.

which nurture passive dependency, whereas transformative justice tries to recognize and mobilize the resources, knowledge, and agency of local actors to create change (Bassichis 2011:18; Kim 2011:20; Russo and Spatz 2007:17).

Mētis is an embodied craft that requires an intuitive "touch" or "feel" (Scott 1998:314), and somatic (not just intellectual) learning is a key part of a transformative justice epistemology. The framework of healing justice, first articulated by the Kindred Southern Justice Healing Collective, aims "to address trauma, grief, crisis, and violence (both historical and current)" through decriminalizing and revitalizing ancestral lineages of integrative and holistic care (Page and Woodland 2023:140). Like transformative justice, healing justice is abolitionist oriented and focused on community response, but it focuses specifically on "interrupt[ing], transform[ing], and interven[ing] on individual/collective trauma" (Page and Woodland 2023:139). As such, it has been a symbiotic framework for transformative justice.[8] This healing is necessary to channel somatic responses to violence like rage, fear, and revenge fantasies away from retributive and towards transformative justice (Creative Interventions et al. 2012:1-32–34; Kershnar et al. 2007:60–61). This requires developing not just good ideas but also our emotional capacities for responding otherwise (Kershnar et al. 2007:6–8).

The struggle to "respond otherwise" – i.e., transformatively – to violence is uncertain in a world with limited options, as evidenced by one of the participants in a SOS training. He shared his safety strategy when violence emerged in his store: "*I call the guy who owns the*

[8] Organizationally, a co-founder of the early transformative justice organization generationFIVE, Staci Haines, later went on to develop "generative somatics," a methodology for politicized somatic healing from oppression and trauma. Many transformative justice practitioners have trained in this method, creating organizational and relational links between the two movements.

corner store across the street cuz he owns a machete'" (Dixon 2015c). In our interview, Dixon acknowledged that this was a community-based response, albeit not a transformative one, as it still operates on the threat and fear of violence. She reframes this learning from her work as an open question:

> *That's one of those questions as a movement we have to [ask ourselves]. I don't think we've fully grappled with the fact that a lot of us deep down, whether or not we say it or not, we think that sometimes de-escalating is about a power play. Sometimes it is about, "Don't fuck with me, because you think I will fuck with you." We know that's not transformative, but I'm not sure we've figured out the transformative thing we all feel in our hearts would work. That is the gap that I would see among theory and practice.* (Dixon 2015c)

Dixon wrestles openly with the uncertainties which characterize a positive safety ontology, in this case the uncertainty about how to effectively shift from a self-defense strategy based on fear to something more transformative and capacious. A somatic and intuitive learning process suits uncertainty; Scott asserts that mētis "is the mode of reasoning most appropriate to complex material and social tasks where the uncertainties are so daunting that we must trust our (experienced) intuition and feel our way" (Scott 1998:327).

Certain groups of people have unique access to mētis, according to Scott. "Communities that are marginal to markets and to the state are likely to retain a high degree of mētis; they have no choice, as they have to rely disproportionately on the knowledge and materials at hand" (Scott 1998:335). Mētis is particularly acquired by those who respond to emergencies and disasters, Scott insists (Scott 1998:314), and is mastered by those who respond to opponents (like boxers) or collaborators (like dancers). Transformative justice practitioners check many of these boxes – developed in communities for whom calling the police was not an option because of their marginality, responding to the crisis of violence, and navigating a landscape of shifting opponents and collaborators. Emergency cultivated the

emergence of transformative justice as a mētis of building relationships (proto-community) under conditions of extreme duress.

In SOS Collective's case, building relationships under extreme duress meant not only acute cases of individual violence but also neoliberal racial capitalism's ongoing displacement of longtime locals, which frayed the fragile webs the campaign was weaving. "*The story after I left [SOS] is how deeply gentrification impacted a lot of the spaces we had organized. So many of the spaces we had reached out to aren't in Bed-Stuy anymore*," Dixon shared (Dixon 2015c). In response to these pressures, Rodriguez documents SOS being jazzy and improvising new directions in the face of what they call "corrective development": "the forced movement of Black mad, poor, and/or queer bodies from a target geography to less desired areas" (Rodriguez 2022:167). They pivoted toward organizing virtual businesses and people in co-working spaces in order to expand SOS's network in the face of the steep decline of Black-owned brick-and-mortar businesses (Rodriguez 2022).

Transformative justice is a lab for organizing community, but the evasive, complex character of its epistemology requires unique conditions for learning that are quite different than the schools of sovereignty. Scott emphasizes that mētis cannot be made explicit as instructions. In fact, he uses the example of "work-to-rule" labor actions, where workers do only and precisely what is legally required of them in their job descriptions or work manuals, effecting the equivalent of a slowdown or strike without ever violating their contracts (Scott 1998:310–11). Scott uses this as evidence that efficient processes always rely on the intuitive, practical knowledge that is not and cannot be written in a manual. The closest thing to a manual for transformative justice is Creative Interventions' toolkit (568 pages) and its accompanying workbook (125 pages), whose length is evidence of the near impossibility of

charting out the many labyrinthine pathways a community accountability process could take. A consistent finding in my conversations with practitioners was their inability to summarize their actual practices because each response to violence was so unique. As a result, in my own methodology I had to accept the impossibility of trying to bear witness to or categorize the multiplicity of practices under the banner of "transformative justice," particularly as these proliferated exponentially after the 2020 BLM uprisings. Instead, I have aimed to distill some of the essence of these "thousand flowers blooming" to describe common core principles among them. This requires respect for the careful dialectic between practice and principle such that an epistemology of universalization and abstraction does not take hold.

Unfortunately, the inherent vagueness created by this diversity of practices poses challenges when trying to teach or explain transformative justice to others. This is particularly true since learning comes through practice, not just study – a truism affirmed by practitioners like Shira Hassan so much so that she named her transformative justice consulting business and collaborative "Just Practice." Learning to practice often requires accompaniment by more experienced practitioners, as mētis is concentrated in "a member of a community that serves as a living, oral reference library for observations, practices, and experiments" (Scott 1998:324). This epistemology recreates forms of knowledge transmission dependent on relationships with elders and mentors. Unfortunately, as we will see in the next chapter, the limited number of experienced transformative justice elders also poses problems for ambitions to scale out transformative justice quickly.

The Tensions of Community Against the State

Transformative justice discourse is not the only discourse to frame community as its ideal political imaginary. Rather, community is invoked across the political spectrum from left to right as an overfull and therefore an empty signifier, turning its definition into a battleground. For instance, do 'community policing,' 'community organizing,' and 'community alternatives to police' refer to the same thing, the same sense of community? The transformative justice vision of community can and should be understood in many different ways because it is built on a social ontology that is precarious, uncertain, and emergent and an epistemology of the local, contextual, and embodied. This leaves the concept frustratingly vague, however. In this section, I explore tensions within the concept and practice of community in a positive safety framework. Community ranges from being a descriptor of shared space to being a normative marker of shared values and identity. Temporally, community appears paradoxically as both a vanished past but also something that does not exist and must be built in the future. In each of these dualities, one pole marks a romanticized vision of community as coherent and unified, while the other marks community as more divided or disorganized. Thus, these binaries are overlaid with a tension between sameness and difference.

On a symbolic level, community is overburdened with diverse and sometimes contradictory roles in transformative justice discourse. It can be both the agent of and setting for accountability; in the former, it is perhaps ascribed too much agency or coherence as a kind of subject, whereas in the latter, it becomes more of an inert backdrop. It can be a contributor to harm, analogous to the perpetrator, or impacted by harm, analogous to the survivor; usually it is both. Rarely is community singular. 'Community' refers to a variety of

overlapping and sometimes competing forms of social connection, chosen and unchosen: geographic co-habitation; shared culture, identity, and values; kinship; and positioning within systems of oppression.

On a practical level, community often appears hard to operationalize concretely in transformative justice practice. Again and again in my interviews, activists spoke about the limits of their communities, the lack of capacities for taking action, and the histories of trauma that limited community members from having transformative reactions to violence rather than falling into old patterns organized around vengeance, denial, moralistic and binary thinking, and conflict avoidance, among others. This is a key place for further experimentation and development within the movement. Many have turned instead towards a micro-level focus on individual accountability and community-building skills, which is a way to tackle the problem at a manageable level, but it can feel like a deferral of bigger picture questions. In response to this difficulty to operationalize community, BATJC trains people to map their "pods" in order to get concrete and specific about the people they would turn to when they experience or cause violence, making positive safety more realistic. I discuss this model more at the end of this chapter.

All political units struggle with the question of membership and how to draw the boundaries around who is "in" and who is "out." Community's expansive and amorphous character means it is used to describe various kinds and intensities of social connection, many of them overlapping. Community may signal tight circles of people who share the intimacy of daily life, with a preference for face-to-face interactions, or relationships to people who are temporally or spatially distant like digital connections or connections with strangers. I want to explore one specific valence of community that overlaps with these

others: how it may range from connections based on shared values or identities (a "normative" ground) to connections based on shared space – be it an organization or a physical place (a "descriptive" ground).

On one hand, community may designate an older, place-based meaning that is merely descriptive – a location loosely inhabited by people who may be heterogeneous in many of their identities and norms. Spaces like neighborhoods, schools, universities, organizations, public spaces, and workplaces may be sites where no particular shared normative investment defines the community, but where sexual violence happens between members and intervention is nonetheless needed. In this case, 'community' serves as a descriptive, rather than normative denotation. Working in the tradition of community organizing, which takes neighborhoods in all of their political and social heterogeneity as the basic building block of political action, some transformative justice activists speak about community in this sense. Philly Stands Up, for instance, describes their "firm conviction that neighborhoods are better equipped than lawmakers are to break harmful cycles and redefine accountability to foster, rather than to destroy, community" (Kelly 2011:52). Johnson from BATJC shares a similar approach:

> *Lately, we've been having talks around just using community as a descriptive location term and like trying to build just more in the places we inhabit, and maintaining those connections along lines of identity and interest but just like, you know, what would it mean to really focus our energies on bringing this work to our neighborhoods and the people who live down the street and the people who work in our offices*" (Johnson 2013).

The neighborhoods where SOS built its vision of anti-carceral community in Central Brooklyn are peopled by immigrants and people of color targeted by the criminal legal system. The insurgent theoretical traditions of these communities, like Black nationalist, Indigenous, and Latin American socialist traditions, offer subversive re-imaginations of the

nation-state and self-determination, which are rich resources for imagining post- or un-sovereign futures.

Theorists have lauded the value of this descriptive thrown-togetherness. Examples include Iris Marion Young's vision of the unoppressive city where people can encounter inexhaustible Otherness through strangers in a "politics of difference" (Young 1986) and Butler's ethical imperatives of "unwilled proximity and unchosen cohabitation" (Butler 2012b:24). A city based on the politics of difference or neighborhood of unchosen cohabitants need not organize the boundaries of its membership through governmental jurisdiction or national borders, but could allow shared denizenship (rather than citizenship) to ground belonging (Buff 2001), moving beyond the bounds of state sovereignty to make space for stateless and undocumented people. Without shared values, though, how can such a heterogenous group of people respond when violence occurs? Diversity is easy to romanticize until it produces what seem like intractable conflicts.

On the other end of this spectrum, community can designate people who belong to a common group, grounded in some kind of normative commitment such as shared values, culture, and/or beliefs. These kinds of communities could include political organizations and parties, cultural centers, cooperative homes or businesses, and unions. Much of the transformative justice discourse that calls for community action against violence presumes a shared set of values or norms motivating that action. At its most utopian, this normative grounding imagines community as a coherent collective subject, with agency and the ability to confront and transform violence. Such a collective subject brings back into view, and onto the political stage, the social relations framed out of the picture by a carceral, individualizing model. Because community accountability was forged within communities facing multiple

forms of marginalization (for example, racism, heterosexism, sexism, and more), community often refers to shared political identities related to marginalization (for example, the trans community). Often, an overlap between normatively-grounded and identity-based communities occurs, where expectations of a shared experience (for example, the violence of transphobia for the trans community) slips into the expectations of a shared value (anti-violence).

For instance, Chapter Two narrated how CARA supported women in a local Seattle Chicanx organization who were assaulted by a fellow organizer. The survivors succeeded in holding not only the abuser accountable for his violence but also the organization that enabled it, getting the organization to agree to implement a national educational program about sexual violence for all its members, a curriculum that articulated Chicanx and Mexican liberation and efforts to end rape and abuse as shared struggles. Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), a national membership-based organization for Black youth that emerged out of the BLM movement in 2013, similarly implemented educational and safeguarding measures in the wake of a very public transformative justice process among members (Black Youth Project 100 2017). These included an enthusiastic consent training developed in part by the survivor in collaboration with others, a clear protocol for how to address reports of sexual violence, a national Healing and Safety Council to coordinate transformative justice processes, the creation of educational material for members about harm prevention and intervention (in particular, the *Stay Woke Stay Whole: Black Activist Manual*) (Bonsu 2018). BYP100 later went on to make their "She Safe, We Safe" campaign a central priority, which fights to divert police funds into "community-determined" (She Safe, We Safe Story Collection Project 2019) programs to address gender-based violence in Black communities.

Community has not only a normative/descriptive divide, but also a temporal divide. In transformative justice discourse, the concept of community hangs in a temporal balance of looking backwards and forwards, simultaneously something that must be built but has perhaps already been lost. Scholar and activist Alexis Pauline Gumbs suggests that community is often used "*prematurely*" within the context of the non-profit-industrial complex: "*How can we empower the community and how can we get rights for this community and how can we do this for that community, and it's like but is there a community?*" Community should not be taken as a given: it is something that may need to be built in a forward looking project of organizing community.

In their introduction to a special issue of the journal *Social Justice* about community accountability, editors Alisa Bierria, Mimi Kim, and Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo name colonial and carceral politics as responsible for disintegrating community bonds. They see parallels with the ways that carceral feminist approaches to violence have individualized the issue:

> Consistent with a history of colonial and racial politics that subordinate by breaking down a community's sense of itself as a community, these ["official"] responses also weakened a community's ability to imagine violence as a collective injury. It became clear that one of the hurdles to overcome was to re-imagine and re-build ourselves as communities. (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011:3)

Bierria, Kim, and Rojas Durazo insist that these individualizing technologies "undermine the possibility of community formation" (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011:5), setting community building in opposition to the modalities of the neoliberal state.

Just as healing justice frameworks aim to rekindle traditional healing practices suppressed by colonization, so too have transformative justice practitioners used metaphorical "time traveling" (Khan, Mohamed, and Rollin 2023) to recover ancestral forms

of justice and community building before and outside of Western sovereignty and carceral logics. Transformative justice practitioners have drawn on accountability practices that existed before or parallel to the criminal legal system, particularly when that system was not operational. Scholar-practitioners Kim, Durazo, and Bierria list some such settings: "during Jim Crow, in the criminalization of migration, the racial profiling of Arab, South Asian, and Muslim communities, the criminalization of sex work or same-sex acts, and the punishment of gender nonconformity" (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011:5). They go on to describe the recovery of this work:

> Community accountability practices are revealed in family oral histories and in intimate kitchen-table and backroom storytelling. […] That community work remains unnamed, articles are not written about it, and political organizations do not house or support it. […] The last decade of intentional collective thinking and organizing has been a process of recovering the legacy of this work and assessing what can be done within a more sustained, broad-based movement. (Rojas Durazo et al. 2011:4–5)

Similarly, Dixon describes a conversation with their mother about the Jim Crow South that influenced their work at the SOS Collective:

> *"Mom, when you were growing up, did you ever call the police?"*
> *"I can't remember any time that we did."*
> *"What did you do if something violent happened?"*
> *"It depended on the situation. Often, we could send for the uncles, brothers, fathers, or other family members of people involved to interrupt violence. However, there was this time when we had this family that lived on our block, where the husband was attacking his wife. And people were fed up, so some men in the community with standing – a minister, teacher, doctor, etc. – decided to intervene. Those men stopped by the house to let the husband know that they wouldn't tolerate his behavior and it needed to stop."* (Dixon 2015b)

This commingling of past, present, and future may not be contradictory but a unique temporality that harkens back to the circular, ghostly returns of feminist history in this dissertation. Avery Gordon speaks of "abolitionist time," driven by both "acute patience and urgency" (Gordon 2018:42), in which abolition (and, for transformative justice, community)

does not arrive as a decisive break, but it is instead ongoing work done in the meantime "while you're still enslaved, imprisoned, indebted, occupied, walled in, commodified" (Gordon 2018:236).

