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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

**THE WHITE MAN PROBLEM: EXPLORING INTERSECTIONAL
CONSCIOUSNESS, WHITENESS, MASCULINITIES, AND SOLIDARITY
AMONG WHITE, MALE-IDENTIFIED ACTIVISTS**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

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with an emphasis in FEMINIST STUDIES

by

Robert David Majzler

September 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables and figures.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Method.....	34
Chapter 3: Conscientization: Anti-racist Feminist Education.....	48
Chapter 4: Solidarity: Toward Anti-racist Feminist Praxis.....	75
Chapter 5: Voices of Resistance and Resistant Voices.....	114
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	148
Appendix A: Interview Script.....	160
Appendix B: Listening Guide “Listening” Instructions.....	163
Appendix C: Listening Guide Worksheet.....	165
Bibliography.....	167

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Social Psychological Model of Conscientization.....	31
Table 2.1: Participants.....	41
Figure 2.1: In the Field.....	43
Figure 4.1: Ecological Model of Anti-Racist Solidarity Practices.....	110
Table 5.1: White Male Social Justice Voices.....	119

ABSTRACT

THE WHITE MAN PROBLEM: EXPLORING INTERSECTIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS, WHITENESS, MASCULINITIES, AND SOLIDARITY AMONG WHITE, MALE-IDENTIFIED ACTIVISTS

by

ROBERT DAVID MAJZLER

This dissertation investigates anti-racist feminist consciousness development and solidarity practices among sixteen activist White men. The interviewees were selected based upon a nomination process by anti-racist feminist activists. We conducted life story interviews exploring turning points and influences on the interviewees' paths to anti-racist feminist praxis. Interviewees also described their anti-racist feminist praxis, projects, and what solidarity means to them. A research team analyzed the interviews with the Listening Guide. The Listening Guide is an approach to analyzing qualitative data that highlights voice and relationship. The results of the study indicate diverse patterns of life stories and trajectories with common threads of marginality, mentorship, community, and activism. Solidarity for the interviewees was both a social and psychological practice of challenging Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity at multiple levels of analysis. Lastly, using the Listening Guide, we discerned the various social justice voices that the participants spoke with in grounding or justifying their activism, which highlights the complexities, challenges, and contradictions of solidarity from dominant group positions. We conclude with implications, limitations of this study, and future directions for research and application of these findings.

To my mom, Helen, for the patience

To my dad, Robert, for the courage

To my brother, Dave, for the poetry

To my mentor, Aaronette, for the fire.

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Ranu Sinha on my committee; I hope to one day to inspire classrooms the ways you do. You model a feminist masculinity.

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If I think of a next step for this dissertation, I think of the 105f group. Dave, Dan, Nick, Ian, you all inspire me as White men who strive toward liberation. You have all given me tremendous support over our lives. In that vein, I have to thank Mike Bishop, too. I've included Thoreau and McCandless in this dissertation; can you find them?

Dave, can you believe that I'm writing this after we moved out to California 7 years ago? You made those first few years in the woods, so much happier for me. We've seen it all, bonfire of trust, flashfloods of pain....Well, it's time to start building that school.

Toward the end of graduate school, I got the courage to ask a second year student if she'd like to paint my finger nails sometime. I am so grateful she took me up on that. Honeybee, you are my fire and joy. I'm so excited about where life will take us.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Staying ‘home’ and not venturing out from our own group comes from woundedness, and stagnates our growth....To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy” (Anzaldúa, 2002b, p. 3). As Anzaldúa suggests, individuals and social movements can experience growth in multiple ways by bridging across difference. Such relationships across difference require activists to overcome centuries of stigma, taboo, and separations of self-Other. Bridging differences and understanding their relationships to systems of domination, while finding commonality in social justice, is the heart of solidarity and the inspiration for this dissertation study.

Solidarity refers to political organizing but also entails a psychological process; solidarity is about group relationships and about how individuals negotiate such relationships. In the introduction to this dissertation, we¹ start by examining the ways the Left has historically mobilized solidarity, and the important interventions by women of Color activists in developing a model of solidarity that embraces difference. This solidarity is both a social practice, but also a psychological process that hinges on woman-of-Color consciousness (Anzaldúa, 2002b; Sandoval, 2000).

By examining how this consciousness develops and how it envisions anti-racist feminism and coalition building, this study seeks to develop an opening for those who are not women of Color to understand and practice these forms of

¹ Although I, Robert Majzler, typed the words of this dissertation, this project was a collaboration with my advisor, the research team, the participants, my committee, my mentors, and supporters. Without this community this project would not exist, hence the “we.”

organizing and living. Woman of Color solidarity highlights the destructive dynamics of White-supremacist cisheteropatriarchy², and although these systems privilege White men, White men have (psychological and often material) stakes in developing solidarity in transforming these dominant social structures (hooks, 2004). Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity are socio-political and ideological structures that operate to dominate and control the social order for the benefit of owning-class, White, cisheterosexual men (Connell, 2005; Leonardo, 2002). Although in different ways and to different degrees, all White men receive White male privilege, that is a *patriarchal dividend* (White & Peretz, 2010) and the *wages of Whiteness* (Lipstiz, 2006). Because of the ways that these systems of domination work, White men most often take their privilege as natural and/or normal, and thus and are likely resist women of Color feminism (Pease, 2010).

These tensions are at the heart of the White man problem. In particular, two sources give inspiration to the title of this dissertation *The White Man Problem*. The first is a story about the famous novelist Richard Wright as told in by Lipsitz (2006). A French journalist asked the author, “How does it feel to be a problem in America (as a Black man)?” Wright replied, “There’s isn’t any Negro problem; there is only a White problem” (p. 1). With Wright’s response in mind, the title points to Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity as oppressive social structures that are often taken for granted by those who have the privilege to do so.

² We define White-supremacist cisheteropatriarchy as intersecting systems of power and social relations based on the supremacy and dominance of White cisheterosexual men through the exploitation and oppression of people of Color, women, and LGBTQI people.

The second source of the title is Harding's (1991) discussion of "the Monster problem" within feminist scholarship. By this she asks what should feminism do about men who desire to be feminist. Can men be feminist? Can they produce feminist knowledge or knowledge that is useful for feminist movements? With this in mind, *problem* is also used as a dilemma, an open question.

The White Man Problem is at the confluence of these questions about oppression, privilege, social justice, solidarity, and transformation. This study aims to explore how some White men come to consciousness of the patriarchal dividend, wages of Whiteness, and radical social transformations; and how they understand their own stakes in confronting oppression from dominant group positions.

In order to explore the possibilities and limitations of White masculine consciousness, we review the literatures on Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity. This dissertation draws on interdisciplinary cultural analyses and social psychology to explore how structures of Whiteness and masculinity condition White men to envision themselves as heroes/saviors as well as how these structures limit both cognitive and affective understanding of intersectional solidarity. This literature also makes clear that these are systems of hegemony and the possibility for what Melamed (2006) labels as breaks in systems of hegemony. The category of "White man" is a social identity and not a destiny.

This chapter concludes by drawing on previous studies of activists with relative privilege who engage intersectional solidarity (Black men, Latino men, and White women). To the best of our knowledge, no such studies with White men exist

in the literature of intersectional consciousness. In the current study, we have reviewed these literatures to research the life histories and solidarity practices of anti-racist feminist White men. Although such consciousness embodied in White men is uncommon, we believe that radical social movements have created breaks in hegemonic systems and openings for some White men to learn and embody anti-racist feminist solidarity. We conclude the introduction by weaving together these literatures to pose two guiding questions for the current study:

- How do White men who identify as anti-racist and feminist understand and narrate their life in relation to critical consciousness development?
- How do White men who identify as anti-racist and feminist understand and embody solidarity from their positionality?

Solidarity

Emphasizing the importance of organized struggle, Frederick Douglass professed 149 years ago, “power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will” (p. 278, in Bulhan, 1985). Social justice movements are able to make demands on power and take aim at radical social transformations when a critical mass of people are mobilized (Martín-Baró, 1994). Yet in the U.S. and in international contexts, the “people” is a broad category with extreme diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, citizenship status, age, ability, education level, body size, and other social factors. Social justice struggles are able to make demands on power when solidarity is established within and between diverse groups.

Conceptually, solidarity is a term (and rallying cry) that holds together commonality and difference. In a basic sense, solidarity means bringing together independent groups or people with a common interest. Historically, *solidarité* gained political usage during the revolutionary period of the mid-nineteenth century in Europe as a counterpoint to *fraternité*. *Fraternité* had a connotation of blood ties, whereas *solidarité* brought people together based on ideology and/or a moral cause (Kip, 2016). Political psychologists describe solidarity as including: (1) a diversity within unity or a coalition approach to activism and (2) an explicitly political composition of the relationship, i.e. perceiving unjust social power structures and acting to change those structures (Subašić, Reynolds, Turner, 2008).