Neither of these binaries (descriptive vs normative, past vs future) are mutually exclusive, and most community formations likely like somewhere in between. In general, though, in each conception of community within transformative justice discourse, one pole portrays a rosy and idealistic picture of community as a form of unity or holism, while the other offers a more chaotic or even pessimistic view of community as amorphous and diverse. Transformative justice thinkers and practitioners have cautioned against what Miranda Joseph calls "the romance of community" (Joseph 2002), denying difference. INCITE! co-founder Andrea Smith implores practitioners to begin with an open mind about whether community already exists or not:

> Developing community-based responses to violence cannot rely on a romanticized notion of 'community' that is not sexist, homophobic, or otherwise problematic. We cannot assume that there is an intact community to begin with. Our political task then becomes to create communities of accountability. (Smith 2011b:xvi)

As Joseph recounts in *Against the Romance of Community*, postmodern theorists like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida have deconstructed the stable foundations on which liberal theories of community rest – like the sovereign self. Further, post-colonial thinkers have challenged the "fabricated claims of authenticity" (Joseph 2002:xx), the mythic origin stories and organic unities, of all nationalisms, even post-colonial ones. Critics of so-called "identity politics" have argued that community becomes a boundary policed for purity and ideological conformity, mobilized to advance individual or group interests – often those of group elites (Táíwò 2022) – rather than build coalitions towards liberation across difference. One of the

primary dangers of this romance of community, according to Joseph, is how community can universalize one of its shared particularities (for example, trans identity) at the expense of all others (race, class, diversity of ideological belief, etc.). This uncannily parallels how the state's supposed universalism conceals the particular interests of elites, reminding us that communities of resistance often ironically imitate that which they oppose, putting them at risk of cooptation. Here, community appears to be as much an obstacle to liberation as a vehicle.

The history of transformative justice is rooted in the struggle to recognize difference in supposed sameness. This includes acknowledging racial difference within the everywoman sameness that whitewashed the feminist anti-violence movement in its carceral ascent (as described in Chapter One). In addition, it includes a recognition of gendered difference – and violence – within communities of color and anti-racist movement spaces focused on the sameness of race and racism (as described in Chapter Two). Because of its focus on sexual and relationship violence happening at the heart of the intimate, community accountability discourse has always recognized that community can be a bad romance and an unsafe home for many. As a cross-cutting issue, rape exposes deep fissures at the heart of what was taken to be "home" (in violence terms, the intimate; in identity political terms, safe space and same space). It reveals fault lines within community, exposing the branching fractures of social cleavages that romanticized community attempts to smooth over. Because of its anti-carceral orientation, community accountability discourse also recognizes how community and home can be weaponized as fortresses of negative security – excluding and abandoning those beyond, while disciplining those within its borders.

This precarious position attempting to bridge across difference and broken solidarities is part of the long tradition of women of color organizing.[9] CARA, for example, understood community as constructed rather than given, based as much on identification (or affinity) as identity (Thuma 2006). They claimed communities in the plural rather than the singular in their name, and they attempted to build solidarity across these communities through an organizing community (rather than community organizing) approach. Yet this proliferation of communities does more to critique and implode the concept of "community" – as well as the survivor/perpetrator binary, since many communities both enable and prevent harm – than it does to offer a clear way forward.

In response to the vagueness of the term community, BATJC developed the term 'pod' to encourage people to get concrete and specific about community support. A 'pod person' denotes a specific kind of relationship – the people in someone's life that they could turn to for support and/or accountability when violence occurs. While people in other positions in our lives (friends, co-workers, neighbors) may also be our pod people, the term names "a separate kind of relationship, made from markedly different fabric than others" (Mingus 2023) that includes characteristics like "a track record of generative conflict; boundaries; being able to give and receive feedback; reliability" (Mingus 2023). According to Mia Mingus, one of the founders of BATJC, transformative justice requires the cultivation of this particular kind of relationship, which is "not one we have historically been taught to

[9] This tradition is exemplified by the groups the Combahee River Collective and STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), and the books *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984) and *All the Women Are White and All the Blacks Are Men*, *But Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull, Scott, and Smith 1993). This tradition includes the precarious in-between, "bridge" position of African-American women, for instance, who were simultaneously chided for weakening the Civil Rights Movement when they demanded an end to patriarchal violence within it and at the same time accused of dividing universal sisterhood when they drew attention to the racism of white feminists (Martin and Mohanty 1986; Reagon 1982).

understand, look for or cultivate" (Mingus 2023), instead of focusing on just community or connection more broadly. As BATJC member Johnson shared, *"We have always seen relationship-building as not being the precursor to the work but actually being the work itself"* (Johnson 2013). On a small scale, this is about cultivating specific types of relationships. On a larger scale, it is about propagating them exponentially to be the mobilizing structures and infrastructure for transformative justice work when crisis arises.

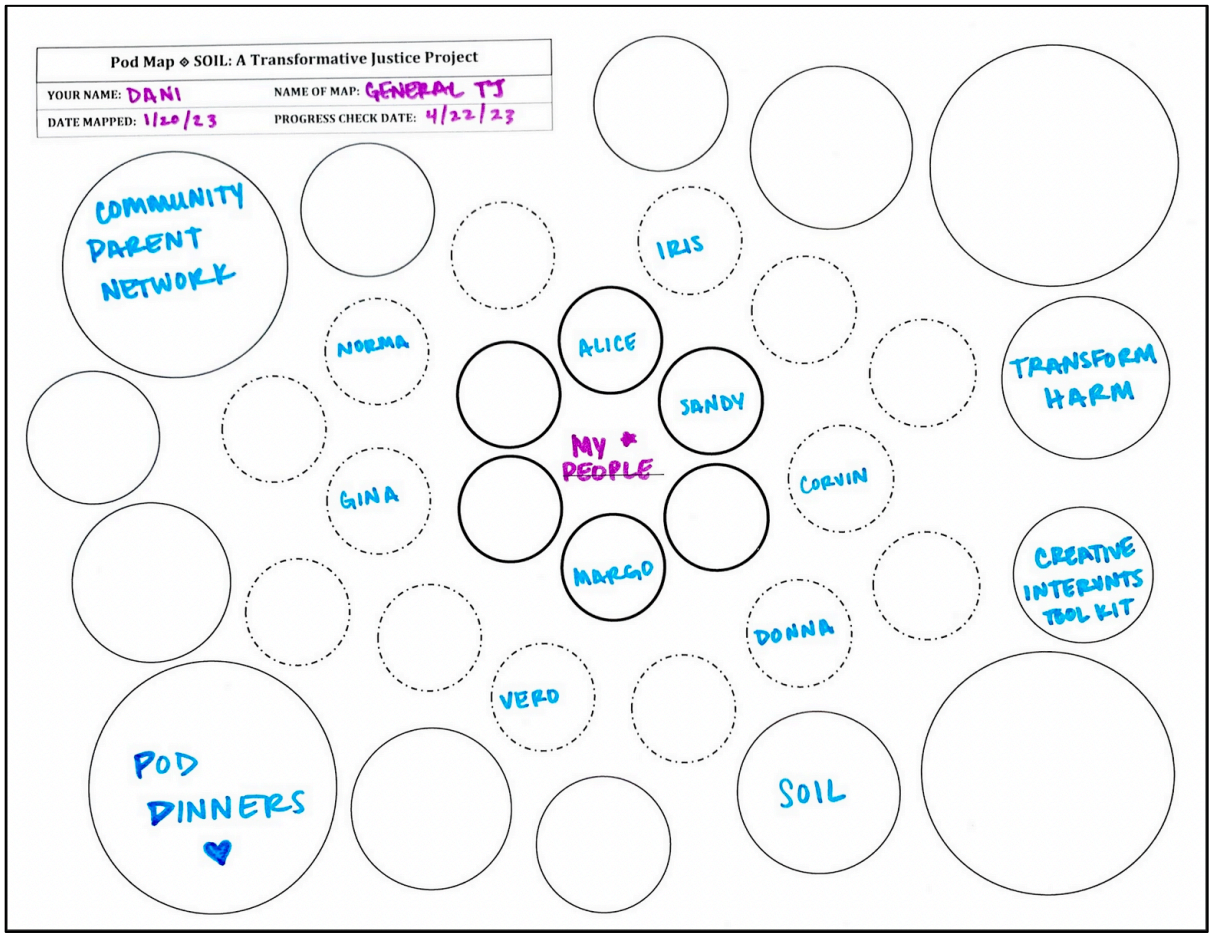

Figure 3: A sample pod map filled in with a mix of real organizations and hypothetical individuals (Mingus 2023).

The collective has supported people in visualizing their pods through "pod-mapping": a process of labeling an inner circle of people they trust, an outer circle of people who could

be moved into that inner circle after more relationship building, and an outer ring of broader resources, for example, "your local domestic violence direct service organization, or your cohort in nursing school, or your youth group, or a transformative justice group" (Mingus 2016). The collective originally trained people to map two types of pods, one for the set of people you can turn to if you experience harm, the other for the people you can call if you cause harm. They discovered that people had noticeably fewer people to turn to in cases where they caused harm than cases where they experienced it. This is understandable given the incentive to identify with victimization over perpetration out of fear of punishment. Since then, as Mingus has noted, pod mapping has been used for a variety of different purposes, such as pandemic support. In her updated version, she describes pod maps (which often overlap) for life transitions, work, emergency/crisis situations (like wildfires), and even "pod-building pods" (Mingus 2023), second-order pods that support people in the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining pod relationships.

Through their work with the pod concept, BATJC made several important observations. One is that people who may feel a sense of community actually had very few of the specific kinds of relationships needed for transformative justice work. "For example, someone might feel connected to 'the queer community,' but when asked who from that 'queer community' they felt they could trust to show up for them in times of crisis, vulnerability, or violence, they could only name two or three people" (Mingus 2016). Many could name none. Shannon Perez-Darby, of the Accountable Communities Consortium, describes this as the "*classic social media problem which is the performative nature of community and then actually who could you call at 2:00 AM?*" (Perez-Darby 2020) The other finding was that trust and relationship are greater predictors for successful transformative

justice interventions than a shared political analysis, which is more easily built on a foundation of trust than the other way around (Mingus 2016). Martina Kartmann, another interviewee, confirmed this for her own life and organizing with Collective Justice in Seattle: "*Restorative justice talks a lot about love and relationship first. [...] I always call my sister. My sister does not share my politics on everything [...] start there*" (Kartmann 2020).

These two findings confirm the intuition that narrow, "thick," or intimate connections rather than expansive, loose notions of community are easier to operationalize for transformative justice, which makes sense given the intense emotional and logistical demands of transformative justice processes. They do, however, challenge the assumption that those intimate pod relationships are chosen based on shared normative values, identities, and political beliefs. The implication is that descriptive connection based on shared place, upbringing, workplace, and neighborhood may cultivate deeper pod relationships over a long period of time than normative connections based on shared identity or ideology. BATJC's findings also imply that time and duration matter: it seems like the strongest connections are some of the oldest, regardless of which type of community forged them in the first place.

Conclusion

I have established a contrast in this chapter between the transformative justice of positive safety, which grounds itself in the political unit of community, and the retributive justice of negative security, anchored in the political formation of the nation state. Positive safety questions the logic of state sovereignty and its false universalism. It leans into a social ontology of interdependency, rather than sovereign selves and states. As such, it embraces

the precarity, vulnerability, and uncertainty of our entanglements with one another, rather than the certainty and enclosure of an autonomous unit. Positive safety also questions the universalism of sovereign ways of knowing. Transformative justice knowledge is generated rather through mētis, where embodiment is valued over abstraction, the local over the imperial, and emergence over fixed rules. Learning comes through praxis, a dialectic of theory and practice, not through the rote application of abstract principles.

Transformative justice discourse lays out community as both the means to survivor healing and perpetrator accountability, as well as the ends itself. This is an ambitious political imaginary. In reality, communities often vacillate between poles of unity (normative alignment, romanticized pasts) and chaotic diversity (descriptive thrown togetherness, disintegrated bonds in the present). This often echoes as a gap between dream and reality, which organizers try to bridge by building solidarity across diversity and difference, knitting relationships together towards greater alignment. I have offered BATJC's pod-mapping strategy as one form of bridge between dream and reality.

Pods try to address practical limitations, but there may also be conceptual limitations within the positive safety vision of community. As Dixon pointed out in their discussion of safety strategies that involve threat of violence (a machete, for example), a community-based approach is not the same as a transformative approach. 'Community-based' suggests a reliance on relationships with other people, not state agents; 'transformative' describes an approach that resists and transforms systems of violence and oppression. The gap between community and transformative is another in need of bridging: we cannot assume communities are inherently committed to transformation. If we devolve and decentralize matters of justice from the state to diverse communities, as positive safety envisions, how do

we ensure that community-based justice is transformative and not used to create community-based violence? For all of the critiques of state sovereignty and universalism, the state does provide shared principles and guardrails for justice processes that are not yet envisioned by transformative justice discourse, despite transformative justice being vulnerable to manipulation or weaponization against survivors. Moreover, community-based justice does not yet offer a solution for how to address violence across communities, cases in which the state's guardrails provide a level of mediation between the norms and values of different communities. What form of shared values could serve as guardrails for transformative work and what political body could offer a degree of mediation between communities, without reproducing the abstract pseudo-universals positive safety critiques?

While it is relatively easy to critique the state, it is much harder to replace all of its functions in the political unit of community. Gumbs opens the taboo question of whether some of the functions the state plays in our society are also needed in the alternative political imaginary of the community:

> *How can we empower the community and how can we get rights for this community [...] but is there a community? [...] These calls for community, to the 'this community' to the 'that community,' the queer community, it makes me want to ask: is what we are really desiring and creating a state? Are we creating an alternative state? [...] There's something very challenging in that for me, because, I mean, that's terrible news! (laughs) Every state I've ever heard about is violent, the form of the state is violent. But, is that not it? Do we want a queer community, a Black community or do we want a queer state!? Do we want a Black state?! Is it possible to actually create a sustainable alternative state of being without doing state-type stuff?* (Gumbs 2014)

Sovereignty served as a bridge in this chapter between the self and the broader collective in a negative security framework, describing parallels between sovereign selves and sovereign states. Gumbs's quote, being jazzy, riffs on a different meaning of the word 'state': "a state of being" (rather than a nation-state). Perhaps a "state of being" could poetically bridge between

a positive safety ethos of connection at the individual, interpersonal, and political levels. Gumbs's inquiry is about how to make transformative justice's "alternative state[s] of being" sustainable in perpetuity. In the concluding chapter, I turn to the question of the future, and transformative justice's strategic relationship to the state as the movement navigates new terrain.

Conclusion: Three Possible Movement Futures

Sexual and domestic violence, though everyday and routine, often only surface in our society as spectacle – graphic stories of rape and abuse that pull on heartstrings of sentimentality, sensationalism, and moral panic. Inspired by the clever use of homonym by abolitionist geographer and co-founder of Critical Resistance Ruth Wilson Gilmore (Gilmore 2021), I have tried to turn this spectacle into spectacles, a lens through which a seemingly extreme, but actually routine, form of violence "illuminates the nature of normativity" (to use George Lipsitz's words). I have attempted to track and theorize the ways that the transformative justice movement uses sexual, domestic, and other forms of interpersonal violence as an entry point, a lens that cracks open a seemingly small individual experience to reveal the world (social, political, economic systems) within it.

The transformative justice movement also imagines new worlds in the process, using the intensely interpersonal as a launch pad for the lofty and often science-fictional project of dreaming abolitionist futures. This conclusion reviews what I have articulated so far about the movement's history and present in order to take up the question of the movement's future. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) uprisings of 2020 have increased movement visibility, potential, and resources, while also creating fears about commercialization and deradicalization. This creates a circular temporality that returns the movement to its old ghosts, anxieties about power and cooptation that shaped the transformative justice movement's emergence in the early 2000s in response to carceral feminist cooptation. How can the movement seize this moment of new opportunities without ending up depoliticized and institutionalized as the anti-violence movement became in the 1970s and 80s?