In forging ties at the level of ideology and morality, solidarity also entails not merely an intellectual but also an affective bond between actors based upon commitment. hooks (2000) distinguishes solidarity from mere support, “Support can be occasional. It can be given and just as easily withdrawn. Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment” (p. 67). Thus, solidarity is not about charity or assuaging guilt but about a stronger emotional connection. The bonds of solidarity entail establishing relationships of trust, commitment, and radical love.

A historical shortfall of solidarity is the processes by which group differences are maintained, respected, or assimilated within the solidarity relationship. Groups have mobilized common interests in ways that assume sameness and forced assimilation in the name of solidarity to the cause. For example, the idea of sisterhood has been deployed to minimize race, class, culture, sexuality, and other

differences among women (Lorde, 2007). Furthermore, labor organizing has a long history of White racial solidarity to the exclusion of multi-racial, all-gender, class-based solidarity of workers. For example, many White unionized workers in the South were part of the Klan (Griffith, 1988)³. These historical examples bring to light that the way differences are conceptualized in relationships has importance for social justice practices and solidarity.

Woman of Color Solidarity

Despite the some of the historical challenges that solidarity poses in regard to dealing with sameness/difference, the history of women of Color feminist organizing and writing demonstrates the promise of solidarity to open up paths to social justice and radical social transformations. The previous failures of social movements to develop radical and fully just solidarity practices often stemmed from dominant groups reasserting hierarchies within social movements. In the case of women's liberation in the 1970s and 1980s (and this continues today) issues of racism and classism were often evaded for "gender issues," and thus making sexism only about White, middle-class, heterosexual issues (Lorde, 2007; Sandoval, 2000). In the case of labor organizing, groups of Color and women/genderqueer people have been historically excluded from many unions, thus showing that solidarity has too often meant only if you are White, straight, and cis-gendered (Aptheker, 2011; Griffith, 1988; Spade, 2011).

³ None of this to say that there were/are not many exceptions to this racism in feminist and labor movements.

In the aftermath of these movements during the 1970s and 1980s, women from different racial, social class, and cultural backgrounds began to articulate what is now referred to as intersectional solidarity (Davis, 2016; Sandoval, 2000). Progressive movements in the 20th century continually erased the experiences and the priorities of women of Color, who confronted racism in White-dominated feminist movements (Lorde, 2007). Women of Color also experienced sexist de-prioritization in civil rights and racial power movements, i.e. we'll fix racism first, then sexism (hooks, 2000). Moreover, lesbians and queer women of Color were at the forefront of challenging the racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression in these examples. A commonality in these movements was the (a) erasure of difference and (b) sameness built upon the norms of the dominant group.

Feminists of Color in this time period showed the possibility of solidarity out of difference. As Lorde (2007) writes, "Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged," and "community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist" (p. 112). Because there are multiple systems of domination, the exploration of different relationships to systems of domination reflects a more accurate portrait of a complex and "fractured world." Spade (2011) refers to this as a "trickle up social justice" model of solidarity that does not make people choose one identity over another; furthermore, those who are most violently affected by these systems articulate the terms of building coalitions.

Solidarity out of difference has generated “coalitional consciousness” among radical women of Color. Sandoval (2000) explains:

It is this personal, political, and cultural configuration that permitted feminists of color from very different racial, ethnic, physical, national, or sexual identities access to the same psychic domain, where they recognized one another as ‘countrywomen’ of a new kind of global and public domain, and as a result generated a new kind of coalition identity politics, a ‘coalitional consciousness’ (p. 71).

Coalitions, like the authorship of ground-breaking texts such as *The Combahee River Collective Statement* (Combahee River Collective, 1977), *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983) and *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, but Some of Us are Brave* (Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith, 1982), came together in the common interest of struggles against White-supremacist, capitalist cisheteropatriarchy while embracing the participants’ diverse social positions and backgrounds with systems of domination.

Woman-of-Color Consciousness

The category of “woman of Color” is itself a coalition of difference, women of diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, political, religious, etc. backgrounds with differing social positions in relationship to White patriarchy. According to Alexander (2002), “We are not born women of Color. We become women of Color,” (p. 91). Woman-of-Color consciousness and solidarity arises from community struggling for liberation in the context of multiple systems of domination. Women-of-Color consciousness is

a standpoint generated from being inside and outside at the same time, reflected in such concepts such as “mestiza” and “nepantla” (Anzaldúa), “sister outsider,” (Lorde), and “outsider within” (Collins). This consciousness is fostered by oppressed women and gender-nonconforming people politicizing the double-consciousness that arises from being positioned inside and outside of dominant power structures (Sandoval, 2000). Solidarity in this context also reflects movement for wholeness, integration, and interconnectedness. Alexander (2002) asserts that this desire for wholeness is another aspect that dominant feminist and leftist movements have overlooked: “Since colonization has produced fragmentation and dismemberment at both the material and the psychic levels, the work of decolonization must make room for the deep yearning for wholeness” (p. 99). This is a wholeness that integrates multiple selves rather than assimilates one for another.

The yearning for wholeness is an emotional, even spiritual, yearning that disrupts rational-choice models of motivation. The union of dualities is a source of power and pleasure that Lorde (2007) signifies with the concept of the erotic. She explains, “In touch with the erotic, I become less willing to accept powerlessness, or those other supplied states of being which are not native to me, such as resignation, despair, self-effacement, depression, [and] self-denial” (p. 58). Shotwell (2011) explains that the erotic refers to a faculty of understanding that allows one to integrate intellectual knowledge with sensual and embodied knowledge. Intersectional solidarity and women-of-Color consciousness is not merely driven by dry analyses of

oppression, but rather an emotional, and indeed spiritual, desire for interconnection within the context of difference.

The coalition of women of Color is limited when taken merely as an identity category and not as a theoretical and methodological approach in its own right (Anzaldúa, 2002b; Sandoval, 2000). The women-of-Color solidarity methodology and consciousness outlined here reflects this more capacious approach. In a groundbreaking decades long project of documenting and theorizing radical woman of Color feminism, Sandoval outlines the “methodology of the oppressed.” This methodology of liberation is a coalitional project animated by the use of the erotic; self-reflexivity and development of historical and structural analysis; the ability to decode and explode false binaries like us/them and oppressor/oppressed; the ability to shift between multiple perspectives. Finally, all this arises from double consciousness and intersectional social movements based in woman-of-Color solidarity. Sandoval argues that “all citizenry” must learn to use the technologies of the methodology of the oppressed in order to struggle for liberation in a transnational, neo-colonizing capitalist context (p. 181). The question of whether and how dominant groups have learned from women-of-Color consciousness and solidarity inspires the current study.

Intersectional Consciousness Among Dominant Groups

In a latter essay Anzaldúa (2002b) writes, “[We] question the terms *White* and *women of color* by showing that Whiteness may not be applied to all Whites, as some possess women-of-color consciousness, just as some women of color bear White consciousness” (p.2). This quotation helps to untie women of Color consciousness

from biological or essential ideas of race and gender. Yet, it should not be understood in a way that assumes that people privileged by race or gender could advance anti-racist feminism without women of Color. Women of Color must be central to anti-racist and feminist movements. “Only African-American women occupy the center and can ‘feel the iron’ that enter Black women’s souls” (Collins, 2000, p. 35). At the same time, people who occupy dominant group positions may learn, teach, and advance (in coalition) women of Color feminism (Collins, 2000). There is now a small but growing literature of empirical studies assessing the development of intersectional consciousness among men of Color and White women (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Thompson, 2001; White, 2008).

Taken together, these studies of feminist men of Color and anti-racist White women highlight three key aspects of intersectional consciousness among dominant group members: (1) relationships with women of Color, (2) development of anti-racist feminist praxis, and (3) the importance of social positionality. The first point is that these activists developed an understanding and appreciation of intersectional consciousness from women of Color in their lives. These activists had long histories and deep connections with women of Color. The second thread is that this consciousness is a process; it develops in a praxis of “private commitments and public actions” (White, 2008) and is ongoing. In this process, these activists learn the “capacity to switch political gears, size up and understand changes in state power, and use multiple tactics to undermine oppression” (Thompson, 2001, p. 208). Lastly, intersectional consciousness is connected to a person and group’s standpoint. For

these activists, drawing on their lived experiences of oppression (e.g. racism for men of Color; sexism for White women) enhanced and fostered their growth in understanding their privilege with another identity. At the same time, these activists spoke of identity (race, class, gender, etc.) differences as ongoing challenges both psychologically and as relating to solidarity. None of these studies explored White men anti-racist feminist consciousness, however some of the key insights of this body of research informs the current study. Not being oppressed by race or gender, can White men learn intersectional consciousness?

Intersectional consciousness and White masculinities.

After an extensive literature search, it appears that empirical studies of intersectional consciousness among White men are non-existent. Empirical literature, on the contrary, generally indicates severe limitations in social consciousness within this group. Survey studies show White men as the group most likely to support meritocracy and color-blindness, endorse individualistic over structural attributions for inequality, and are least likely to support affirmative action (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Bullock, 1999; Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll 2009). Ethnographic studies show this group to be the most hostile toward critical education (Allen & Rosado, 2009; Cabrera, 2014). Furthermore, the only studies on White men's race and gender consciousness appear limited to right-wing White-supremacists (Ferber, 1998) and economically exploited White men who feel under attack by women and people of Color (Fine, Weis, Adelson, & Marusza, 1997; Kimmel, 2013).

In order to avoid essentializing the category of White man and to understand the landscape of White masculine socialization, it is important to briefly examine socio-political structures of Whiteness and masculinity. Scholars have made important historical and structural connections between Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity, arguing that it is crucial to examine how these social structures intertwine in their attempts to assure dominance and privilege for White men (Connell, 2005; Carroll, 2011; Hurtado, 1996). Patriarchal gender relations in the West have historically structured White masculinity as the “mythical norm” and the cultural standard upon which all other cultures and genders are compared (Dyer, 1997; Lorde, 2007). Gender and racial orders in the West have continually rearticulated themselves in the context of capitalist empire-building, systems which endorse White, heterosexual male supremacy (Hurtado, 1996). For example, White male dominance is promoted by creating mythology of purity/fragility of White femininity under threat by Black masculinity, then subsequently creating systems that police and punish Black masculinity (Connell, 2005; Davis, 2002).

White-supremacist, capitalist cisheteropatriarchy takes more specific forms in the era of neoliberal multi-culturalism. In the era of neoliberal multi-culturalism, cultural shifts have taken place that have called into question the hegemony of White patriarchy, which has in turn prompted new formations of White masculinities (Melamed, 2006). As feminist and anti-racist/anti-colonial movements made gains in the 1960s and 1970s calling White male dominance into question, Carroll (2011) argues that hegemonic White masculinity could no longer totally assert its dominance

based upon being the universal and the normative experience (although in many contexts White and male as universal continues). In the contemporary era, White masculinity has claimed an injured or victimized subject, where Whiteness and masculinity are under attack by feminists, immigrants, and liberals and, to quote an angry White man from Kimmel's (2013) study, "nobody gives a shit about us guys any more" (p. 3).

Carroll (2011) explains that in this landscape there are four cultural formations of White masculinity struggling for hegemony. These images include (a) the citizen hero⁴, rooted in values of nationalism and consumerism, exemplified by Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland's character) in the TV show *24*; (b) the working-class hero, rooted in conservative blue-collar values, exemplified by the characters of *American Chopper* and the rapper Eminem; (c) the liberal patriarch, rooted in values of being more conscious and open-minded yet ultimately interested in White paternalism, exemplified in the Robert Wakefield (Michael Douglas' character) in *Traffic*; and (d) the homo-normative gay man, rooted in gay assimilation into hetero-normative relations, exemplified by Enis del Mar and Jack Twist (Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal's characters) in *Brokeback Mountain*.

The citizen hero, working-class hero, liberal patriarch, and homo-normative gay man may differ in their political projects, yet all serve as reclaiming projects for White cisheteropatriarchal gender relations (Carroll, 2011). Specifically, each

⁴ Carroll does not specifically name these formation of White masculinity, but I attempt to use the same language in his descriptions of these sites of conflict.

represents White men who are facing the challenges of changing multi-cultural neoliberal ideology by claiming different types of injury by these changing systems. The effects of such claims work to reassume White male privilege. The citizen and working-class heroes claim injuries to national security and working class White economic security respectively, while both offering traditional values of nationalism, meritocracy, and the American dream as solutions.

Even though the liberal patriarch and homo-normative gay man embrace some of the issues of multi-cultural and equality movements, neither cultural formation is critical of social structures and both center the White male injured hero. The liberal patriarch's solution is to be able to express emotion, yet not give away any White masculine privilege (i.e. be a sensitive but rich guy). The homo-normative gay White man, on the other hand, wants to advance conservative family values, corporate power, and militarism a la Peter Thiel (a gay, pro-Donald Trump, Silicon Valley billionaire). Moreover, all of these models of White masculinity have no critique of capitalism or individualism and promote ideas of success as being earned by competing in the (supposedly free) market. In fact, at the heart of each of these cultural formations is fear embodied by a social psychological fragility around issues of privilege and oppression.

Intersectional Consciousness in the context of White male fragility.

This presentation of this cultural landscape with system-legitimizing stories of masculinity aims to contextualize the findings of White men's defensive and hostile responses to social justice consciousness (Cabrera 2014; DiAngelo, 2011; Kimmel,

2013). The work of hegemony takes place at the level of ideology, and it also takes place in the structures of feeling (Williams, 1977), or social circulation of affect (Gould, 2009). Although the face of White masculinity changes with historical eras, hegemonic White masculinity makes claim to authority, entitlement, and centrality at the heart of the American story (Carroll, 2011). In other words, to be the hero. Challenges to this narrative elicit fear, anger, defensiveness, guilt, and shame in White male subjects, a structure of feelings called White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013). A society steeped in cultural messages of White superiority conditions White people to respond to racial/cultural difference with affects/feelings that range from shame and guilt to anger and frustration. Theorists of political emotion call this repertoire of White emotion “White habitus” (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). This affective circulation is triggered when conversations pertaining to race take place, which may be infrequent for many White people, hence White fragility is also called a lack of racial stamina (DiAngelo, 2011).

Most of the research on White fragility does not elaborate on gender, class, sexuality, ideology, and other differences among various groups of White people. Researchers theorize White fragility to be dialectically structured and structuring of White habitus, which would affect anyone interpolated as being White (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; DiAngelo, 2011). Yet, would social identities and political consciousness buffer certain White people while making other White people more susceptible to White fragility? Would White fragility be embodied differently for different groups of White people? For example, some White people who desire to be anti-racist seem

to fall into a type of White fragility in which they distance themselves from racist White people, creating a good Whites/bad Whites dichotomy (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Mayer, 1997). This response is less hostile than responses of anger, entitlement, and arrogance discussed by DiAngelo (2011), yet such a response reflects a us/them dualism, a distancing defense, and forecloses working with many other White people, which is at the heart of anti-racist praxis for White people.

In regards to gender, although as yet there has not been explicit theorizing on White male fragility, the cultural models described above may condition White male subjects to respond with a higher level of fragility based upon male privilege that narrates even more entitlement to benefits. Empirical research examining gender differences among respondents' reactions to Whiteness being made visible to them has shown that White men react more angrily and fearfully with less awareness of White privilege as compared with White women (Spanierman, Beard, & Todd, 2012; Spanierman, Todd, & Anderson, 2009). Kimmel (2013) calls this an aggrieved entitlement response. With this term he suggests that defensive, angry responses stem from a socialization and expectation to inherit dominant roles in society. When such expectations are threatened, anger and frustration arise, which are coupled for many men with a lack of emotional intelligence (that lack coming from masculine socialization to repress emotions) to deal with such emotions.

Fortunately, Melamed (2006) explains, "A hegemony is not an entire social formation" (p. 9). The cultural formations highlighted by Carroll (2011) do not represent all embodiments of White masculinity, merely the culturally dominant ones.

As noted, the key linkage between the hegemonic White masculinities is their shared effort to legitimize White cisheteropatriarchal relations. Although they represent a small group, radically anti-racist White men do exist. In a 16-year naturalistic inquiry study, during which researchers observed White people in various social settings such as professional conferences and institutions, places of worship, and at universities,⁵ they found about 1% of 1,200 observations were radically anti-racist (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1999). It is unclear from this literature whether White men can become radical anti-racist *and* feminist activists, yet anecdotal evidence provides reason for an exploration of such embodiments of White masculinity. bell hooks (1994) writes of her colleague Ron Scapp, “even though Ron is White and male (two locations that bestow specific powers and privileges) Understanding and appreciating our different locations has been a necessary framework for the building of professional and political solidarity between us, as well as for creating a space of emotional trust where intimacy and regard for one another can be nourished” (pp. 131-2). hooks delineates Whiteness and masculinity as socializing structures and not predetermined destinies. hooks (2004) writes elsewhere that White men should not be centered in anti-racist feminist movements, but anti-racist feminisms may contribute to their flourishing by fostering anti-racist feminist consciousness and solidarity practices. If this is possible, what are the social and psychological processes that White men undergo in developing anti-racist feminist consciousness? This question is taken up in this dissertation.