Throughout this dissertation, I have written about the movement's praxis of positive safety in the language of abeyant roots (hiding out during the ascendance of carceral feminist cooptation in Chapter One), revitalized seeds (through early transformative justice innovators discussed in Chapter Two), and now a thousand flowers blooming (through the myriad contemporary projects named in Chapters Three and Four). All of these innovations have grown in the toxic soil of the status quo, pushing up the new out of the "shell of the old" (Industrial Workers of the World 2022). Here I turn from past to present to future, to explore three potential futures of the movement. Each approach offers its own strategy, organizational form, and mode of financing itself.

The first, "Keep TJ Wild," continues the path that the movement has been on up until its moment of popularization during the BLM uprisings of 2020: an "interstitial" (Wright 2010) or anarchist strategy of fugitivity from state and capital that focuses on pre-figuratively building the alternative worlds we want to see through small-scale, decentralized mutual aid. This approach thrives on the power of organic ungovernability. An image of this agitating ungovernability can be found in June Jordan's poem, "Letter to the Local Police" (Jordan 2012). A rose bush drives a law-and-order, bureaucracy-minded citizen to outrage:

> I have encountered a regular profusion of certain
> unidentified roses, growing to no discernible purpose,
> and according to no perceptible control, approximately
> one quarter mile west of the Northway, on the southern side
> To be specific, there are practically thousands of
> the aforementioned abiding in perpetual near riot
> of wild behavior, indiscriminate coloring, and only
> the Good Lord Himself can say what diverse soliciting
> of promiscuous cross-fertilization.

Yet the roses of this approach also face challenges endemic to their wildness: scale, organizational discontinuity, and burn-out from lack of resources.

Another future assumes that the movement needs to scale up with more orderly growth in order to meet the massive scale of the problem of sexual violence. This would require confronting the state through contentious politics aimed at taking state power, given that the state has the scale to (re)produce the problem and thus also to solve it. Campaigns to defund police and drain other arms of the carceral state could lead to reinvestment to grow the welfare functions of the state. This "Scale Up / State Power" approach could use either a "symbiotic" strategy of state reform or a "ruptural" strategy of revolution (Wright 2010) – or better yet, a pathway that leverages reform *towards* revolution called "abolitionist reform" (Critical Resistance 2018b). This hybrid approach could take back the state and democratize it by and for the people who live within its boundaries, but it also risks reiterating the story of cooptation that the anti-violence movement already underwent.

The third future attempts to navigate the narrow path between the Scylla and Charybdis of each of these other futures' challenges. I call it "Scale Out" rather than Scale Up. Scaling Out focuses on sustainable growth (thus avoiding the smallness of Keep TJ Wild) but in a decentralized manner (thus avoiding the centralization and potential bureaucratization of Scale Up / State Power). Scale Out allows existing transformative justice organizations to train and support community members to respond to violence, harm, and conflict, particularly at low levels before they escalate. This approach aims to seed a larger culture of transformative justice rather than a centralized, professionalized, trademarked transformative justice institution. As such, it aligns with a positive safety view that violence is best addressed in community through relationship and not primarily through professionalized service provision models. It leverages various funding streams (state, philanthropic, revenue) to share skills for free or low cost with community members, and in

API Chaya's case, even funding those members with stipends for holding transformative justice processes to avoid burn-out. While this approach does not fully resolve the chronic organizational and resource questions plaguing anti-violence work, it does approach them in new ways and experiments with how to cultivate transformative justice's thousand flowers blooming in different climates, terrains, and circumstances.

Black Lives Matter and Our Current Political Conjuncture

"Who keeps us safe? We keep us safe!" This chant rippled through the BLM uprisings, passed from mouth to mouth across the country in the summer of 2020. The long past and present of police violence against Black people was compounded by the pressures of the pandemic and Trump's law-and-order rhetoric (and lawless rule), creating an explosion. In the San Francisco Bay Area, where I live, text messages spread word of spontaneous protests as well as more organized events, like the car caravans led by the Anti-Police Terror Project and a Juneteenth protest at the Oakland Port called by the militant, Black-led dockworker's union (the International Longshore and Warehouse Union). On a celebratory bike ride through downtown and west Oakland, people emerged onto porches cheering, banging pots and pans, and waving. We rode along the seams of the segregation, gentrification, and displacement that were pushing Black people out of a historically Black city, but the veil of separation fell – if only for a moment – to convene multiracial solidarity, relationships constellated in new ways, and the potential for a community of resistance where no one is disposable. I marshaled the protest by bike at the rear for safety, but people by and large

already knew how to take care of each other while in collective motion. In this, I glimpsed for a moment real safety, the safety of each other.

Transformative justice's vision of positive safety went viral in 2020 with the second cycle of contention of the BLM movement, arguably the largest mobilization in U.S. history (Buchanan, Bui, and Patel 2020), with global resonance and protests on every continent (including Antarctica). My Twitter feed showed everyone from Gushers to the Gap proclaiming "#BlackLivesMatter" interspersed with on-the-ground reporting from mass protests, stand-offs in the street between police tanks and protestors, and vigilante shootings and car attacks by right wing actors. Corporate performative allyship had already put a governable container around the event, while on the ground the uprising's ideology and strategy were still inchoate, its common sense still molten.

I tethered myself to a few choice quotes in hopes of making sense of the chaotic moment. One was "There are decades when nothing happens and weeks where decades happen," attributed to Vladimir Lenin. The summer of 2020 was arguably the most tumultuous our generation had seen. What was for many unthinkable happened: a police station was set aflame. It did not stop there, as more unthinkables happened: corporate and institutional approval of the liberal wing of the movement; widespread discussion of abolishing police (Kaba 2020); Juneteenth declared a national holiday; the removal of Confederate names and statues; and a huge influx of money and promises to Black-led businesses, organizations, and movements. As Stuart Hall said, "politics does not reflect majorities; it constructs them" (Hall 2017:246), and the raw power of mass disruption to rapidly change the mainstream's common sense and move the Overton window on policy was on display. A slight majority of polled U.S. Americans (54%) believed the actions of

protestors, including burning down a police precinct, were partially or fully justified, expressing a surprising level of sympathy for property damage as a protest tactic (Monmouth University Poll 2020). A seemingly untouchable sovereign force, the police, appeared on the precipice (as many other state institutions appeared, while under attack from both fascist and left-wing forces). A remark from a prison reform panel I attended years before as a young college student in New York City reverberated through my mind, which I can now only paraphrase: institutions appear stable right up until their moment of collapse. Throughout the summer, racist memorials to slave holding and Confederate historical figures did literally collapse, toppled by protestors from Raleigh, North Carolina to Nashville, Tennessee to Richmond, Virginia, and as far afield as Bristol, England (Diaz et al. 2020).

The cacophony of demands specific to the criminal legal system that emerged from the movement ranged from reform to revolution. I have offered the concept of immanent critique in this dissertation as a Marxist epistemological method to understand the relationships between theory and practice, reform and abolition. In the case of the BLM uprisings, reformist demands like body cameras on police, community oversight boards, and diversifying police forces presume that the practice of policing does not live up to its guiding principles. In this framework, the practice of racist abuse and murder by police is an aberration of policing's ideal function, namely, ensuring people's well-being. Critics responded that policing's core purpose has never been about well-being but rather upholding regimes of racialized and gendered capitalism (Thompson 2021a, 2021b; Vitale 2017), as evidenced by policing's emergence in order to manage genocidal settler colonialism, the institution of slavery through so-called "slave catching", and capitalist exploitation through crushing strikes and repressing labor actions (Kaba 2020). Thus, the police lynching of

George Floyd in Minneapolis that sparked the uprisings was not the result of a "bad apple," a practice that had gone astray from its ideal principles. Rather, it was the product of a rotten tree, where both the seeds and the bitter fruit, the principles and practices, (re)produce violence. This analysis exposes the contradiction at the heart of the criminal justice system: it claims to make us safe but engenders the opposite, thus creating the very problems it purports to solve. A new concept and practice of safety needed to be created to overcome this contradiction. To mark this distinction, I have theorized carceral principles and practices as *negative security* and transformative justice/abolitionist ones as *positive safety* in this dissertation. Drawing on decades of abolitionist and transformative justice theorizing and practice of positive safety, Black Lives Matter offers a new answer to the question of what *really* makes us safe.

The radical wing of the BLM uprisings eventually coalesced around a concrete policy demand to "Defund the Police." This was framed as a "non-reformist reform" (Critical Resistance 2018a; Gorz 1967) aimed at tangible policy change that could chart a path towards more revolutionary restructuring of public safety and law-and-order in U.S. society. Other reforms like body cameras and greater training were declared "reformist reforms" (Critical Resistance 2018b), and they were deemed not only useless but also a dangerous distraction and potential cooptation of revolutionary energy. A report by abolitionist "movement resource hub" Interrupting Criminalization published in January 2021 documented that organizers in over twenty cities had won decreases in local or municipal police budgets by over $840 million, with $160 million invested into communities (Interrupting Criminalization 2020:15). Overall, this marked a 5.2% aggregate reduction in police budgets among the 50 largest U.S. cities, although the report also noted that pandemic-

related economic troubles had also contributed to this trend. Other policy wins included ending police contracts in schools in over 25 cities and bans on the police's use of military-level weapons and facial recognition technology (Interrupting Criminalization 2020:15). In a follow up report published in early 2023, Interrupting Criminalization documented fewer and smaller funding wins, though police department divestment or reallocation was won in Miami, Milwaukee, Oakland, St. Louis, and for a second year in Seattle (Ritchie and Interrupting Criminalization 2023:11–13). Additionally, it documented transformative justice-inspired alternatives like the creation of non-police crisis lines (in Austin, Atlanta, Durham, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C.), organizing community around non-police safety strategies, and increased civilian participation in governance through participatory budgeting (particularly in Seattle) and safety task forces (Ritchie and Interrupting Criminalization 2023:8–10, 14–16).

Politically, however, the defund movement failed to sway the governing Democratic Party to its side, with President Biden repeatedly coming out expressly in favor of more funding for police. Republicans and other right-wing forces used the defund movement to create a racialized law-and-order panic and to portray its rivals as soft on crime by politicizing a steep (30%) increase in the murder rate between 2019 and 2020 (despite a long term decrease since the 1990s) that many experts link to increased gun violence (Grawert and Kim 2022). For those declaring defund efforts "dead," some social movement literature might put the movements' strengths and weaknesses in context. Uprisings like BLM arguably belong to what Erik Olin Wright calls a "ruptural" strategy (2010 envisioning real utopias) better designed as an outsider strategy to confront the state than an insider game to negotiate policy and political change within it. As part of a "mass protest tradition" (Engler and Engler

2016; Momentum 2022), uprisings typically emerge organically and pullulate exponentially beyond any clear organizational containers, leadership, or theories of change that would help navigate the grueling work of policy negotiations. As a result, their viral, whirlwind force often leaves their biggest marks at the ideological and narrative level, dramatically politicizing a new generation of activists. The massive success of the movement at this ideological level also means that the term 'transformative justice' is being used more widely than ever, with greater contention over its original meaning. Abolitionists and transformative justice practitioners bristle at whether to make the most of this political opportunity or to gatekeep the term to prevent cooptation.

Since 2020, many of my interviews with transformative justice practitioners and abolitionists featured concerns about the popularization, commercialization, and potential cooptation of transformative justice. One of those was with Rachel Caidor, long-time rape crisis and domestic violence hotline worker and transformative justice practitioner with Just Practice Collaborative, a group based in Chicago which trains and mentors community accountability practitioners for sexual and relationship violence. Caidor comes across as an old school riot grrrl, perhaps because of her stories about wearing a patch in the 90s that read "I have fleas." She brings that punk skepticism to the long arc of anti-violence work in Chicago that she has witnessed since the 1990s, as well as recent cooptation efforts, for example, when anti-violence services and rape crisis centers want to turn her transformative justice work into a program within their office. In our interview, Caidor recounted a conversation held with fellow Just Practice practitioners in a garage during the pandemic – the only safe place to meet indoors at the time – where they discussed TJ's relationship to the state in light of the recent uprisings. Centralization, Caidor insisted, would be an "ice slick

sidewalk into surveillance," using a synonym for "slippery slope" that seemed inspired by Chicago's rough winters. Longtime friend and collaborator Mariame Kaba, also a member of Just Practice and a co-founder of Interrupting Criminalization, seems to share Caidor's concern. She opened a webinar with Brown and Harvard University's transformative justice centers with her characteristic "unbought and unbossed" directness and cautioned universities against credentializing transformative justice as a degree program, asking how this will inevitably be used against grassroots organizing (Kaba et al. 2022). Writing in 2021, abolitionist Dean Spade shared how in that moment "funders 'discover' transformative justice and community accountability while threatening to evacuate its radical politics through institutionalization" (Spade 2022:ix). Many practitioners I talked to welcomed TJ's increased popularity and practice among regular people, but they were keen to gatekeep TJ's politics as abolitionist and therefore by definition exclusive of any collaborations with the carceral state.

The intensity of these concerns appears tied to the unique conditions of transformative justice's emergence as a (re)vitalization of radical legacies muted by institutionalization into the carceral state. With these concerns, the movement has come full circle to face its own history of cooptation in the 1970s and 80s; so, too, does cooptation serve as the bookends of this dissertation, returning us to the lessons of Chapter One. What did that history teach the movement that is relevant for a moment of renewed popularity?

Transformative Justice Pasts and Presents (or, What I've Argued So Far)

The chapters in this dissertation have aspired to set the table for this very conversation about the movement's future. My overall aim in this dissertation has been to

deeply engage with the movement for transformative justice alternatives to police, prison, and punishment for gender-based violence and crystallize their principles and practices into what I theorize as positive safety. This is contrasted to the negative security framework of the carceral state and, more specifically, carceral feminist approaches to sexual and partner violence. The dissertation understands theory as generated out of practice, and thus roots its articulations of negative security and positive safety in their respective movement histories and practices. The theoretical side of this project draws on Black, Indigenous, and women of color feminisms and a Marxist method of immanent critique for epistemological orientation, whereas the practical side of the project uses a social movement analysis focused on five dimensions (resources, organizational structure, strategy, collective identity, and framing/ideology). I review each chapter here with an eye towards what it can contribute to envisioning a future of positive safety and strategizing about the transformative justice movement's next moves.

In Chapter One "Carceral Feminist Cooptation, or Movement Success as Failure," I discuss the origins of negative security in the arc of cooptation that brought the anti-violence movement in a carceral feminist direction in the 1970s and 80s. In general, anti-violence organizations transformed from volunteer organizational structures to professionalized non-profits, from radical power to liberal rights-focused frames, from social change to service provision strategies, from self to state funding, and from diverse identities to a white, middle-class collective identity. These shifts cemented the ascendance of negative security as the new common sense for a carceral anti-violence movement and sent more intersectional, grassroots, and anti-carceral approaches "underground" into abeyance. Chapter One lays out in detail the process of cooptation, from which the current transformative justice movement

can learn. Particularly of note is the assertion by historians of cooptation that it was not simply the result of bad or privileged individuals but complex dynamics of largely well intentioned activists entering into collaborations where they were outgunned by a more powerful carceral collaborator. This suggests that the contemporary movement should not waste time moralistically pointing the finger at individuals but rather undertake a thorough power mapping and strategic plan of current political conditions. The chapter's review of theories of cooptation suggest that there is some form of institutionalization that is not identical to cooptation but that the movement would have to build enough power to not be bullied by the state.