⁵ It did not seem that any observations were in progressive/radical organizing spaces.

Pedagogy for the Oppressor: Critical Consciousness and White men.

Conscientization is a process (socio-political, cognitive, and emotional) involving a “mobilization of consciousness” that produces knowledge of the social, historical, and political roots of oppression (Montero, 2009). Conscientization entails linking one's material experiences with the social, historical, and political contradictions that give rise to oppression. At an individual level, a person's particular standpoint has an intimate relationship to conscientization (Collins, 2000). Although White men's social positions affect their relationship to radical knowledge and conscientization process of thereby creating limitations, there are enough autobiographical and biographical stories (Crass, 2013; Cohen, 2009; Gilbert, 2012, hooks, 1994) to believe that White men can learn from radical social justice movements.

In this section, we will present a model of intersectional conscientization drawing together Freire's (2000) original concept with theoretical perspectives from women-of-Color consciousness (Anzaldúa, 2002a; Collins, 2000) and social psychology of social justice activism (Kieffer, 1984; Martín-Baró, 1994; Watts, Griffith, & Jagers, 2003). Connecting these bodies of literature, we present a working model of conscientization for this study that includes five key core concepts of the process. We will explain each of these five concepts, how they work together, and, based on the literature on White masculinity, what each of these five core concepts means for anti-racist feminist White masculinities (assuming such conjunctures can exist).

For Freire (2000) conscientization is an on-going cycle that includes *critical reflection* on one's life and the social injustice, *authentic dialogue* with others in social struggles, and *liberatory praxis* in the world in order to transform it.

Conscientization can be thought of as a developmental process of social justice consciousness, although not necessarily one that follows a linear path (Anzaldúa, 2002a; Kieffer, 1984; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). Five themes or core concepts predominate in the theorizing on conscientization that reflect social psychological development germane to the current study. These concepts are (a) sleeping/waking up, (b) turning points/ruptures, (c) the relationship of self to community, (d) the relationships among mind, body, and spirit, and (e) conversion, crossing, and identity. Within each of the following subsections that describe these concepts, we will discuss the particular relationship that embodying White masculinity has to the development of anti-racist feminist conscientization.

Sleeping/Waking up

Several empirical studies of activists contend that people start the conscientization process from psychological states characterized by feelings of powerlessness (Kieffer, 1984; Watts Williams, & Jagers, 2003). These feelings of powerlessness are both in relationship to one's self: self-blame, self-hatred, depression; to others: distrust, victim blaming, alienation; and to the larger society: accommodation to oppressive conditions, socio-political hopelessness, predatory behavior. Oftentimes these psychological states are held in place by ideological frames that present the world as unchangeable (Martín-Baró, 1994) and/or "just

world” beliefs that attribute inequities to differing “cultures,” values, and motivations among groups and individuals (Watts et. al, 2003).

Conscientization is likened to a process of then waking up to oppression in the world and/or that one has power to affect these systems of oppression. According to a feminist liberation approach:

Activists speak of conscientization as waking up to the injustice in the world – or seeing it for the first time. It is not that the injustice is beginning; it is that you encounter oppression, injustice, violence yourself, or you see it in a person or situation. You may have seen the same situation many times before, but for some reason you begin to connect the event with a deeper recognition that the injustice is wrong (de la Torre, 2013, p. 185.)

The word itself implies this waking up, and it can be translated as “to become conscious or aware.” Not only is this waking up to injustice, but to one’s own position in relationship to this injustice and the darkness or sleep of the powerlessness just described.

White men and sleeping/waking up.

In contemporary U.S. White-supremacist cisheteropatriarchy, within which colorblindness and post-racist ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), as well as gender blindness and minimization of sexism (Ferber, 2007) dominate, many White men are encouraged to ignore knowledge of injustice. Researchers refer to these states as White ignorance (Mills, 2007). Likewise, male privilege takes numerous institutional and embedded forms that most men take for granted (hooks, 2000). Akin to

theorizing on conscientization, many White anti-racist activists discuss the process of coming to see Whiteness and White privilege as, “waking up to Whiteness” (Irving, 2014). McIntosh’s (1989) famous essay on privilege details the many ways she receives privilege as being an *invisible* knapsack (invisible to her).

Although privileged by race and gender, White men may in fact suffer from fractured identities, identities that are “contradictory, as well as confused and anxiety-ridden, to an unprecedented extent” (Winant, 1996, p. 4). Even though the privilege of White masculinity may not be visible to many White men, the combination of legacies of White-supremacist cisheteropatriarchy with economic losses in the neoliberal era create a situation in which many White men are struggling economically and looking for answers (Melamed, 2006). Many are still expected to be bread-winners, saviors, and heroes, yet do not have the economic resources to do so. Sandoval (2000) argues that psychological fracturing caused by colonization is no longer solely a condition of those who have experienced colonization. Social justice movements, and the dominant culture’s backlash to them, create conditions in which the colonizer experiences confusion, alienation, and loss. Surely, confusion, alienation, and loss are predominant characteristics of Kimmel’s (2013) *Angry White Men*, the Tea Party, and many Trump supporters.

Turning points/Ruptures

If conscientization is an awakening to the suffering and injustices of the world, then this process is permeated by turning points/ruptures. Turning points are emotionally stirring events that redirect a person’s trajectory, a “profound rebirth”

(Freire, 2000, p. 61). Anzaldúa (2002a) calls turning points *arrebato*, or ruptures, highlighting that these events represent breaking from previously held beliefs and ways of being. An *arrebato* is, “a violent attack, a rift with a loved one, illness, death in the family, betrayal, systematic racism and marginalization. [Un *arrebato*] rips you from your familiar ‘home,’ casting you out of your personal Eden, showing something is lacking in your queendom” (Anzaldúa, 2002a, p. 546). Ruptures take place when a new belief or perspective disrupts previously held beliefs, and this conflict puts one’s beliefs and/or identity into crisis. Similarly, Warren (2010) describes such events *moral shocks*, which describe that these turning points strike at the level of a person’s morality. The turning points themselves are not typically pleasant; on the contrary, they can leave a person initially with a sense of loss, grief, confusion, and emptiness (Anzaldúa, 2002a).

Although some social justice activists may experience just a few major turning points, most experience many over the course of development. White (2008) found every participant in her sample of twenty Black, male feminist activists described multiple turning points in their paths to feminism. Turning points are core features of many identity models of social justice development (Helms, 1990; Todd & Abrams, 2013; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

Turning points and White men.

Hegemonic racial and gender regimes attempt to create a psychological state of being for dominant actors that represent the social order as stable and just (Connell, 2005). In fact, for White people, their possessive investments in Whiteness

may create such strong psychological attachments to racism that they do not view racist violence as violence (Lipsitz, 2006; Yancy & Butler, 2015). An obvious example of this is the White culture's "All Lives Matter" response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Thus, it seems for dominant actors, shocks, and often particularly strong and multiple shocks, are a core feature of conscientization. For example, one participant in White's (2008) study described being shot in the chest by his wife after abusing her as his first turning point toward feminism. Providing more evidence of the pervasiveness of turning points among dominant actor social justice activists, Warren (2010) found that forty-eight of the fifty White racial justice activist in his study described moral shocks in their development. As helpful as these studies are, none of them focus on the intersection of Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, clarifying why and how turning points lead to social justice or toward regressive political perspectives remains somewhat under-explored.

Self in Community

Turning points that lead to social justice are often influenced by how a person views themselves in relationship to a community, which is the third core feature of conscientization. Knowledge that one is a part of a community, may come through education, collective activities, and mentorship that facilitate integration of fractured sense of self. Self in community has two major aspects that foster conscientization: (a) learning and (b) sense of togetherness (Kieffer, 1984). It is within a community context that the elements of conscientization of reflection, dialogue, and action occur (Freire, 2000). Learning from others who are in the struggle for social justice in

places like schools, activist groups, gatherings, and one-on-one promote critical thinking, reflexivity, and structural perspectives on oppression and privilege. Yet, it is not only conceptual knowledge that one accrues in a community, but a felt sense of togetherness and joy that is crucial to conscientization. This is the feeling and the power Lorde (2007) calls the erotic. Conscientization connotes hope, action, and agency which arise from a sense of “we consciousness” (West, Buschendorf, 2014). Domination destroys relationships and creates a sense of isolation and loneliness; whereas relationships of love restore bonds and foster empowerment (hooks, 2004).