In Chapter Two, "From Emergency to Emergence: The Seeds of Transformative Justice in Communities Against Rape and Abuse," I narrate the emergence of positive safety as a (re)vitalization of these underground anti-carceral roots through the formation of community accountability, and later transformative justice, practices in the early 2000s. I focus on Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) as a case study, drawing on unique archival access and oral histories with former members. CARA succeeded in (re)vitalizing an older, grassroots praxis of positive safety that was suppressed by cooptation across several of these movement dimensions, hybridizing them with other legacies and adapting them to contemporary conditions. For example, CARA returned to a frame oriented around power and updated it with an analysis of prison abolition, renewed a strategy of social change and made it relevant to the anti-globalization Left in Seattle, and centered Black, disabled, and youth constituencies in its collective identity as part of a new generation of women of color in the anti-violence world. Ultimately, however, CARA could not overcome the ghosts of past feminist generations – stumbling to find alternatives to the non-profit organizational

form and to state funding sources. These are questions the contemporary movement could devote itself to historicizing, researching, and experimenting with. In this chapter, I also introduce a discussion of strategy, highlighting why ruptural/protest and symbiotic/community organizing strategies were not an easy fit for CARA, and offering "organizing community" (Stall and Stoecker 1998) as a better fitting strategy of interstitial/mutual aid. I revisit these strategy discussions here in the Conclusion to reassess how anti-violence might refashion ruptural and symbiotic approaches for anti-violence movements. I ultimately argue that CARA's work served as the seeds of a new movement, carrying the core principles of positive safety like DNA that have now blossomed into hundreds of community accountability and transformative justice initiatives.

In the latter half of the dissertation, I traverse this field of a thousand flowers blooming, picking a few of those flowers as examples of contemporary transformative justice practice and distilling their essences as potent tenets of my theory of positive safety. CARA and INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence helped shape the concept of community accountability and articulated four of its major areas of work: survivor support and self-determination, perpetrator change and accountability, community prevention, and transforming structural conditions that enable violence.

In Chapter Three, "From the Negative Security of Carceral Feminism to the Positive Safety of Transformative Justice," I focus on three of the four areas of transformative justice work articulated by CARA and INCITE!: structural conditions, survivors, and perpetrators. In each, I explore how a negative security approach of carceral feminism ends up being self-defeating, and I offer a positive safety approach of transformative justice that can better

achieve an end to violence. For instance, with regards to structural conditions, I look at how negative security's narrow scope frames sexual and partner violence as primarily interpersonal, whereas positive safety looks at interlocking forms of violence at the interpersonal, state, and structural levels. Turning to survivors, I contrast negative security's framing of survivors as powerless and in need of paternalist state protection with positive safety's empowerment of survivor self-determination. Lastly, for the realm of perpetrators, I show how a negative security understanding of responsibility as punishment and blame perpetuates violence through institutions like prisons. In contrast to this vision of accountability as "taking account" (i.e. quantitative debt to be repaid), I offer a radically different understanding of accountability based on giving account (refashioning a narrative of self in relation to others).

I devote Chapter Four, "Community Beyond the State," to the final area of work named by INCITE! and CARA: the community. I argue in the previous chapter that positive safety understands the self as interdependent and understands interpersonal ethics as an exercise in interdependence, but in this chapter I explore the political shapes this interdependence might take in the form of the community. I understand community to stand in opposition to state sovereignty and particularly its false claims to universality. Thus, the social ontology of positive safety is one of precarity and vulnerable life, rather than the certainty and enclosure from harm promised by the carceral state (though never delivered because it is ultimately self-sabotaging). Positive safety's epistemology is also anti-universal, focused on local context, embodiment over abstraction, and improvisation over rules. This mētis pushes back on imperial knowledge and cultivates an ethos of experimentation. In light of all this, positive safety asserts the community as the venue for cultivating transformative

justice, which blends social and individual justice, rather than the state's retributive justice that focuses almost exclusively on individuals.

The positive safety of connection and relation elaborated across these chapters could point to a potential antidote to cooptation, specifically relationships with those closest to the problems of both sexual and state violence. Philosophers Sarah Tyson and Brady Heiner suggest that "centering those whose social position renders them more vulnerable to multiple, intersecting forms of violence (Crenshaw 1988, 1991) could be seen as a safeguard for researchers against cooptation" (Heiner and Tyson 2017:14).

Three Possible Futures

What now? What is to be done? How do we actually transition from carceral feminist negative security to transformative justice positive safety at a planetary scale? In charting the path of how life-giving institutions and infrastructure can replace our current death-making ones, there are many maps, from the Marxist tradition to the ecological pathways of a just transition, but none is fully settled.

While the movement faces a nuanced terrain of future options, I want to lay out two extremes that have appeared in my research, charting the pros and cons of each. Tyson categorizes these two pathways:

> *Most of the accountability folks who are putting their theory out there either have a revolutionary rhetoric or they have an anarchist one. And it sometimes unstable, right, it will move between those two. Either we are going to have a wholly new state born of this, or it is about living outside of the state, or living in places the state isn't looking at, and maybe something new will come of that.* (Tyson 2014b)

In one direction is an approach I call "Keep TJ Wild," a phrase I borrow and repurpose from CARA co-founder Alisa Bierria.[1] This approach has affinities with what Tyson describes as anarchism, because it is firmly anti-state. This direction can also be understood in the language of Black fugitivity and what Wright calls an "interstitial" strategy (2010), because it aims for transformative justice work to remain elusive to the state and to capital, and to sidestep their mediating networks of philanthropy and the non-profit-industrial-complex. It also has tendencies of what the Momentum movement training institute calls "alternative institution building" (2022) because it uses mutual aid to build a pre-figurative politics of what a new world could look like beyond the state and capital.

The other direction I call "Scale Up," which draws on what Tyson names as a revolutionary orientation to taking state power, socialist ideology, and frameworks of democratic governance. This direction exhibits more willingness to confront and strategically engage with the state (and capital, though less relevant in this case), either at the level of governance (through electoral organizing and policy-making to push leftist agendas), or through reimagining social welfare services. I address two different tendencies of engagement with the state here: a more reformist, "symbiotic" relationship that aims to curb state and capital's excesses, as well as "ruptural" and revolutionary strategies of the socialist and communist traditions (Wright 2010). I use the concept of "non-reformist reforms" (Gorz 1967) or "abolitionist reforms" (Critical Resistance 2018b) to suggest a possible evolution from one to the other.

[1] Bierria shared this phrase in conversation with me in November of 2019. My repurposing and elaboration of the expression in no way reflects on her possible understandings of it or of TJ's futures.

I represent these tendencies as two ends of a spectrum, but they are not actual "factions" within the movement; rather, they often intermingle and overlap, and they have the potential to augment one another if they can manage to work together. Like other terms throughout this work ('carceral feminism,' 'transformative justice,' 'negative security,' and 'positive safety'), these tendencies represent a distillation of practices and ideas into an ideal type, a hermeneutical tool that allows us to think through their implications. Each of these approaches proposes different organizational containers and resources for transformative justice projects.

Inspired by a positive safety affinity for dialectic and nuance rather than binaries, I conclude by proposing a third potential future – a pathway of "dual power" between the two tendencies that can draw on each of their strengths and mitigate their weaknesses. This power focuses on "Scaling Out" rather than Scaling Up, drawing on my research with API Chaya in Seattle and the New York City Transformative Justice Hub. Scale Out allows for growth and stable containers for mentorship and sustainability, drawing on the best of the Scale Up / State Power approach. Crucially, it does so in a way that contests capture by the non-profit industrial complex by focusing on community-based, non-professional skills, protecting the core tenets of the Keep TJ Wild tendency. I bring in theoretical engagements with critical theorist Bini Adamczak's theory of revolution as the recrafting of relationships (including the relationship between binaries like mutual aid/state power or community/state) (Adamczak 2017) and the socialist tradition of "dual power" (Lenin 2017) to elaborate on the theoretical vision of this third way.

Future 1: Keep TJ Wild

The approach to Keep TJ Wild has the most continuity with the way transformative justice work had been organized until the BLM uprisings, operating largely in self-resourced and self-organized grassroots groups under the radar of mainstream institutions. This approach builds on an "interstitial" (Wright 2010) theory of change that prioritizes fugitivity (Campt 2014; Gumbs 2016; Harney, Moten, and Halberstam 2013; Moten and Hartman 2014), mutual aid (Spade 2020), and prefigurative politics (Boggs 1977) to meet people's needs and develop alternatives ways of being, knowing, and doing in the present.

'Prefigurative politics' names projects where people try to "be the change" now, creating the alternative world they are fighting for at a micro scale within their community, organization, or family (Monticelli 2021, 2022). While there are long histories of this practice within marginalized communities, the term "prefigurative" was coined by Marxist Carl Boggs in 1977. He was primarily concerned about how purportedly emancipatory political units in the Marxist tradition (like trade unions, political parties, and real socialist states like the Soviet Union) repeat the same problematic features of bourgeois state sovereignty: bureaucratic centralization, hierarchy, and lack of democracy. For Boggs, prefigurative politics uses radical participatory democracy to put the task of transition back into the hands of all.[2]

[2] This reflected the wave of New Left projects in the 1960s and 70s that turned away from the rigid class politics and bureaucratic organizational forms (parties, unions) of the earlier, old Left that sought to transform state power, towards politicizing new axes of injustice in more democratic organizations that targeted daily life for transformation. The feminist anti-violence movement at that time was an expression of this tendency, and transformative justice's (re)vitalization of that legacy (among others) inherited those traditions of flat organizational structure, politicizing the personal, and focusing on intersectional axes of injustice beyond (but including) class.

Transformative justice practice reflects a desire to prefigure a utopian community of "care and commoning" (Escobar 2022:xxv), belonging, joy, and liberation where structures of violence have been abolished and remaining forms of interpersonal harm are addressed through the medicine of social connection. Prefiguration requires living one's full values and politics in the present, the "alignment of means and ends" (Laamanen 2022), avoiding compromises or reforms that could be vulnerable to cooptation. As I argued in the previous chapter, the transformative justice movement aligns its means and ends around the practice of social connection – as both a method for healing and accountability after harm and as the ultimate goal to prevent future harm.

As catalyzing as this vision may be, Keep TJ Wild faces the same critiques as other prefigurative projects – that its utopianism is unattainable. Failure seems inscribed into the architecture of utopia: critical theorist and eternal pessimist Theodor Adorno has said that "there is no right life in the wrong one" ["Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen"] (Adorno 2020:43), and the term 'utopia' itself was coined as a pun combining the Greek words for good place (*eu-topos*) and no place (*ou-topos*) (More 1969). By itself, this might simply be tragic, but an unattainable politics also risks cultivating a politics of purity [see, for example, Alexis Shotwell (Shotwell 2016)] and performativity that ultimately leads to exclusion (du Plessis and Husted 2022). When maintenance of a group identity becomes more important than bringing in and politicizing new people, the narcissism of minor differences (Blok 1998) can lead groups to focus on disagreements with their closest political neighbors, the "small war" (Mitchell 2022), rather than confronting their true enemies. All of this results in groups staying small and insular, lacking the power for wide social change.

One way that organizations bring new people in is through mutual aid, which Spade defines as direct organizing for people's survival – through self-organized food pantries and "people's kitchens;" feminist, abortion, gay, and trans health clinics; and "care webs" with and for disabled people (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018; Spade 2020). This mutual aid is coupled with political education to build a solidarity and a shared analysis of our "forced dependency" (Spade 2020:8) on systems that will not meet most people's needs and, in fact, are designed to not meet those needs by hoarding resources and power. The Black Panther Party, whose free breakfast program in Black neighborhoods was so successful that it forced the US government to expand its federal free breakfasts as an effort to undermine its power, called this "survival pending revolution" (Newton 2020:104). Unlike that federal free breakfast program, the Black Panther Party and others' mutual aid is "solidarity not charity," neither state charity via welfare nor philanthropic charity allocated by capital elites. Mutual aid draws on long histories of pre-colonial and pre-capitalist gift economies and community infrastructure, as well as marginalized people's networks of self-organized care developed to survive colonialism, capitalism, and more (Spade 2020:10). Transformative justice interventions that address sexual and partner violence through community rather than police resources are a form of mutual aid – they provide for survivors' and perpetrators' needs directly and enable them to circumvent reliance on carceral systems that might cause further harm.

The Keep TJ Wild approach also has affinity with the Black Radical Tradition's concept of fugitivity. Practices of escape on the part of the enslaved have always existed within the institution of slavery, and foundational Black Studies scholars W.E.B. Du Bois (Du Bois 1999) and Cedric Robinson (Robinson 2005) devoted significant scholarship to the

historical impact of fugitives fleeing slavery. By tracing the "afterlives of slavery" (Hartman 2008) in mass incarceration (Alexander 2010), contemporary thinkers have expanded understandings of the fugitive. Tina Campt offers the closest thing to a definition, when she describes fugitivity as being "defined not by opposition or necessarily resistance, but instead a refusal" (Campt 2014) of anti-Black and white supremacist ways of being and acting. This refusal often registers as escape or non-compliance.

Examples of fugitivity abound in transformative justice organizing when people choose not to comply with legal obligations to involve police in situations of harm. Projects like Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral and Interrupting Criminalization's Beyond Do No Harm provide resources for social workers, health workers, teachers, and others who are legally bound to make referrals to carceral systems but who want to change their institutional and state policies. Lastly, abolitionist and transformative justice organizers actively get people out of prison through bail funds, pressure on district attorneys to drop charges, and clemency campaigns. Survived & Punished and Love & Protect are two groups who revived an anti-carceral feminist tradition of survivor defense campaigns from the 1970s (Thuma 2019) and now work to liberate survivors incarcerated for self-defense against sexual and domestic violence.

At its most abstract, fugitivity appears in the work of Black theorists like Fred Moten and Saidiya Hartman as a restless figure of continual movement and refusal: "fugitivity is being separate from settling" (Harney et al. 2013:11). While fugitive life posits alternate norms and ways of being, it refuses to congeal into a coherent social order or system of governance. Yet after escaping slavery, communities of maroonage formed throughout the Americas which surely confronted the question of how to build and govern the spaces

cultivated by their fugitivity. Drawing on this abolitionist legacy, Avery Gordon frames refusal as "being in-difference" (Gordon 2018:v), and she connects it back to prefiguration:

> a mode of insubordination [...] in which you break your affective and effective attachments to the powers that be and begin the practice of becoming unavailable for servitude [...] a prefigurative consciousness, in which you inhabit the anticipatory in daily life, both as preparation for self-governance and as an important measure of permanent desertion itself. (Gordon 2018:193)

For transformative justice activists, similar questions arise of how to create stable alternate norms, structures, and practices that can govern the new spaces or structures they build, even if ephemeral.

Prefigurative work tends to focus on the small scale, the level of interpersonal relationships or individual *habitus*, building "an inch wide and a mile deep" (brown 2017:22) and focusing on "critical connections over critical mass" (brown 2017:7). Further, the do-it-yourself ethos of mutual aid means that it is "inherently antiauthoritarian" (Spade 2020:12), like the participatory democratic impulse of prefigurative projects and the low-hierarchy habits of submerged feminist legacies. Thus, the organizational form of a Keep TJ Wild approach continues the trend in feminist anti-violence history towards small, informal, low hierarchy groups, run either as volunteer collectives or with a tenuous non-profit status. This tendency was visible in the early anti-violence groups in the 1970's (Chapter One) and was revitalized by CARA in Seattle in the early 2000's (Chapter Two). In terms of collaboration at larger scales, networking among groups tends to be decentralized, rhizomatic, and translocal (Movement Generation 2014), maintaining power and decision-making at the grassroots.[3]

[3] Social media has enabled individual activists and leaderless, non-hierarchical groups to network much more widely to great effect, fueling the protest movements of the 2010's like the Occupy movement in the U.S., the Arab Spring, and public occupations in Spain, Greece, and Turkey. As Zeynep Tufekci argued in *Twitter and Teargas* (Tufekci 2017), these movements mobilized millions more people than earlier, pre-Internet movements,

INCITE!, for example, was a national organization with a coordinating committee, but it was largely driven by the projects and analyses developed in local chapters or by specific individuals. This informal organizational structure prevents transformative justice from the risk of cooptation into service provision by centralized, hierarchical institutions like universities, the state, or non-profits. For decades, social movement scholars and organizers have argued over the appropriate role for organizations in harnessing and coordinating activist energy (Piven and Cloward 1979). Maurice Mitchell, National Director of the Working Families Party, has critiqued "anti-institutional sentiment" in his diagnosis of toxic traits in Leftist organizing culture: "Reflexively disdaining institutions and organizations as inherently oppressive and antiquated [...] casts institutions themselves as the problem, even those with a social change mission" (Mitchell 2022). While acknowledging the dangers of institutions hoarding power and being bloated by inefficiency, Mitchell thinks the Left should not throw the baby out with the bathwater:

> We need institutions for a powerful and durable movement. Organizations and institutions are political vehicles. They are also spaces where individuals develop skills, connection, and ideological alignment. Institutions transmit knowledge, hold strategy, and cultivate power. Atomized individuals that loosely assemble cannot do this at the scale needed to take on entrenched power. Arguing for doing away with political vehicles without offering a viable replacement demonstrates a lack of a power analysis. The most organized forces can leverage crisis, so how can our movements win in moments of crisis if we relinquish our organized vehicles? (Mitchell 2022)

In the case of transformative justice, Mitchell is right that these informal structures have prevented initiatives from reaching the scale to be accessible to larger groups of people or building enough collective power to change the structural policies (like mandatory reporting

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but they were unable to forge these loose ties into strong organizations that could weather political shifts and implement long-lasting change. When technology substitutes for organizational structure, "organizing without organizations" (Shirky 2008) runs into problems: people often lack the capacity to navigate conflict, make decisions, and build consensus (Tufekci 2017).

laws) that block the way for TJ's effective implementation. It appears that uncompromisingly maintaining a radical politics and a commitment to participatory democracy, grassroots engagement, and non-professionalization may come at the cost of external, political power.