White men and community.

Cultural messages of White masculinity exalt rugged individualism, self-sufficiency, and man-as-an-island. White men predominantly view themselves as alone against the world and under siege by the Other (Cabrera, 2014; Kimmel, 2013). Even progressive White men often choose isolation as seen in Thoreau’s (1995) *Walden* and the life of Chris McCandless portrayed in Krakauer (1996). On the other hand, many White men showed expanded social justice consciousness and lasting relationships with people of Color and women after a semester of intensive Intergroup Dialogue, a program based in part in women-of-Color consciousness and Freirian pedagogy (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Because of the material and ideological privilege of Whiteness and masculinity described in previous sections, White men’s conscientization may be fostered by reading and formal education in ways that for women and people of Color may come through to experience. For White men who come from marginalized backgrounds and identities (e.g. working class, gay, trans

men), one's experiences may offer paths of empathy and consciousness of systems of domination.

Mind/Body/Spirit

The fourth core aspect of conscientization is the holistic learning that the process entails, which links the mind, the body, and the spirit. Conscientization is gaining conceptual knowledge (also called propositional knowledge) of history, oppression, and structures, yet the learning is much deeper and wider than cognitive learning alone (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). Transformation is in large part learning about and from affect. Referring back to turning points, it is the emotional quality of these breaks that makes them so salient. Not only is affect the bridge between our own minds and bodies, but also between our body and others' bodies.

Shotwell (2011) describes tacit or "common sense" knowledge, a type of knowledge that is connected to propositional and affective knowledge, but differs from both. Tacit knowledge is skill-based, "how to" knowledge that is often taken-for-granted, normalized, and may be difficult to put into words. Being able to ride a bike is an example of tacit knowledge. As with propositional and affective knowledge, conscientization relies on and transforms tacit knowledges. The feeling one has "in my bones," can assist or hinder learning about systems of oppression and taking action against them.

For many theorists of conscientization, liberation is not only mind and body but also spirit (Alexander, 2002; Anzaldúa, 2002a; Freire, 2000; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). In fact, Anzaldúa (2002) refers to the most advanced stage as

spiritual activism. This spirituality may or may not be connected to a notion of God but connects to living life with a higher purpose beyond one's material existence (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999).

White men and mind/body/spirit.

White men's possessive investments in the power and privilege of White masculinity are at the levels of mind, body, and spirit. In their study of anti-racist White activists, Perry and Shotwell (2009) explain that anti-racist education can only be effective in the long-term when addressing racism through all three forms of knowledge listed above – at the propositional (concepts of White supremacy), affective (felt sense of self as interconnected), and tacit (becoming aware of habits of racism). Furthermore, several studies of anti-racist White people have found that many in this small group of people express the importance of spirituality and spiritual connectedness in their development (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1999; Thompson, 2001). It is still the case that the majority of studies of anti-racism among Whites and feminism among men has not looked at holistic accounts of knowledge at these multiple levels of experience, meaning they have not taken an intersectional approach. This current study does just this.

Conversion, Crossing, and Identity

Conscientization theorists describe a process of conversion and crossing that signifies a deep commitment and identity transformation (Anzaldúa, 2002a; Freire, 2000). There is a sense of no going back as one crosses a bridge (or multiple bridges), which is “a boundary between the world you've just left and the one ahead

[and] is both a barrier and a point of transformation” (Anzaldúa, 2002a, p. 555).

From a psychological perspective, some call this the “era of commitment,” which entails a sense of mastery in the political world and teaching/mentoring others (Kieffer, 1984). One’s career, calling, and sense of purpose are driven by conscientization, liberation, and lifetime activism (Dutt & Grabe, 2014).

In fact, other scholars represent this conversion as an identity transformation. As Lorde (2007) famously called herself, “Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” (p. 40), the conversion can be one’s sense of self as inextricably connected to community’s struggle for liberation. In other words, the conversion represents a person’s self-definition as intimately connected to community and struggle.

Even though there is a sense of no going back, one still struggles with past struggles, trauma, and identities in a process called recycling (Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006). The crossing and commitment does not mean all previous internal and external conflicts have been resolved, but rather one has a commitment to continue to integrate and reconcile them in the context of social justice and liberation. According to Anzaldúa (2002a) even though *desconocimiento* (confusion, ignorance, and conflict) still arises, one has greater psychological flexibility, grounding in a supportive community, and knowledge of spiritual interconnectedness to support consciousness, healing, and survival.

White men and conversion, crossing, and identity.

Drawing from decades of studying women of Color feminism, Crass (2013) has written that for White men to engage in lifelong anti-racist feminist solidarity

three criteria must exist. The first is to understand their social position and how privilege affects them and everyone around them. In other words, this means developing anti-racist feminist critical consciousness. This includes the benefits they accrue, the internalized superiority that they likely have, and the ways that they are negatively impacted by systems of domination. They must navigate the contradiction of learning about these things from women and people of Color yet without expecting that women and people of Color will teach them. Interviewed in Thompson's (2001) study of anti-racist White activists, Mab Segrest highlights this challenge and a possible navigation route, "Women of color couldn't be expected or obligated to teach us anything. But I found when I was putting my life on the line – totally, seriously intent on what I was doing – I got an incredible range of help and mentoring from people of Color" (p. 212). Thus, perhaps when White men have engaged in other forms of social justice learning (e.g. reading or in school) and have committed to learning about privilege these bridges can be built.

Second, White men are socially positioned to work with other White men, and possibly other White people, in making the effects of racism and sexism visible in their lives. They must do this work even if it is deemed less attractive. Lastly, White men need to learn about caring labor and the mostly invisible labor that makes society, as well as social movements, work. Just as with education with other White people, White men must contribute to social movements with such caring and reproductive work.

Vis-à-vis Whiteness and masculinity as identities, their histories of domination may present continual conflicts for White men. White identity and masculine identities are intimately connected to domination and violence, and some believe that they are beyond rearticulation in a socially just sense (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Jensen, 2007). Lorde's positive affirmation of Black, lesbian, and mother seem unlikely for White men with their White masculinity, especially without a mass movement of anti-racist feminist White men (Thompson, 2001). Exploring these identity conflicts with White male activist seems to be a crucial area for building solidarity activism; we take this up in this dissertation.

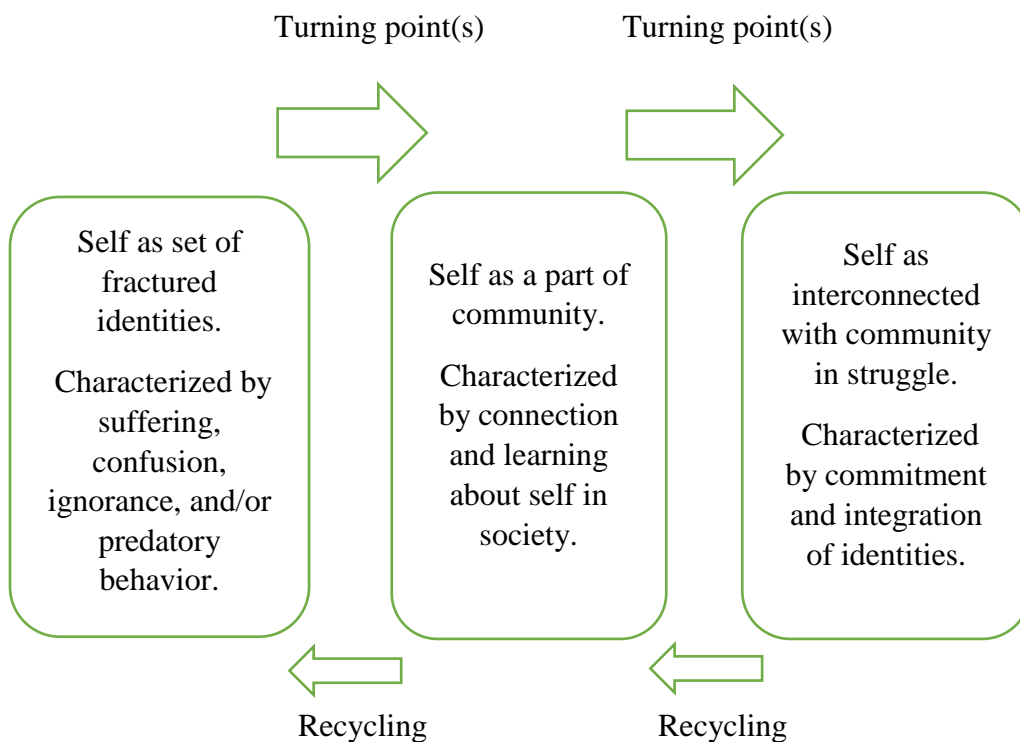
A Holistic Account of Conscientization

The foregoing account of conscientization presents the process as complex, lifelong, never-ending learning that incorporates all aspects of one's being: mind, body, and spirit. The following figure (see Figure 1.1 on the next page) attempts to represent this model of conscientization graphically, yet we acknowledge that such a complex process is difficult to simplify. The box on the left represents a psychological state of fractured identities, which often shows up in the literature as sleeping and/or powerlessness. The middle box represents a state of one's self interacting within a greater community, learning and receiving mentorship. The rightmost box represents a state of one's self inextricably linked to community(ies) in social justice struggles. The larger arrows over the boxes indicate turning points (ruptures, shocks), which represent movement between states. The smaller arrows below represent processes of recycling, which show that one may still work through