Mimi Kim reflects similarly from her vantage point as a scholar of the transformative justice and anti-violence movements:

> Nimble organizational forms, porous containers, networks built upon relationships rather than formal structures feel more resonant with the post-modern social, political, economic, and cultural climate. But on the other side of the beauty of starfish, spores, and viruses, biological forms evoked in current treatises on social movement innovation, lies precarity. (Kim 2020:323)

Mitchell articulates that precarity with regards to external power in broader society, but second wave feminist Jo Freeman illuminates that precarity with regards to internal power within the organization. Freeman has argued that small informal groups are uniquely vulnerable to abuses of internal power in comparison to groups with clearer roles and tighter organizational forms. In her "Tyranny of Structurelessness" (Freeman 1972) article, inspired by the second wave white feminist movement, Freeman describes how no group is truly structureless, despite appearances. Seemingly structureless groups simply lack formal, democratic, and transparent structures, and they are instead full of informal structures more easily influenced by dynamics of social capital.

Running anti-violence mutual aid projects in informal, non- or semi-professionalized settings leans heavily on volunteer labor and donated resources, allowing independence but also fostering burn-out. On one hand, movements have for centuries been fueled by regular people within informal networks and communities and by rank and file, unpaid members of organizations. The rise of the professional non-profit as vehicle for movements and advocacy, critiqued by INCITE! as the "non-profit industrial complex" (INCITE! 2007), came about in

the 1960s (Skocpol 2003). Social change typically requires mass mobilization of huge numbers of people,[4] and it is simply not possible (or perhaps even desirable) for all of them to be paid. As INCITE! declared with the title of its 2007 book *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*. As detailed in Chapter One, in the grassroots anti-violence movement of the 1970s, fellow survivors often ran the phones at rape crisis hotlines for free, sometimes out of their own homes. Following that, the early transformative justice movement included a number of volunteer collectives, like Philly Stands Up, Support New York, and the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective. Spade has critiqued how building a wage labor relationship to movement work brings capitalist dynamics of exploitation and control into anti-capitalist struggles, pointing out that being paid often means we are funded by our opposition (Spade 2023). The cooptation of the anti-violence movement narrated in Chapter One was caused in part by taking state funds, which required the professionalization of anti-violence providers as staff, which led in turn to exclusion of those without education and credentials and a narrowing of the anti-violence movement's constituency and, in turn, its analysis to white middle-class women's concerns.

Yet the concern cuts both ways. That same drive to take funds was propelled in part by exhaustion and burnout, a constant risk of volunteer-run organizations. Transformative justice's reliance on informal labor often reiterates patterns where care work is devalued and done by people of marginalized race, gender, and ability status, re-entrenching capitalism's denigration of reproductive labor as unwaged work. Further, volunteer labor can be

[4] While the social movement literature is not conclusive about the numbers of participants required for protest to achieve its goals, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan's (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011) research on global protests resulting in regime change found that movements that managed to mobilize at least 3.5% of their population always succeeded. Some have tried to apply the "3.5% rule" to non-regime change protest movements, like the climate movement, but this is a creative interpretation of the findings not supported by Chenoweth and Stephan's research.

exclusionary if it limits participation to those who have the privilege of free time (the wealthy, retirees, etc).

Beyond its impacts on the organization itself, some question the deeper implications of an approach to resourcing care work that unwittingly affirms neoliberal austerity and privatization programs. Both the carceral and public sector have been marked by increased recourse to a philosophy of personal responsibilization, which places blame narrowly on individuals (as evidenced in the liability model of the criminal legal system) but which also implicitly decreases the collective responsibility of public institutions and the state (Young 2011). Individuals are socialized according to economic models as entrepreneurs who must invest in themselves and manage their own risks, for instance, of illness, poverty, or addiction (Foucault 2010), as the concept of welfare citizenship is replaced with that of active citizenship (Kearns 1992; Marinetto 2003). Responsibilization has tasked not just individuals but also communities with organizing basic social goods and services as the state abandons the marginalized (Rose 1996). Replacing the state as provider and protector, visions of the *community* or other small scale, traditional social units, such as the family have reappeared in political life and public consciousness across the political spectrum, invoking geographies of intimacy as a source of security rather than the contested borders of the nation-state. The state's neoliberal austerity has outsourced its social welfare provision and care work, like services for homeless people, survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and education, to supposedly "community-based" non-profit organizations or for-profit corporations (who enter public-private partnerships). This "shadow state" (Gilmore 2007b; Wolch 1990) represents a paradox of "antistate state actors: people and parties who gain state power by denouncing state power"(Gilmore 2007b:43). Yet the state continues to govern

"through community" (Rose 1996). As German sociologist Silke van Dyk describes, this community-based care mandated as an austerity governance strategy "from above" meets the community-based care "from below" of social movements like transformative justice, since both encourage unwaged (or "post-waged") work (Van Dyk 2018). Van Dyk critiques community "from below" for failing to adequately reckon with its parallel shadow side of community "from above," which threatens to absorb community into "community capitalism": "Despite its stated aim to criticize capitalism, the grassroots 'romance of community' (Joseph 2002) conceals the structural implications of post-waged work (such as precariousness) and obscures the connections between alternative projects and the state-led politics of community" (Van Dyk 2018:537). A Keep TJ Wild approach has to reckon with how its volunteer, unwaged resourcing strategy plays into larger trends in statecraft, just as calls to defund the police might find unholy alliance with austerity projects to defund (and privatize) everything run by the state.

Interlude on Power

Though a prefigurative or fugitive political orientation within transformative justice practice willfully refuses the state, it need not be naive about state power. The underlying theory of change in many leftist prefigurative projects is to carve out spaces outside state power, and then these alternatives can undermine state power, "eroding [it] from within" (Wright 2010, 2019). Sarah Kershnar of generationFIVE explains how transformative justice removes the state's ability to govern through sexual violence (and particularly child sexual abuse, generationFIVE's focus):

> We always knew at some point we'd be in a confrontation with the State because we're taking away from them something [the criminal legal system] that they use to control families, communities, and people. Meaning, when we find ways in our

> communities and in our movements to address violence and we don't rely on the state to do that, they [the state] can't be in our families and our communities and our lives in the same way. (Kershnar et al. 2007)

Interestingly, Kershnar describes how the Keep TJ Wild approach, which aims to evade the state ("we don't rely on the state to do that"), inevitably brings it into "a confrontation with the state." Will the movement take up this confrontation head-on or continue to refuse and evade it?

For long-time anti-violence activist and social justice consultant Maura Bairley, there are limits to refusal. In our interview, she spoke about members of her organization, Movement to End Violence, going on a visit to India. Sister organizations challenged the Movement to End Violence cohort about not holding the state accountable within a human rights framework. Reflecting on this experience, Bairley shared:

> *So for me, where the dilemma, how the dilemma lives is the difference between resistance and government. I worry sometimes that on the Left, and even in our most radical queer feminist organizing spaces, that we exercise our muscles around resistance much more than we exercise our muscles around governance. And I think that it is a worthwhile challenge, and it will actually be required of us to be able to govern. So I am not willing to abandon the state nor do I think we can afford to stop imagining and seeding and living alternatives, living into those alternatives. [...]. Are we able only to resist or to govern? When we look at revolutionary movements globally, that is a challenge, that "all resistance and no government" doesn't actually get you very far.* (Bairley 2014)

Staying on the side of resistance, not governance, means that transformative justice models remain fugitive from state and capital, and they refuse to congeal their attendant ways of being, doing, and knowing into a coherent social order. As a result, however, this potentially cedes the terrain of governance to the state. This risks limiting the transformative justice movement's focus to addressing interpersonal violence, without the resources and strategy to stop or reduce the harms of state violence directly, and only able to offer a space to mitigate and heal the state's harm. The theories of cooptation I explored in Chapter One hypothetically

left room for movements to succeed at building people power and building institutions without undergoing cooptation. In practice, however, this gap between institutionalization and cooptation seems foreclosed to most transformative justice practitioners I talked to. Bairley locates this refusal to govern in a deep ambivalence about power:

> *[We feel uncomfortable] partly because we imagine power only as we've seen it abused [...]. Even though we use the word 'empowerment,' I think on some level we think that all forms of power and authority, meaning the right to make binding decisions over others, are inherently abusive.* (Bairley 2014)

As my arguments in Chapter One and Two pointed out, radical feminist activists have often feared power.[5] They have been anxious about the positional power of leaders within their own organizations and skeptical about how to build external feminist power[6] in society without being coopted and transformed into whitestream (Grande 2003), governance (Halley et al. 2018), or carceral feminisms.

Bairley suggests that this ambivalence is connected to experiences of sexual, family, and state violence:

> *Thinking about the families and communities that many of us grow up in, what other forms of power have we seen, besides power that is abusive? I think that there is a relationship between our experiences of abuse and trauma and our ambivalence around power [...]. We have merged power and abuse as if they were the same thing, and it is hard for us to imagine that we could have positive power, co- power, power with […].* (Bairley 2014)

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[5] For additional perspective, see Sendolo Diaminah (Diaminah et al. 2023):

> I have often been afraid of using power decisively because, in our movements, power is so associated with abuse and we struggle with distinguishing between the two. You're not supposed to want power, you're not supposed to use power; you're supposed to tear it down. I think what that disguises is that we are always using power in many different ways: it's not just people at the top of an organizational structure who are engaged in power. There's a need for all of us in movement to be like: We all have power. How are we using it?

[6] Here I distinguish between internal power – positions of authority within an organization – and external power, which I understand as Steven Lukes's (Lukes 2005) three faces of power, as rearticulated by (Christens 2019): the situational (the first face), the institutional (the second face), and the systemic (the third face).

Bairley draws connections between experiences of internal and intimate powerlessness have conditioned us for external and public powerlessness. This distinction between "power over" and "power with" (Christens 2019) reiterates the distinctions in the model of power used in a negative security and positive safety frameworks. 'Power over' describes the model of power in a negative security framework – the power to dominate and isolate – whereas 'power with' names the power of collective collaboration, the driving force of positive safety. The tendency to collapse all power into "power over" can lead marginalized groups to view powerlessness – marginalized status, victimhood – as the only morally clean position, celebrating and even cultivating an identity built around it, as per my analysis of Brown's "wounded attachments" in Chapter Three. Facilitator Yotam Marom calls this "the politics of powerlessness," offering a critique of his experiences with the Occupy movement as a further example (Marom 2015). For Marom, this politics is undergirded by a somatic and emotional defense mechanism towards a "paralyzing hopelessness" convinced that the Left cannot win, and instead of overcoming this fear, we choose rather to be morally correct, beautiful, or popular while we lose.

Future 2: Scale Up / State Power

The second pathway for the transformative justice movement is to engage with state power through contentious, and not only prefigurative, politics. The theory of change underlying a Scale Up approach is that state power – and its reach and resources – are the only way to truly transform the structural violence of the state and capital. As Farzana Khan of Healing Justice London has said, individual and community capacities have been so depleted by violence that asking communities to take responsibility for care becomes "a disproportionate onus of labor, and actually we need structural capacity, we need baseline

material needs of housing, health, access to land and space, clean air, transport. We need this to also support and grow out communities capacity too" (Khan et al. 2023). Moreover, taking state power and governing may be the only way to make a new model of justice truly sustainable and accessible to millions of people, not just those who happen to be connected to the patchwork of transformative justice projects. This vision would require contentious politics that target the state. These could range from being more "symbiotic" with the state, managing its excesses, or more revolutionary and "ruptural" (Wright 2010). I look at each of these in turn in this section, discussing a dialectic of the two that uses reform as a pathway to revolution.

Many police defunding campaigns frame their demands in the language of "divesting from the carceral state" and "investing in the welfare state" (M4BL 2020) – others have framed it in the language of "defunding" and "refunding" (Brooks 2021). The Defund Police campaigns that emerged from the BLM uprisings have been directly engaged in contentious politics ranging from disrupting police forces and police unions (Margolis 2022) to changing city and state police budgets [see for example (Participatory Budgeting Project 2020; People's Budget LA 2021)] to electing officials like allied district attorneys and prosecutors (Foran, Kaba, and Naples-Mitchell 2021). In contrast, in contexts related to transformative justice for sexual and partner violence, open contestation of the state has been more rare. S&P, highlighted in Chapter Three, confronts the state by campaigning to get criminalized survivors released from jail, prison, or immigrant detention. The Mandatory Reporting Is Not Neutral project organizes against policies that require people to report violence to police, while Interrupting Criminalization's Beyond Do No Harm project organizes health providers and researchers to cut ties with carceral institutions.

In the framework of divest and invest, these U.S. based forms of contention have largely been focused on divestment of carceral power as a form of harm reduction for survivors. For examples of an invest approach that turns to the welfare state to increase resources, we have to look further afield. In the U.K., the feminist direct action group Sisters Uncut formed in 2014 to fight British government cuts to support services for domestic violence survivors, inspired by the U.K. Uncut movement fighting budget cuts to social service funding more generally under the conservative Tory government (Sisters Uncut n.d.). Sisters Uncut have used a variety of highly visible direct action tactics to draw attention to the connections between the housing crisis (caused by gentrification and a lack of public housing) and the inability for survivors of domestic violence to leave abusive homes, using the tagline "How can she leave if there's nowhere to go?" and the hashtag #NowhereToGo (Sisters Uncut 2015). The Sisters have used sofas to block bridges across Britain "as a metaphor for the fact that bridges to safety have been blocked by the Tory government" (Persio 2016), and reclaimed public housing (Sisters Uncut 2016), and a former women's prison in London (Sisters Uncut 2017) to turn them into community spaces for women, non-binary people, and children (Aisha, Hatel, and Sisters Uncut 2017). Revisiting Marie Gottschalk's comparison of the U.K. and U.S. feminist movements in the 1970s from Chapter One sheds light on why this kind of strategy might be more common there than in the U.S. Gottschalk explains: "The British women's movement was less ideologically diverse, relatively more autonomous, and more grassroots-oriented due to Britain's stronger socialist and radical traditions" (Gottschalk 2006:154).[7] While Sisters Uncut has grown its abolitionist

[7] Gottschalk also explains that the U.K. had a comparatively stronger welfare state, including housing policy, which allowed early battered women's shelters (known in Britain as 'refuges') to fund themselves by

critique of the carceral state over time, it has always called to expand and better fund the welfare state. Gilmore, similarly argues that abolitionist strategy can aim to shrink the carceral arm of the state while growing the welfare state (Kushner 2019).