past issues, traumas, and conflicts. That the recycling arrows are smaller indicates not a full return to previous states. Although the figure may make the process seem like it is simple, linear, and singular; in reality the process is complex, moves in multiple directions, and is a never-ending process rather than ever having a completion.

Figure 1.1

Social Psychological Model of Conscientization



Intersectional Conscientization, Solidarity, and White Men

As we remarked in the beginning of this section, the privilege and socialization processes of White masculinity would seem to be strong preventative factors of conscientization for White men. As Kieffer (1984) indicates,

conscientization often starts with the reinterpretation of powerlessness through the lens of injustice, yet for many White men such a stage of powerlessness might not exist. And when such powerlessness does exist, the stories of White masculinity (heroes, patriarchs, and entitled to the kingdom) do not foster structural interpretations of injustice, rather they foster aggrieved entitlement. Yet, perhaps for White men who were exposed to social justice education in their youth akin to Intergroup Dialogue (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013) and/or who hold other marginalized identities (e.g. working-class, queer, disabled) conscientization, and in fact conscientization, could occur.

This study is an integration of these questions of White masculinities, conscientization, and solidarity. We are interested in intersectional solidarity from “the oppressor,” White men, in terms of what this looks like, how it feels (relationship to structures of feeling), and how activists arrive at this consciousness. Specifically, the following questions guide this study:

- How do White men who identify as anti-racist and feminist understand and narrate their life in relation to critical consciousness development?
- How do White men who identify as anti-racist and feminist understand and embody solidarity from their positionality?

The following chapters are organized around our investigation of these research questions. Chapter two outlines the epistemological groundings and methods that we utilized in this study. In chapter three, we present results of our analysis of the interviewees paths to intersectional consciousness. This will be a thematic

presentation of the influences and turning points in the interviewees' lives toward anti-racist feminist consciousness. Chapter four explores solidarity. We conceptualized interviewees' solidarity as social and psychological processes and practices at multiple levels of analysis. We describe this model through a thematic analysis of the interviews. In chapter five, we present some of the psychological tension points of doing solidarity from the social position of White and male. This chapter relies on the Listening Guide analysis focused on discourse and voice. In the concluding chapter, we present a synthesis of results and implications for theory and activism.

Chapter 2: Method

A Liberation Methodology

Research methodology depends on researchers' ontological and epistemological beliefs (Harding, 1991; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Our epistemological stance is rooted in liberation psychology, which is connected to a critical paradigm of science (Watkins & Shulman, 2008; White & Dotson, 2010). Liberation psychology posits that producing critical knowledge, knowledge that is marginalized by systems of domination and subversive to those systems, is the goal of research. In practice, this methodological approach centers the voices of oppressed groups who have traditionally been excluded from academic knowledge creation (Smith, 1999). While taking this into account, it is also important for liberation psychology approaches to understand the psychology of those who are privileged by society. In other words, the psychology of the oppressor.

Critical theory and methodology, specifically Black feminist thought and women of Color feminism, the perspectives that shape this dissertation, have been developed by researchers working with groups that face oppression and dispossession (Collins, 2000; Smith, 1999; White, 2008). We continue the argument made by others that a critical paradigm of science can be employed with privileged and powerful groups when certain principles and considerations are maintained (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008; Harding, 1991). These principles are reflexivity about power and privilege, aims toward abolition of systems of domination, and accountability to those most affected by the research. This is the approach of some of the work in critical

Whiteness studies (Frankenberg, 1993; Thompson, 2001) and feminist masculinity studies (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; White, 2008).

With these epistemological and methodological foundations in mind, we will describe the specific methods and techniques employed in this study. As we expounded on in the introduction, the empirical literature on White men's anti-racist, feminist conscientization is almost non-existent. In this section we will describe the recruitment and interviewing of a group of participants that fit the criteria of White men who are anti-racist and feminist. Also of note is that the data collection process created various power relationships (e.g. between myself, participants, and my research team); we will describe the various methods of reflexivity that we used to highlight these power relationships and their effects on the research. Following this, we outline and explain the analysis methodology and rationale; this includes a discussion of my research team and our use of the Listening Guide, a feminist method at the intersection of narrative and discourse analysis.

Design and Process

By asking research questions about the psychological development of a group about which there is little empirical research, Regina Langhout (my advisor) and I designed an in-depth, narrative-focused interview study. Inspired by White's (2008) interviews with African American feminist men and Frankenberg's (1993) interviews with White women about racial consciousness, we followed these researchers' paths of collecting rich stories of conscientization, i.e. developing radical political consciousness and enacting/embodying such consciousness. Moreover, the premise

that the tensions and challenges of solidarity from a social position that is privileged vis-à-vis at least two axes of power suggests that hearing stories of such tension would occur in such an interview setting.

Reflexivity by Design

Acknowledging and embracing the interconnectedness of subjectivity and objectivity means that practices of reflexivity are crucial to critical research and interviewing (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindal, 1994; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). In this study we use feminist interpretive epistemologies and value the concepts of trustworthiness, thick description, and reflexivity as markers of scientific rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Questions of power and privilege have been constant guiding questions that we have engaged with our dissertation committee and research team. Specifically, how a White man does anti-racist feminist research on/with other White men has been the focal reflexive question for this study. My own positionality as a mostly able-bodied, heteroflexible, White cis-man from a middle-class background who has been deeply affected by anti-racism and feminism is a central aspect and motivation for this research. My positionality gives me a certain access to other White men, while also creating limitations to consciousness that I must systematically attend to. One important aspect of reflexivity is highlighting power inequalities and addressing them. With this in mind, I have opened this project to the scrutiny of a larger research community. In practice, this included presenting this research with my advisors, colleagues, and various research gatherings in different settings in order to

include various critical perspectives. I have not tried to hide my intentions and my own positionality in relation to this research, but instead have called attention to them in the context of this project, and as a result I have received important feedback about many aspects of the project.

Another practice of reflexivity suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that has been particularly important for thinking through my subjective entanglements with the participants of the study and the larger community is journaling. While the study was in development and also throughout the interviewing and analysis processes, I have kept a reflexivity journal. I journaled before and after every interview; I also journaled at any time that I had any strong feelings related to the project. Reflexive concerns that I kept at the forefront were: ethical treatment of participants, my power as a researcher, whose voices are left out of this project, White male bonding in the interview space, and any other emotional experience that arose in the research.

Materials

The life-story interview structure is designed to generate stories that represent a person's evolving identity (McAdams, 1994; White, 2008). "In this model, each life story contains different features, some of which appear to remain relatively stable over the adult years while others do not. Life stories typically include turning points, pivotal for nuclear episodes, and key scenes (symbolic high or low points)" (White, 2008, p. 4). We designed an interview script from McAdam's script outline, revising it to focus on assessment of the developmental process of anti-racist feminist

consciousness through turning points and key scenes within the context of a participant's life course. See Appendix A for semi-structured interview protocol.

In addition to the conscientization questions and prompts, the interview protocol also included questions intended to focus on the meaning of solidarity, privilege, and power in the projects and lives of the participants. Drawing on similar projects in the White identity (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), masculinities (Connell, 2005; White, 2008), and solidarity (Gould, 2009) literatures, we constructed 10 additional questions for the second part of the interview. These questions had a focus not only on beliefs and practices, but also affective dimensions of solidarity across lines of race, class, gender, etc. difference.

Recruitment

Anti-racist feminist White men represent a small group, and thus it took a recruitment from other activists to find interviewees for this study. The following criteria, grounded in literature described in the introduction, guided the search for participants: each participant (1) can discuss at length and in-depth the story of their conscientization, (2) sees feminist and anti-racist activism as central to their activism, (3) sees feminism and anti-racist activism as central to their selfhood, and the sample will (4) represent a variety of class backgrounds, (5) represent a variety of sexual identities, (6) represent a variety of dis/abilities, and (7) represent a variety of vocations.

As important as the interviewees self-identifying with anti-racist feminism was that someone in their community sees them practicing self-reflexive solidarity.

Unfortunately, we did not have the resources to do ethnographic work to examine interviewees' community involvement. In order to have a small but meaningful sense that interviewees' activism resonates as anti-racist and feminist, we used a recruitment process. White (2008) utilized such a process by asking feminists in her network and feminist listservs to nominate (pro)feminist Black men. This recruitment method of reaching out to feminist women of Color is compelling, and we envisioned could add to the credibility of the accounts of solidarity activism within the interviews. At the same time, restricting nominators to anti-racist, feminist women of Color has the danger of essentializing women of Color as being the only group of people who know or can know what anti-racist feminism is. I balanced these perspectives and concerns while searching for nominators, using the following criteria as guidelines: (1) the majority of the participants for the study should be nominated by women or trans* people of Color and (2) this study is open to nominators who have a strong anti-racist, feminist consciousness. For example, I sought out nominations from my dissertation committee.

I also reached out to feminist, anti-racist organizations and groups. I contacted Af3irm, Brown Boi Project, Organization for Black Struggle, UCSC Women's Center, Save Wiyabi, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and the Freedom Socialist Party. Overall, I received two nominees in total from these organizations.

The process of reaching out to possible nominators, hearing back from them, identifying nominees and scheduling interviews was a slow but steady process. In the

course of five months, I recruited and interviewed sixteen people. Many of these people lived in California, especially the Bay Area, but I interviewed people living in Boston, Austin, and Toronto (via video chat). Thus in the end, this study resembled Frankenberg's (1993) study of 30 White women recruited exclusively from Santa Cruz and the Bay Area. The sample was highly diverse in terms of sexual identity, age, and areas of activism. There was also some diversity in terms of ethnicity (some interviewees identified as Jewish), education level (most had a B.A., some had M.A. and Ph.D.), disabilities, and gender identity (one man identified as transgender). See Table 2.1 (next page) for participants' demographic information.

Interviewing

At the interview, I discussed the overarching goals of the project and what interviewees could expect from the interview process itself. Before the interview I articulated the project's goals of: (1) researching and charting a mostly unexplored consciousness (feminism and anti-racism for White men), (2) the evolution of their political consciousness, and (3) utilizing this research with the aims of furthering liberation projects. I explained that their participation in the project was voluntary, and we were operated with constant consent, (i.e. they could stop at any point). I was also candid about my desire to look at their lives from multiple perspectives and examine the high and low points, that critique is an important part of this study with the aim of growth and determining where people may be challenged in this process, and thus they may be subject to critique in the analysis of their transcript.

Table 2.1

Participants

Name ⁶	Age	Self-identified Race/Ethnicity	Residence (county, state)	Self-identified Sexual iden.	Self-identified Gender iden.
Aaron	70	White	Santa Cruz, CA	Bisexual	Male
Adam	29	White, Ashkenazi Jewish	Suffolk, MA	Straight	Cis-male
Andy	22	White	Santa Cruz, CA	“man – that’s a good question”	Male
Bill	81	White	Santa Cruz, CA	Heterosexual	Male
Charles	30	White	San Francisco, CA	Straight	Male
Doug	43	White	Santa Cruz, CA	Straight	Male
Greg	38	Racialized as White ⁷	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Straight	Male
Harold	31	White	Alameda, CA	Gay	Male
James	57	White	Travis, TX	Hetero w/ homo past	Male
John	74	WASP	Monterrey, CA	Het-bi	M
Peter	50	White and Jewish	San Francisco, CA	Gay	Male (cis)
Rowan	35	White	Alameda, CA	Queer	Transgender FTM
Ryan	32	White/German-Irish	Santa Cruz, CA	Heterosexual/Bisexual	Male
Scott	19	White	Santa Cruz, CA	Hetero	Male
Tim	67	White, Ashkenazi Jewish	Alameda, CA	Heterosexual	male
Tyler	33	White	Alameda, CA	Gay	Male (cisgender)

⁶ These are all pseudonyms.

⁷ Also included: “7th generation English/United Loyalist on father's side arrived in "Canada" in 1790 - Ukrainian/Polish on mother's side arrived in "Canada" in 1905.”

The participants seemed to appreciate the chance to tell their life stories of activism and told richly detailed stories about their development of political consciousness. For some it was the first time that they made the connections of various influences in their life to their activism and outlook. For others they had told these stories before and had made some of the links in their development, yet almost everyone made new connections in the interview space. The interviews took place in private, comfortable locations either at the interviewee's residence, their workplace, or at my residence (see Figure 2.1 for a picture of one of the interviews "in the field"). They lasted about 2.5 hours with the shortest 1 hour and 48 minutes and the longest 4 hours and 1 minute.

The interviews were emotionally vulnerable spaces, and reflecting on the emotional aspects of power and research was central for me. Most interviewees told emotionally-charged stories of abuse, violence, guilt, and/or shame. Some interviewees cried, and at times I teared up. The last portion of the interview was time for interviewees to reflect on the interview and process the experience with me. I expressed gratitude for the depth of sharing, and many participants said that this experience of reflection and expression was a valuable experience for them.

Figure 2.1

In the Field



One of the interviews. Bob on left with one of the participants⁸.

Analysis Procedures and Processes

Research team.

Collaborating with a diverse and skilled research team was a crucial aspect of completing this study. The research team was comprised of myself and a group of nine undergraduate students trained in liberation psychology theory and methods. The team trained for a full quarter, reading the core texts of this study's literature review and discussing them in a seminar format, before doing any data analysis. An

⁸ Picture included with consent of interviewee. Courtesy of Jane Yett.

important part of our training was to understand and embrace a decolonizing stance toward the project, i.e. asking whether this research contributes to collective liberation. It was important to encourage this stance, so that the whole team felt able to give their perspective even if others (including me) disagreed. The research team was diverse in terms of gender, sexual, racial, and class social positions. Most of the research co-investigators were psychology majors; two were feminist studies majors and one majored in sociology.

Data analysis.

The research team transcribed all the audio files. We followed Briggs' (1986) suggestions for transcription in order to capture the high level of paralinguistic communications. For example, we included degree of pauses, excitement, and so-called filler words like “um” and “you know.” We did this in order to capture as much as possible of the affective qualities of the interview. In chapters three and four, we have edited these filler words out of the data presentation for readability sake. In chapter five, in which the affective quality is important for understanding voice, we have left the filler words in the excerpts.

We decided on the Listening Guide for an analytic guide and technique. The Listening Guide is an approach to analyzing qualitative data that highlights voice and relationship (Brown, 1998; Gillian, 2015; Koelsch, 2015; Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008). One strength of this approach is a fine-tuned focus on the participant’s “dialogical selves” and the multiple voices of harmony and conflict within each person. Because solidarity activism is full of challenging emotions like guilt, shame, and frustration

and because doing this work from social positions of privilege is full of contradictions, we thought the Guide's detailed focus on interviewees' discourse and multiple voices would be valuable to illuminate these possible tensions.

Practitioners of the Listening Guide encourage multiple systematic readings of each interview to assess the plot structure of the narrative and relationship between the participant's multiple voices (Brown 1998; Gillian, 2015). The listening of each interview is "guided" by questions rooted in research, in our case research on Whiteness, masculinities, and solidarity (See Appendix B for the Listening Guide prompts and instructions). Accordingly, we read every interview four times, "listening" from different prompts each time.

For the first listening we listened for the narrative plot, specifically the conscientization process of the interviewees (i.e. turning points, influence of relationships, introduction to activism, learning of solidarity). After this listening, we filled out a Listening Guide worksheet to note the various themes of the interview, and our emotional response the interviewee, to their stories, and dynamics of the interviewee to the interviewer (See Appendix C for this worksheet template).

Gilligan (2015), in line with a transformational paradigm of science, encourages analysts to reflect on their emotions and their own social positions in relationship to the interviewee in order to highlight reflexivity and the interpretive nature of analysis.