In practical terms, the transformative justice movement could take advantage of its newfound fame and, coupled with other leftist organizing, make inroads into the welfare state. They could transform state funded rape crisis centers into peer-run centers for survivor organizing and power-building; uncouple hospital services for survivors from criminalization and pathologization and instead focus on healing and harm-reduction; funnel prosecution efforts into community-based restorative justice alternatives; support teachers unions in implementing robust sex education in schools (including preventative teachings on consent and healthy relationship skills), and expand affordable housing, employment, transit, food, and higher education opportunities for survivors and perpetrators of sexual and domestic harm, as well as their families. These could be coordinated at a mass scale directly through the state to ensure oversight, standards, and training, thus circumventing the non-profit industrial complex and the "shadow state" (Gilmore 2007b; Wolch 1990) that has outsourced welfare state labor to community organizations.

State funding could support a massive expansion of transformative justice initiatives that would disentangle the welfare state from the carceral state, and defund campaigns running in tandem would actively shrink the latter. If the movement could mobilize the electorate to vote in abolitionist legislators unafraid to tax corporate elites, an influx of funds could eliminate the longtime need for the movement to beg for crumbs from the state or

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charging rent to survivors which was in turn paid by state housing funding (Gottschalk 2006:141).

philanthropy, a need that has haunted scrappy, low-resourced transformative justice projects like CARA.

There are several serious concerns about this program, however. It presumes that the carceral and welfare arms of the state are separable, yet abolitionist and transformative justice practitioners and scholars have pointed out the "soft policing" within sectors of the feminized social welfare state like education (the school-to-prison pipeline) (Abolitionist Teaching Network n.d.; Meiners 2011; Meiners and Winn 2010; Nocella et al. 2014), child and family services and foster care (called "the family policing system") (Dettlaff 2023; Roberts 2011, 2021), health care (Iwai, Khan, and DasGupta 2020; Obasogie 2022; White Coats 4 Black Lives n.d.), mental health provision (Kim et al. 2021), particularly psychiatry (Ben-Moshe 2020), and social work (Douglas et al. 2021; Network to Advance Abolitionist Social Work n.d.). In Chapter Three, I analyzed carceral feminism's approach to survivors within a negative security framework as seemingly benevolent but paternalist "carceral protectionism" (Musto 2016) in which the welfare state and punitive state are two sides of the same repressive coin. If these two are inextricably entangled, can we meaningfully separate them in order to starve the carceral state and bolster the welfare state?

Secondly, a Scale Up / State Power approach runs the risk of cooptation. Kim's model of cooptation from Chapter One indicated that a key moment where cooptation was cemented was the final stage of scaling up, when local projects were replicated on a national scale. Even when projects had managed to maintain some amount of feminist power despite collaboration with a more powerful carceral player, this nuanced power relationship was lost in a top-down replication in new locations. More broadly, the history of carceral feminism serves as evidence that logics of state sovereignty, racial gendered capitalism, and hidden

forms of carceral control could colonize any transformative justice efforts to reshape the welfare state from within. After the last chapters extensive critique of the logics of state sovereignty, there is no reason to trust that the state's administration of anti-violence would be an improvement over the non-profit industrial complex, since state-run programs would likely also be staffed primarily by middle-class, educated professionals. Thus, any efforts to transform the welfare state must be coupled with a broader project of overthrowing racial gendered capitalism and democratizing the state to protect against the risks of cooptation.

Socialist and communist traditions provide the strongest Left lineages for theorizing how to not only confront but also take state power in ways that do not compromise revolutionary goals of total transformation. In 2018, abolitionists Kaba, Dan Berger, and David Stein engaged in public debate in the pages of socialist magazine *Jacobin* to counter accusations that abolitionism was utopian. They popularized the concept of "non-reformist reform," which they explained as "those measures that reduce the power of an oppressive system while illuminating the system's inability to solve the crises it creates" (Kaba, Stein, and Berger 2017). The term is borrowed from 1960s Austrian socialist André Gorz's work *Strategy for Labor*, in which he defined "non-reformist reforms" as "determined not in terms of what can be, but what should be" (Gorz 1967). It speaks to a long-standing discussion in socialist movements about how to bridge between the so-called "minimalist program" of reforms that can be accomplished within bourgeois capitalist democracy and the "maximalist program" of socialism (Le Blanc 2016).[8] Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International

[8] While some frame reform as the gradualist, more peaceful path to the same destination that revolution rushes towards, Polish-German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg distinguished between the two as qualitatively, not just quantitatively different. Reform is not "a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the *same* goal, but a *different* goal [...] the suppression of the abuses of capitalism instead of the suppression of capitalism itself"

suggested three sorts of demands as part of its "transitional program": immediate demands related to material survival, democratic demands related to political rights, and transitional demands, which "seem reasonable to masses of people but cannot be implemented without immediately and seriously undermining the capitalist system" (Le Blanc 2016:89). Abolition of police and prisons appear to be this latter type of transitional demand, performing a Marxist immanent or "living critique" (Kaba et al. 2017) by exposing capitalism's contradictions: its inability to provide what it promises or "solve the crises it creates," to return to Kaba, Berger, and Stein (Kaba et al. 2017).[9]

Later in 2018, Critical Resistance (CR) released a one-page chart comparing various police reform demands, categorizing them into "reformist reforms" and "abolitionist steps" (Critical Resistance 2018b). Reform demands like body cameras, community policing, civilian review/oversight boards, and prosecutions of police are all deemed reformist because they do not "reduce funding to police," "challenge the notion that police increase safety," "reduce tools/tactics/technology police have at their disposal," or "reduce the scale of policing" (Critical Resistance 2018b). In contrast, CR highlights policies that do succeed in those four criteria. Some are financial: suspending the use of paid administrative leave for police being investigated; withholding pensions and not rehiring police who have committed violence; and requiring police to be liable for misconduct settlements. Others involve limiting police's involvement in the military, such as ending police militarization programs

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[quoted in (Le Blanc 2016:86)]. Since, however, conditions do not prevail to enable successful expropriation of the owning class in many places, including the U.S., reforms as a means towards revolution are the available path.

[9] For Trotsky, this immanent critique should not only expose the system's contradictions, it should serve as a learning process that radicalizes regular people over time as they experience in real time the inability of successful reform to meet their needs (Le Blanc 2016:89). Indeed, for Gorz, the process by which a reform is won is just as important as the win itself, and a non-reformist reform should be fought in a way that builds working class power long-term for greater wins (Gorz 1968:123–24).

like "anti-terrorism" weapons training. Reducing police funding and refunneling that towards social welfare spending is the most obvious of these abolitionist reforms. Overall, CR's four criteria seem to measure reform policies along two dimensions: whether they bolster or erode the *material* or *ideological* hegemony of the institution of policing. (To that, Trotsky might add that such reforms erode that legitimacy by revealing its latent contradictions.)[10]

These abolitionist reforms aim to starve the carceral state, but what are abolitionist reforms with regards to the welfare state, if one possible goal is to grow (and not to starve) it? Perhaps contentious politics against the state has been more rare in transformative justice movement contexts because of this lack of a framework for thinking abolitionist reforms towards the welfare state. What criteria could guide transformative justice engagement with state funding or state programs to prevent cooptation but enable the always impure politics of building mass power? I offer these questions to readers, practitioners, and researchers to debate.

Future Three: Charting the Path Between by Scaling Out

Many abolition and transformative justice practitioners employ both Scale Up / State Power contentious politics to dismantle the death-making institutions of the carceral state and Keep TJ Wild prefigurative politics to build lifegiving institutions, seeing the two as

[10] A similar type of chart assessing reformist vs abolitionist demands with regards to prisons was released by CR in 2021 (Critical Resistance 2021). There the criteria for assessment diverged from those used for policing by explicitly recognizing transformative justice alternatives as meaningful abolitionist demands: "Does this [proposal] strengthen capacities to prevent or address harm and create processes for community accountability? […] Create resources and infrastructures that are steady, preventative, and accessible without police and prison guard contact?"

complementary rather than opposed.[11] This complementarity is captured by the motto "Dismantle. Change. Build." used by CR, the organization that popularized the framework of abolition with regards to prisons and later policing. The four-circle model of transformative justice created by INCITE! (INCITE! 2008) that structures this dissertation always envisioned the work at an interpersonal, small-scale level with survivors and persons who cause harm to be intertwined with the work to change the structural, political conditions that facilitate interpersonal violence.

This approach of hybridizing both forms of politics has kinship with the concept of "dual power" in the Marxist (Lenin 2017) and anarchist traditions (Bookchin 2000), where nascent, democratic institutions fueled by people power grow "in the shadow" (Noland 1967) of dominant state institutions, ultimately replacing them by "forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old" (Industrial Workers of the World 2022). The environmental justice movement's framework of just transition (Movement Generation 2017) offers a related concept called "two loops" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 2020) about hospicing the old economy and giving birth to the new. In this future, abolitionist campaigns could successfully starve police and prisons of their funds and redirect them to community-led transformative justice projects. These projects could build enough power and widespread adoption as counter-institutions to ultimately replace the carceral state, building a translocal network (Movement Generation 2014) while maintaining a community accountable character enabled by broader democracy reforms that enable more participatory local governance (like people's assemblies and participatory budgeting, for example).

[11] For example, Spade's framework of mutual aid understands direct organizing for survival as a form of political education about the failures of states and corporations, linking mutual aid with mass mobilization to change those targets (Spade 2020).

Both a Keep TJ Wild and a Scale Up approach bring their own risks, as detailed in the previous sections. Kim shares her negative associations with the idea of scaling up:

> [It suggests a] neoliberal corporate context [of] copyrights, trademarks and standardizations [...] tied to franchising or making sure that your model, your organization or your individual name gets elevated and diffused. It's fed by funders, market strategists, and communications experts who tie scaling up to sustainability and growth – not necessarily of our communities but of our organizational entities or personal reputations. (Meiners and Brazzell 2022)

My research suggests that some transformative justice organizations are navigating the narrow path between the risks of both contentious and pre-figurative politics, a metaphorical rock and a hard place, through a strategy I call Scaling Out rather than Scaling Up. Scaling Out involves a horizontal transfer of knowledge and skills regarding transformative justice responses to sexual (and other forms of) violence via mass training and cultivating smaller cohorts of experienced practitioners outside of a bureaucratic, professionalized educational format or a non-profit structure. This resonates with Kim's focus on "regeneration" to refer to decentralized growth of a community's capacity to practice TJ: "This language aligns closer to the metaphors of organic life, decentralization and the deep questioning of corporate formations such as non-profit entities" (Meiners and Brazzell 2022).

One example of "scaling out" can be found in API Chaya, an organization that addresses gender-based violence within South Asian, Asian, Pacific Islander and broader immigrant communities in Seattle. This returns us to Seattle, the stage on which CARA emerged (featured in Chapter Two), to follow the trajectory of their sister organization. API Chaya was originally two organizations – the Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center and Chaya – that both served Asian, Pacific Islander, and immigrant survivors of human trafficking, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. The two organizations merged in 2011 to weather funding troubles (the same year CARA ended for similar

reasons).[12] Like CARA, the Center and Chaya were one of a handful of organizations in the Seattle anti-violence movement that focused on marginalized survivors and had a community organizing focus. Like CARA, the Center recognized that community members were the first people that most survivors turned to for support, and thus the appropriate first responders over professionalized anti-violence services. Already in the 1990s, the Center built its "Natural Helpers" program, "birthed by one of our founding mothers Emma Catague," according to current API Chaya co-director Priya Rai (Rai 2020a). Natural Helpers trains community members, such as imams in mosques or local Filipino community members, to recognize intimate partner violence and intervene, offering support to survivors towards healing and to perpetrators towards change.

Members of API Chaya collaborated with CARA on implementing transformative justice approaches, but the organization had a slower evolution to fully embracing transformative justice because it had not jettisoned the direct services model as CARA had. As such, API Chaya offers a useful example of what transition from more mainstream services to more abolitionist approaches can look like – if not at the macro societal scale, at least at the meso level organizational scale in the anti-violence sector. Transformative justice work was first incubated within API Chaya's queer program under the tenure of Kiyomi Fujikawa in the early 2010s, who had developed her practice with transformative justice

[12] The Center, Chaya, CARA, and other small community-based anti-violence organizations in Seattle all struggled with maintaining sufficient funding from the city. In the face of this, they responded to threats of funding cuts with solidarity rather than competition. For instance, when the mayor and a city council person hostile to CARA's use of the frame of "rape culture" attempted to siphon off CARA's funding, they wanted to give some of it to other community-based orgs like the Center and Chaya, assuming these organizations would be happy for the windfall. Instead, groups including the Center and Chaya spoke out in support of CARA, refusing this divide and conquer approach (Bierria 2007:156–57). Ultimately, the API Women and Family Safety Center and Chaya merged to form one organization in 2011 to survive subsequent funding cuts.

strategies in a self-organized volunteer collective for the punk community called For Crying Out Loud. As transformative justice became popularized, more and more advocates reported survivors and community members asking for it. Slowly, through study of transformative justice resources and many conversations among staff, transformative justice as a value and method spread from the queer program to becoming a priority for the entire organization. A dedicated staff position was created around 2017 to hold the organization's transformative justice work, held by Rai. Rai saw the Natural Helpers program as a good foundation to build upon, anchoring transformative justice in trained community members. Rai shared her thinking in our interview: "*We are just taking it three steps further to say, 'What if they [the Natural Helpers] could do full-on processes?*'"

In consultation with Shira Hassan of Just Practice, Rai and others at API Chaya developed a program called Community Solutions. It offers a 45-hour training session to a paid cohort of fifteen community members, who then facilitate community accountability processes referred to them by API Chaya. These community facilitators are supported by monthly meetings and coaching from an experienced mentor. By doing what I call Scaling Out, API Chaya can distribute transformative justice skills widely, thus aiming to meet the need for growth and accessibility to large numbers of people. They do so, however, without "scaling up," avoiding the professionalization of transformative justice skills and the centralization of transformative justice knowledge in one large credentializing institution. This honors and sharpens existing community expertise and rhizomatically spreads skills, rather than consolidating them into a professionalized bureaucracy.

As transformative justice practice navigates a new era after the BLM uprisings, a new organizational tissue has developed at the national level that similarly practices Scaling Out.

The movement has evolved enough to grow a layer of training and capacity-building organizations that do not directly practice transformative justice interventions, but instead "skill up" others to do so. Groups like Spring Up, Interrupting Criminalization, and Project Nia offer trainings and skill building for a large general audience that has grown more diverse since the uprisings, as well as infrastructure and capacity building for nascent, local transformative justice projects.[13] Rather than credentialing transformative justice professionals, this "scaling out" of skills is intentionally focused at the grassroots level so that transformative justice practice can continue taking place in collective settings. Interrupting Criminalization offers people "*the skills to do a talking circle with their family, the skills to do a restorative conversation with their coworker, the skills to do de-escalation on their block*" (Nagao 2023). These basic skills are viewed as "*seeds for proliferation*" (Nagao 2023) with the aim of propagating a general culture of transformative justice that will help people respond better when larger crises or more acute forms of violence occur.

Ultimately, Scale Out hybridizes both a Keep TJ Wild and a Scale Up approach. It aims to meet the need for greater transformative justice infrastructure, impact, and power, as articulated by the Scale Up approach. Simultaneously, it honors the fugitive impulse of the Keep TJ Wild approach through the creation of a grassroots, non-professionalized organizational structure.

A Scaling Out approach holds organizational form lightly, with a focus on spreading skills and knowledge rather than on organizational endurance. Creative Interventions, for instance,

[13] In Interrupting Criminalization's case, this includes offerings like the "In It Together" cohorts, the TJ Skill Up Institute (101), Community Accountability 303 cohorts, and the Help Desk.

did not want to become institutionalized as a non-profit, where organizational continuity might overshadow impact or experimentation as the mission, so they intentionally planned to sunset the project after several years. A number of other groups with tenuous non-profit status also chose to sunset rather than try to institutionalize, though not necessarily intentionally: CARA, Young Women's Empowerment Project, Women and Girls Community Action Network, generationFIVE, INCITE!, and most recently Project Nia in Chicago and New York. Young Women's Empowerment Project, for example, embarked on an intentional closure process in 2013. They developed a hotline for people connected to the organization to call and share stories and appreciations, since staff were too overwhelmed to field calls during the transition process, but they wanted to have an archive of peoples' stories. Transition plans were made for staff, including the creation of community fundraised "movement severance packages," be they art supplies, paying phone bills and bus passes, or tuition for education to set people up for a new job (Intermodal and Young Women's Empowerment Project 2015). These organizational containers may have dissolved, but former leaders insist that the relationships, know-how, and organizing continues:

> For those organizations that have closed purposefully or out of necessity due to lack of resources or life transitions of key stakeholders, many of those individuals who have constituted leadership and membership within these organizations have continued to make contributions from other organizational locations and scattered career trajectories. (Kim 2020:322)

Are there dangers of this organizational "dance of ephemera" (Kim 2020:320), though? Some might argue that anti-institution tendencies in the movement conflate experiences of non-profit and state institutions with institutions *per se*, forgoing the possibility of radical institution-building that might one day replace the institutions of the state. A lack of organizational continuity also impacts learning. Both API Chaya's

Community Solutions Program and the New York Transformative Justice Hub, supported by Project Nia and Interrupting Criminalization, reported grappling with a generational change of the guard. An older generation of transformative justice facilitators were deeply knowledgeable but just as burnt out; many had stepped away from on-the-ground work or their organizations had closed as a result. Particularly since transformative justice epistemology is grounded in a mētis of embodied, relational knowledge transferred through practice and mentorship from older generations (see Chapter Four), this lack of institutional knowledge and organizational continuity has hindered an intergenerational transfer of knowledge at a larger scale. The story Theryn Kigvamasud'Vashti shared at the end of Chapter Two about being confronted by a new generation of Black women illustrated the pain of the demise of CARA. Kigvamasud'Vashti could provide individual support to those women, but the organizational support of CARA was not replaceable by individuals. On the other side, a bottleneck appears because a new generation of practitioners has yet to fully cohere. The New York City Transformative Justice Hub conducted a survey and found that many were held back by a high threshold for practice and fears of failure, made harder by an epistemology of mētis that resists standardizing transformative justice. The survey also found that many new practitioners desire scaffolding for this work, but do not know what it should be, returning us to the same organizational questions that have dogged the anti-violence movement for years.

In terms of resourcing, Scale Out offers more sustainable funding than the volunteer mutual aid of a Keep TJ Wild future, but does not become a state program, thus hedging the danger of cooptation posed by a Scale Up future. Despite this promising start, a Scale Up future, as modeled by API Chaya and Interrupting Criminalization, still has not resolved the

funding dilemmas of the non-profit industrial complex, as each organization manages the thorny question of resources in a different way. API Chaya is funded largely through VAWA state funds funneled to local service providers, and then it uses that money to pay mentors and participants in the Community Solutions Program a small stipend. Interrupting Criminalization and Project NIA are funded through philanthropic dollars and plough that money back into the community through free trainings and regranting funds to small local collectives doing transformative justice and abolitionist organizing, serving as a buffer between philanthropy's influence and grassroots organizing. Spring Up and Just Practice, in contrast, use for-profit models: Spring Up is a collective that funds staff through paid trainings, while Just Practice is a collective that subsidizes free or low-cost trainings through training revenue from well-funded organizations.

Scaling Out is not the silver bullet to solve all of the anti-violence movement's resourcing and organizational woes, but it does mark a path that can mitigate between the dangers of TJ's other two futures. One the one hand, its non-professional, decentralized orientation to changing everyday people and practices resists the danger of cooptation posed by the contentious politics of scaling up and taking state power. At the same time, its development of training and "skilling up" infrastructures and its creative use of state, philanthropic, and revenue resources help attenuate the danger of burn-out and irrelevance threatened by a pre-figurative politics that keeps TJ forever wild.

Conclusion: Future as Experiment

Each of these three futures is an experiment. First, there is the interstitial, anarchist-informed strategy of mutual aid, pre-figuration, and Black fugitivity that I call Keep TJ Wild. Second, there is a symbiotic or ruptural Marxist-informed strategy of "abolitionist reform" that builds mass movement to defund the carceral state and grow the welfare state that I call Scaling Up / State Power. Finally, there is a middle way of decentralized but sustainable growth, that leverages existing funding and ephemeral organizational containers to seed a culture of transformative justice skills located in community rather than organization that I call Scale Out. In a non-linear temporality of return, however, each of these futures are haunted by old questions in the anti-violence movement about organizational structure and resources, and old wounds about cooptation and power.

Bairley's challenge to exercise our muscles of governance calls upon activist-thinkers to prototype alternative models for fulfilling social needs that can ultimately supplant those of the state – be it through an interstitial, symbiotic, ruptural, or other theory of change. Using an epistemology and methodology of mētis, community can serve as a kind of lab,[14] preparation (Gordon 2018), rehearsal (Gilmore 2021; Maynard and Simpson 2022), or improvisation where practitioners experiment with alternative modes of governance that can then be scaled to ever greater degrees until they can replace the state itself. In terms of resources, this might mean demanding no strings attached funding from the state, or better

[14] This references the use of the word 'lab' in transformative justice organizing, like Community United Against Violence (San Francisco) and Audre Lorde Project's SOS Collective (New York City)'s collaborative "Safety Lab" in 2009 (Audre Lorde Project and Communities United Against Violence (CUAV) 2009) and BATJC's "Apology Lab" [some of the content of the lab can be found summarized here (Mingus 2019b)]. The first uses I can find of the term 'lab' are in the San Francisco Bay Area, and my fellow transformative justice researcher Jess Fournier suggested in conversation that this could be the influence of the language of Silicon valley and the tech industry.

yet, putting city budgets in the hands of democratic councils of residents who enact participatory budgeting in order to allot funds to transformative justice projects, who are then accountable only to those councils.

In terms of organization, it might mean anti-violence projects that are worker owned non-profits, rather than hierarchically staffed, to build collective ownership. Fujikawa, formerly of API Chaya, has shared the need for temporary "transition organizations" that allow us to explore a number of "possibility models" that center those from which transformative justice originated – queer and trans, as well as Black, Indigenous and people of color communities (Brazzell 2021). In her dreaming at the start of the Community Solutions Program, Rai of API Chaya held sessions with long-time transformative justice practitioners in Seattle, including Fujikawa, to ask them their vision for a transformative justice future:

> *Actually, they all agreed that what their dream was, is to have a TJ hub in Seattle that has a drop-in center where people can come and get a variety of services that they might need. "Okay, you need mediation, maybe you can go over here." "Okay, you need an advocate for now. You can go talk to this person." That's just a one-stop shop where everyone can go. That is a physical space. That's also where all the training happens. [...] They all agreed that that would be the best-case scenario.* (Rai 2020b)

This serves as a kind of abolitionist reimagining of the Alameda County Family Justice Center that appeared as a deceptively feminist but decidedly carceral institution in the Introduction, and it echoes the efforts of the RESTORE Oakland building to create a one-stop shop that is also an organizing hub.

Disentangling the welfare state from the carceral state, as well as from racial gendered capitalism and the violence of state sovereignty will likely require such profound transformation of the welfare state that it would be unrecognizable on the other side. We cannot know in advance how to organize care and mitigate harm in this new world. Perhaps

some types of care will require centralized coordination, others decentralized autonomy; some types of harm mitigation may require a shared framework or constitution to guide its limits, others may allow for disparate and even disagreeing frameworks in different communities; some types of care may need to be professionalized and funded (and could benefit from relative distance or anonymity), others may need to be done within unpaid, unprofessionalized networks of intimacy. I leave it to future activists and scholars to establish criteria by which to think through these questions. Regardless, this future will require rethinking governance and justice anew entirely, which is precisely the work that the transformative justice movement has been doing.

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Appendix

A. Organizational Index for Dissertation

B. Dissertation Interviewee Demographic Information

C. Transformative Justice Organization Map

A. Organizational Index for Dissertation

This is a list of organizations mentioned in the dissertation, their abbreviation (if used in the dissertation), their location, and their first mention in the dissertation. This list does not include governmental bodies. Organizations on this list are located in the U.S. unless otherwise indicated.

Organizations and Abbreviations	Location	First Mentioned
Anti-Police Terror Project	Oakland, CA	Introduction
Black Lives Matter (BLM)	national	Introduction
Black Panther Party	Nationwide (particularly Oakland, CA)	Conclusion
API Chaya	Seattle, WA	Introduction
Accountable Communities Consortium	Seattle, WA	Chapter 4
API Women and Family Safety Center ("the Center")	Seattle, WA	Chapter 2
Audre Lorde Project	New York, NY	Chapter 4
Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC)	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Chapter 4
Berlin Transformative Justice Collective	Berlin, Germany	Chapter 2
Broadway Youth Center	Chicago, IL	Chapter 3
Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)	national	Chapter 3
California Coalition of Women Prisoners	Statewide CA	Chapter 3
Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)	Seattle, WA	Introduction
Challenging Male Supremacy Project	New York, NY	Chapter 4
Chaya	Seattle, WA	Chapter 2
Chicago Women and Girls Community Action	Chicago, IL	Chapter 1

Network		
Coalition for Justice for Battered Women	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Chapter 1
Collective Justice	Seattle, WA	Chapter 3
Combahee River Collective	Boston, MA	Chapter 3
Community Coordinated Response (CCR)	Duluth, MN	Chapter 1
Communities United Against Violence	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Chapter 3
Creative Interventions	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Introduction
Critical Resistance	national	Introduction
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project	Duluth, MN	Chapter 3
Family Violence Project	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Chapter 1
Fireweed Collective	national	Chapter 3
For Crying Out Loud	Seattle, WA	Conclusion
generationFIVE	national (particularly in San Francisco Bay Area, CA)	Introduction
Healing Justice London	London, UK	Conclusion
INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence (INCITE!)	national	Introduction
Interrupting Criminalization (IC)	national (particularly New York, NY)	Conclusion
Just Practice	Chicago, IL	Chapter 4
Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective	regional - Southeast	Chapter 3
Los Angeles Committee on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW)	Los Angeles, CA	Chapter 1
Love & Protect	Chicago, IL	Chapter 3
Me Too	national	Introduction
Mijente	national	Chapter 3
Momentum	national	Chapter 2
Move to End Violence	national	Conclusion
National Woman Abuse Prevention Project	national	Chapter 1
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)	national	Chapter 1
New York City Transformative Justice Hub	New York, NY	Conclusion
Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse (NWN)	Seattle, WA	Introduction
Oakland Legal Aid	Oakland, CA	Chapter 1
Oakland Power Projects	Oakland, CA	Chapter 3

Philly Stands Up (PSU)	Philadelphia, PA	Introduction
Project Nia	Chicago, IL (then New York, NY)	Introduction
Restore Oakland	Oakland, CA	Introduction
Santa Cruz Women Against Rape	Santa Cruz, CA	Chapter 1
Seattle Rape Relief (SRR)	Seattle, WA	Chapter 1
Sista II Sista	Brooklyn, NY	Chapter 2
Sisters Uncut	national, UK	Conclusion
Spring Up	national (began in Miami, FL)	Conclusion
StoryTelling and Organizing Project (STOP)	San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Introduction
Support New York (SNY)	New York, NY	Introduction
Survived & Punished (S&P)	national	Introduction
Trans Lifeline	national	Chapter 3
Transform NYC	New York, NY	Chapter 3
Women and Girls Community Action Network	Chicago, IL	Chapter 3
Young Women's Empowerment Project	Chicago, IL	Chapter 3

Table 4: List of organizations, their originating locations, and where they are first mentioned in the dissertation.

B. Dissertation Interviewee Demographic Information

Using a survey on Google Forms, I gathered demographic information about my interviewees as part of the second phase of my research. Of a total of 49 interviewees, 41 filled out the form. In order to maximize self-expression around identity, all questions (except one about age) were formulated as short answer, not a selection. Interviewees were encouraged to only share what they felt comfortable sharing. As a result, some of the graphs below include a "no response" option. In addition, the question on class and sexuality was dysfunctional on the survey, which was corrected after the first four respondents utilized the survey. As a result, those two questions had a higher non-response rate than others.

Survey Questions:

1. What is your name?

2. What groups/organizations have you been involved with where you learned about or did transformative justice work? Next to each, please write what your role was.

3. How old are you?

4. How do you identify in terms of...

Ability?

Racial identity?

Gender identity and/or expression?

Class?

Sexuality?

Being a survivor of state or interpersonal violence? (if you identify as a survivor of other kinds of violence, you are welcome to explain in your answer)

Other identities you have that feel important and aren't on this list?

Several questions – related to disability, class, and race – had individual short answers that were relatively similar and clustered into a smaller number of categories whose definitions seemed relatively uncontroversial. For these questions, I decided to take my prerogative as a researcher to recategorize answers into overarching categories (for instance, putting "African American" into the larger category of "Black" or "Filipinx" into the larger category of "Asian Pacific Islander"). While this does collate the data in a way that is easier to understand by the reader, it does not do full justice to the self-description of my interviewees, so I include some notes under each chart to address specific issues related to self-identification. I represent these questions as a pie chart, showing percentage answers of the total (100% = 42 respondents).

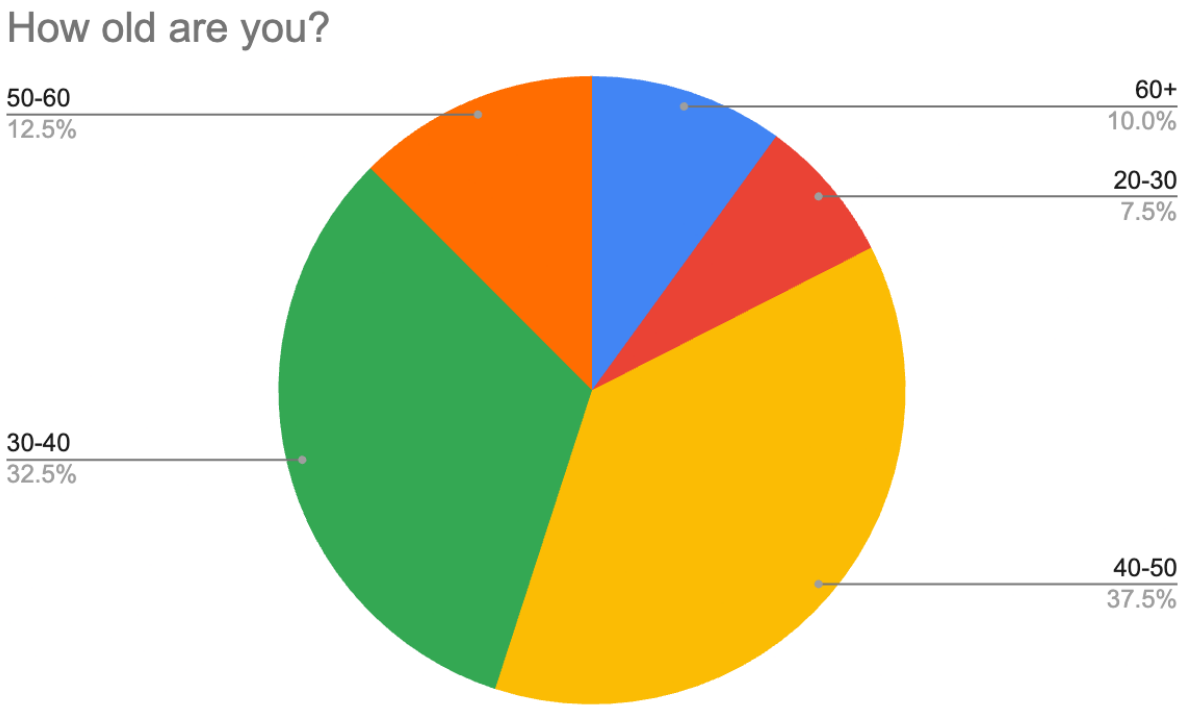

Figure 4: A pie chart showing the age breakdown of interviewee survey respondents.

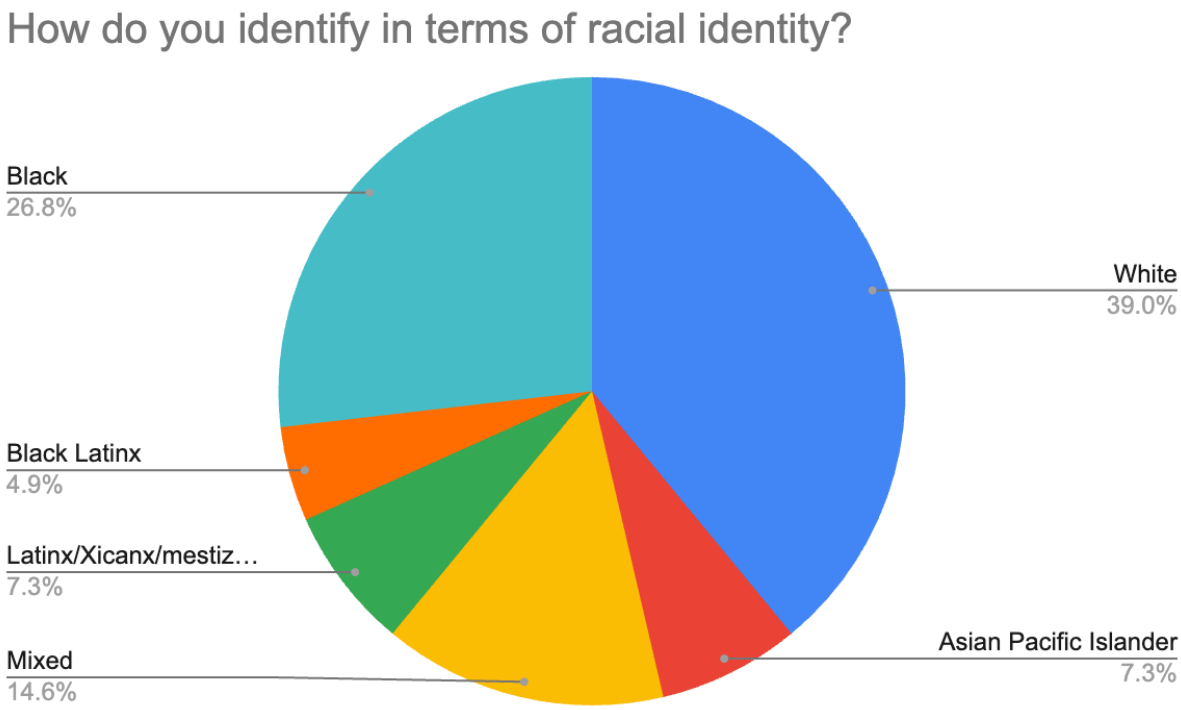

Figure 5: A pie chart showing the racial breakdown of interviewee survey respondents.

Notes on racial identity graph: Anyone who mentioned "mixed" in their answer was placed into the "Mixed" racial category. Black Latinx represents people who identified as Black Latina, AfroLatinx, and Black Puerto Rican. Within the Black group, two people (4.7% of total) identified specifically as African-American and three people (7.1% of total) identified as Afro-Caribbean or Afro-Haitian (this does not include anyone from the AfroLatinx group).

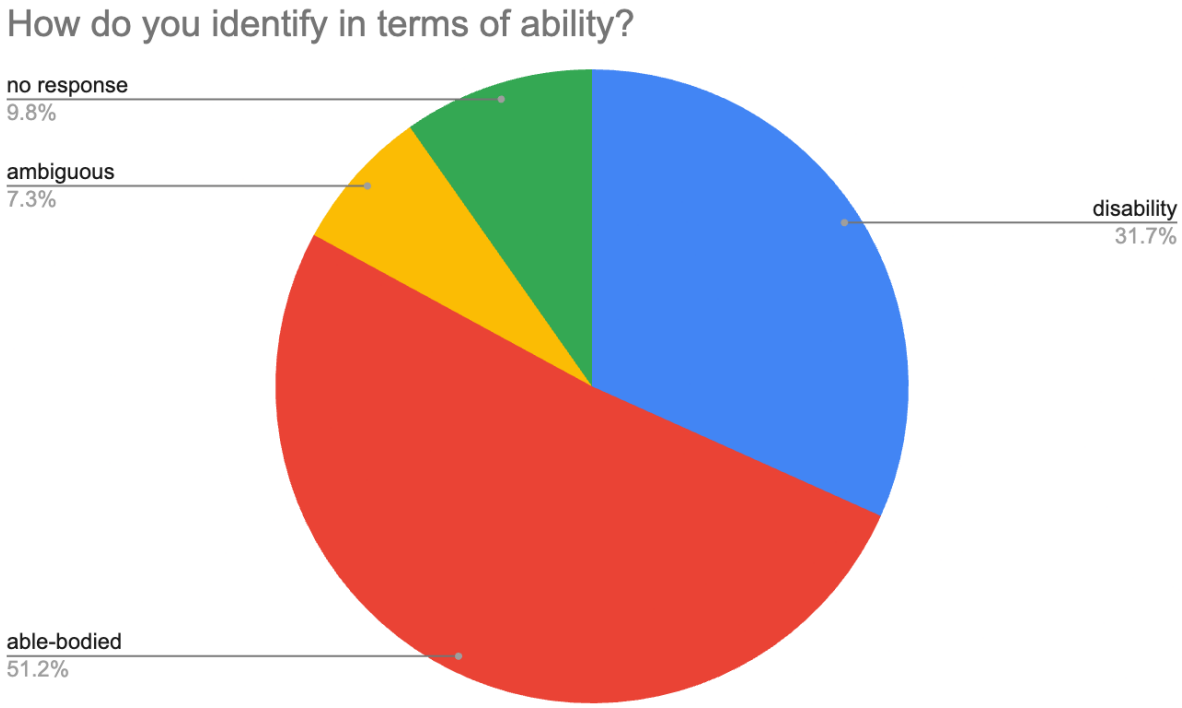

Figure 6: A pie chart showing the ability breakdown of interviewee survey respondents.

Notes on ability graph: Disability included mental and physical disabilities. Ambiguous answers included data indicating both a mix of ability and disability (for example, "chronic pain but high functioning")

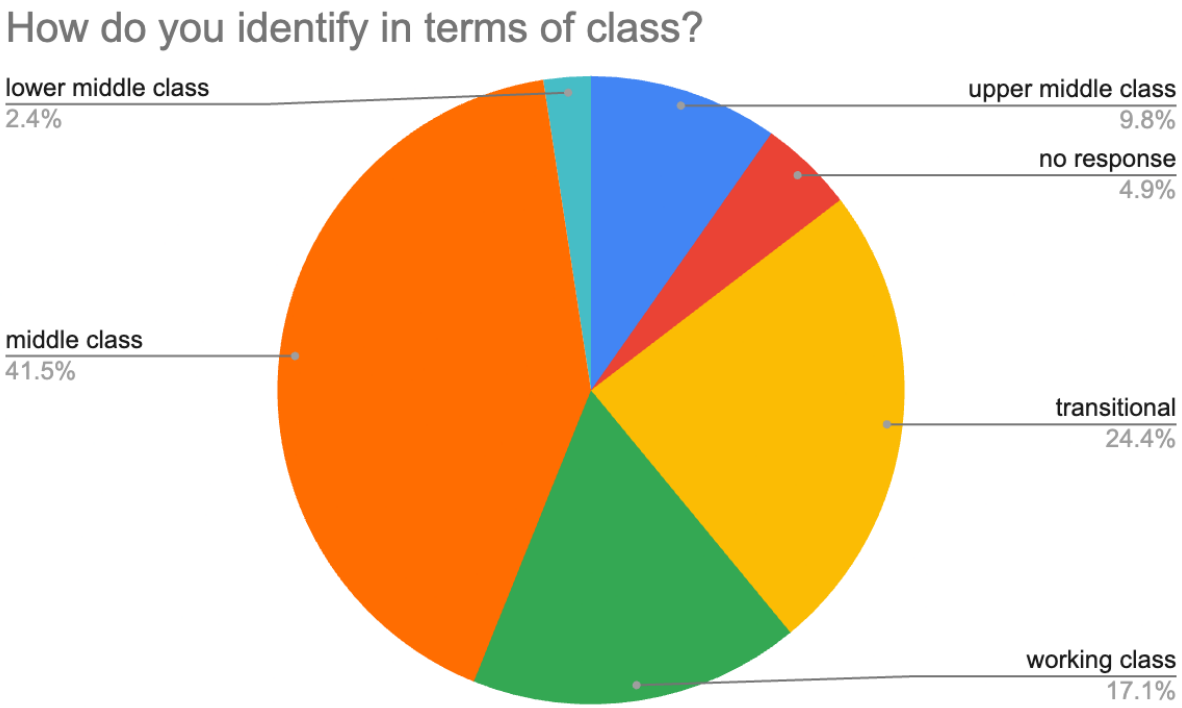

Figure 7: A pie chart showing the racial breakdown of interviewee survey respondents.

Notes on class identity graph: The "transitional" category describes anyone who mentioned going through a shift in their social class over their life time. For every respondent in this category, this included a transition from working class to a higher class; the vast majority described growing up working class, with one person describing moving between working and middle class throughout their lives.

Several questions – regarding sexuality and gender – had individual short answers that diverged greatly, with respondents offering multiple descriptors for themselves. To capture this, I represent these as bar graphs where the total exceeds the number of respondents, since some respondents used multiple descriptors to describe themselves.

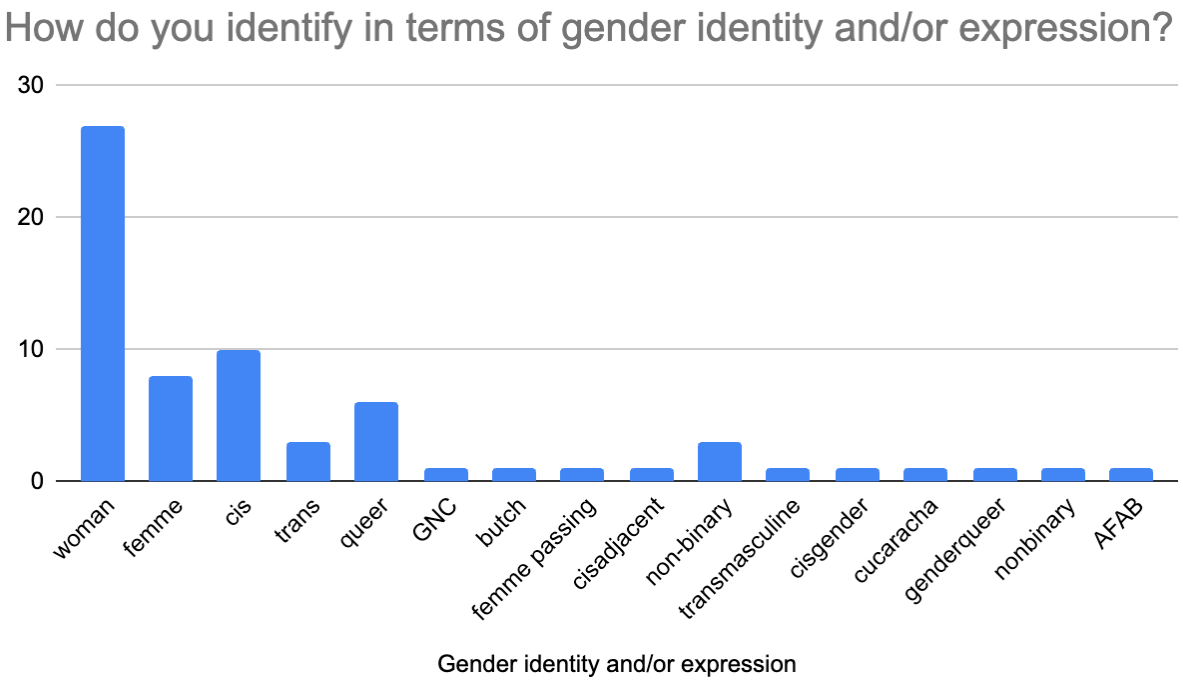

Figure 8: A bar graph showing the gender identity / expression breakdown of interviewee survey respondents.

Notes on the gender identity and/or expression graph: The terms 'female,' 'F,' and 'she/her/hers' were put into the category of woman. Other terms were left separate. ‘GNC’ is an abbreviation for gender non-conforming; 'AFAB' is an abbreviation for 'assigned female at birth.'

C. Transformative Justice Organization Map

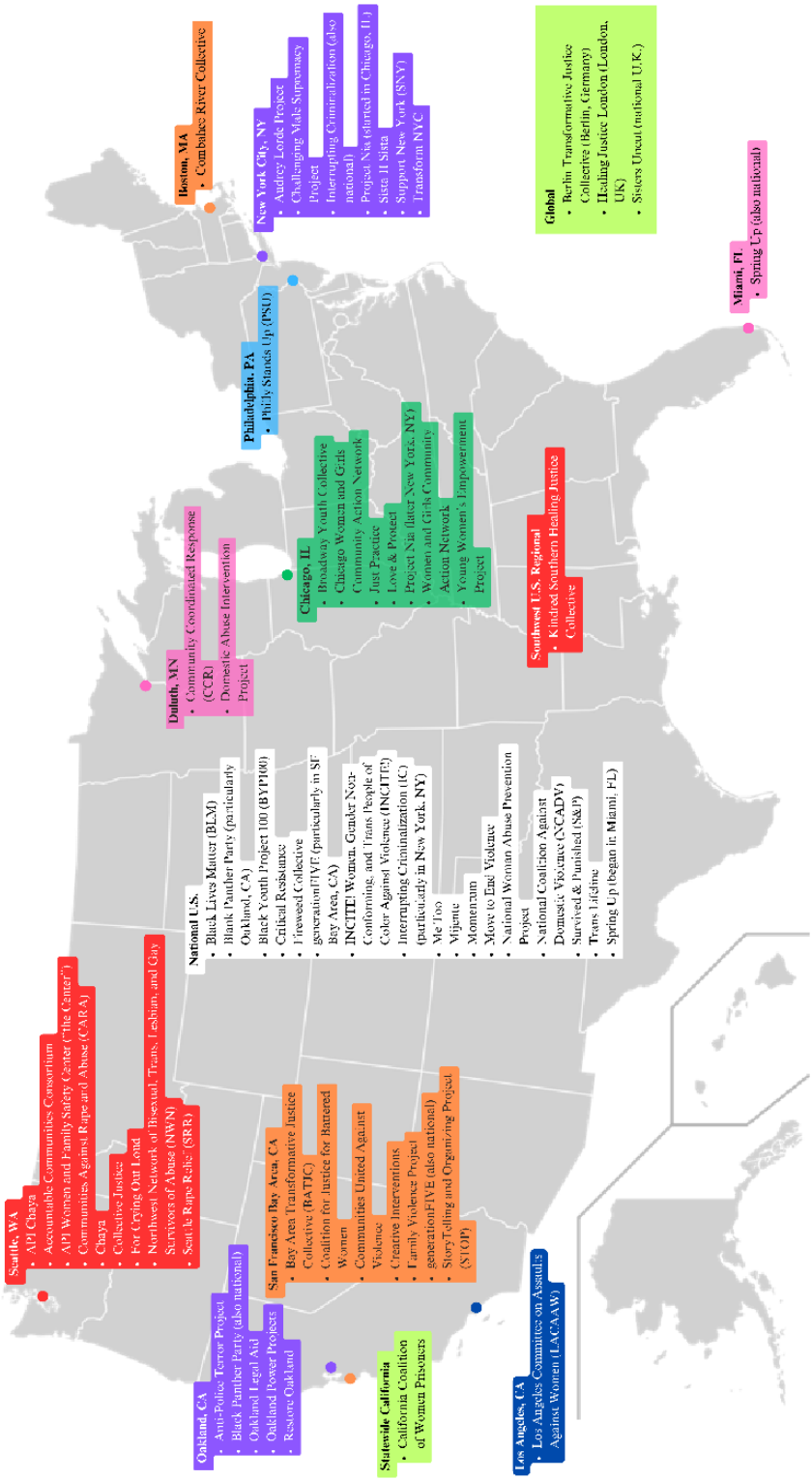

Figure 9: A map of the U.S. shows the originating location of the various transformative justice organizations discussed in the dissertation.