In the second and third listenings, we paid attention to the voices of the interviewee and the relationship of the voices to one another. This consisted of creating "voice poems" for sections of the interview during which the interviewee had

conflict and/or identity issues arose. Then, we looked at the “voice poems” and examined the content, form, and rhythm of these poems across the whole interview. (I will present voice poems in chapter 5 and will explain their structure and criteria for construction further in the introduction of that chapter).

After conceptualizing the interviewee’s set of voices, we came together as a research team and discussed our Listening Guide worksheets. We compared: (a) the various themes of conscientization and solidarity practices/beliefs, and (b) the set of voices that we conceptualized from our listenings. This served as a type of consensus coding process – we included only themes and voices that everyone agreed upon. This process offers a way to incorporate various perspectives from various positionalities into the overall analysis. The fourth listening took place after we assessed the various themes across the interviews, and then listened to the entire corpus of data, asking the questions: (a) what evidence is there for these interpretations and (b) in what ways does each interviewee embody or not embody these themes?

Member checks.

Based in an effort to both be reflexive of researcher power and to enhance validity (Simpson & Quiqley, 2016), I conducted member checks with the interviewees. After the Listening Guide analysis by the research team and analysis write up, I provided the entire transcript, transcript excerpts, and analysis to the interviewees. I prefaced this by explaining that this research does not assume to produce “T”ruth, but rather the interpretations are based in the research team's lived

experiences and the methods of this study. Further, I explained that the interviewee might have a different interpretation, especially if there is more to know about the excerpt than what is on the transcribed page. Further, if there is a difference I would like to discuss that and affirm their perspective.

By and large, the interviewees appreciated the member check and said that the research team analysis was fine. In a few cases, interviewees wanted to fill in some background of their excerpt, and we have included these comments in footnotes. Before doing the member checks, I was both excited and nervous. Outside of participatory action research, to have participants have such an opportunity to comment is uncommon. That being said, we are not under the idea that doing so totally equalizes power between researcher and participant as the participants may not have the time or energy to comment and/or I am still the institutionally-based researcher with all the power relations that entails. Nevertheless, this practice is important in its efforts to share power in a situation limited by institutional separation.

Chapter 3: Conscientization: Anti-racist Feminist Education

The guiding research question for this chapter is how the interviewees describe and make sense of their anti-racist feminist development/conscientization. As explained in the introduction, the term conscientization denotes a process of learning critical consciousness *and* putting that consciousness into action/praxis. In taking a phenomenological approach, we follow White (2008) who suggests that “what actually happens” in one's life matters, but ultimately it matters more how a person chooses to remember and understand one's life history. On the one hand, each person's self-analysis is complex and unique to that person. At the same time, it was evident during the interview and analysis phases that robust themes and patterns could be seen across the interviewees' stories and their interpretations of those stories.

Following Miles and Huberman's (1984) qualitative data organization techniques, our research team constructed data displays to visually map each interviewee's life stories from our Listening Guide worksheets. Each data display included a basic visual image of each interviewee, his/their family, peer group, socio-economic background, and influential events and turning points in their life, coded as either contamination, redemption, and/or peak. Narrative psychologists have argued that the heuristic of contamination/redemption/peak is a common narrative structure in Western cultures (McAdams, 1994; White, 2008). Contamination stories are narratives in which an event causes a previous positive outlook to shift to a negative, ruined, or sullied emotional state. A redemption story is structured in the reverse, in

which a struggle transforms into a positive outcome. A peak story follows an event in which the person enters with a positive outlook and leaves with a positive view.

Similar to White's (2008) study of Black male feminist activists, each interviewee's data display contained all three types of turning points.

This chapter is a thematic analysis of turning points and important influences on this group of interviewees vis-a-vis anti-racist feminist consciousness. The interviewees talked about this development as a continual, lifelong process. This development brought interviewees to awareness and confrontations with power, privilege, and oppression associated with Whiteness and masculinity. Based upon our thematic analysis, this chapter is organized to trace developmental paths to radical consciousness expressed by the interviewees. Presenting these themes will highlight both the *content* (“*the what*”) and *form* (“*the how*”) of the learning. In other words, the content is awareness of power and privilege, and the form is interactions in which transformation takes place. For ease of reading, in this chapter the headers are organized by the form, yet I discuss the content within and during the discussion section.

Origins

Most interviewees started their narrative of anti-racist feminist conscientization with stories of their childhood, family, and friends growing up. The participants came from a diverse range of family backgrounds and early childhood experiences. Some grew up in families with two parents living in the same home; others were raised by single mothers. Some of the interviewees grew up with

conservative parents, others with progressive parents, and some had parents who were activists. Most of the interviewees grew up in predominantly or nearly all White neighborhoods and schools, but some of the participants grew up in racially diverse neighborhoods, schools, and remembered having mostly friends of color. This diversity of background experiences indicates that there is no one background or path to this anti-racist feminism.

Marginalization and Abuse

Their family situations and social backgrounds differed, however a common theme that predominated the early life narratives of the interviewees was around abuse and marginalization. The marginalization that some of these men faced as boys can be accurately called oppression in the forms of ableism and heterosexism. For instance, Aaron described having a subordinated path to manhood and an underdog perspective because of acquiring polio and facing ableism at a young age:

I have to start as a young child because I had polio when I was eight months old, and I think I would have been a very different person if I didn't have polio. Having had polio, I see – I have physical weakness but also realize that I am not a jock out there and I could have been, who knows? And you know different kind of lifestyles help create different viewpoints on life, and for me it was feeling like the underdog, maybe because I was a person with a disability. But the underdog – it was really important to make sure I paid attention, to people who didn't have all the privileges that everybody else had.

Aaron traced a life-path from experiencing the world with polio to a lifestyle outside the boy norm (being a jock) to viewing it critically as an outsider. Masculinity and ableism are deeply intertwined power structures; male bodies that do not represent strength and toughness receive social, psychological, and sometimes physical violence (Saczkowski, 2011). Similarly, to Aaron, John noted that his ability to embody an alternative masculinity as a boy and later as a man was rooted in his birth injuries, which prompted his family to enroll him in dance classes, a more female-centered environment:

I was *badly* injured at birth with forceps. Optical damage, optical nerve damage, vagus nerve damage, so I was a wobbly kid. I had trouble with, getting balance and coordination, all that kind of stuff. So my parents didn't know what to do, so I had this departure from boydom, where I was sent to dancing school to get coordinated. Well, dancing school means you're with girls when you're not supposed to be. So for the next seven years I was going from little league to dancing school – I had that kind of thing going on. But I was building friendships with girls when it wasn't allowed. So that was a significant kind of like-- *set me apart* from all the other boys who, when it came time to objectify girls.

John was viewed as less-than for being a “wobbly kid” and “had this departure from boydom.” On the one hand, this represents a marginalization, yet on the other hand John noted that this prompted his critical consciousness of masculinity. John noted

later that he would not contribute to the objectification of women in high school precisely because of his friendships to girls, which started in dance class.

Other interviewees facing heterosexism followed a similar marginalization and had an outsider perspective pattern. Scholars have argued that heterosexism is the core logic of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003). Tyler struggled with shame as a boy knowing that he was gay and thinking he would therefore go to hell. As a teenager he shared this struggle with a youth leader in his church, only to be betrayed as this leader made his sexuality public. In the interview, Tyler related that his radical consciousness was connected to growing up gay and his community therefore rejecting him:

I left after that. I said to them you know this feels like a violation of the confidentiality that we talked about and it really hurts me that you've known me since I was a child and you would question my integrity or my motivations or act like I'm not trustworthy to be around children. So I left, and I'm at the moment I'm reflecting that the question here that you're posing is really about the development of an anti-racist and a feminist disposition in the world, and I can't, I don't know how to reflect on that without talking about my experiences growing up gay, although the curious thing to me is how many gay White men turn out to not have an anti-racist or feminist perspective so but this is true for me and it's part of my development.

Tyler articulated being gay and facing heterosexism to his eventual anti-racist feminist development. About half the interviewees put their development in the following sequence: having a stigmatized identity (either disabled and/or queer), being ostracized or feeling different from others because of this, and these being the first feelings of being different and seeing the world differently from one's peers and/or family. This conforms well to research on other groups (women, Jewish people, and Black lesbians) who have had a parallel path from stigmatization to critical consciousness (Unger, 2000; Hall & Fine, 2005).

Interestingly, other interviewees faced this type of marginalization even though they did not identify as being gay or disabled. Ryan described facing heterosexism in middle school and the effects:

I started to face a lot of harassment that was based on perceptions of my sexuality, so I got targeted pretty fiercely I think more than a lot of other people at my school and mostly just like called a faggot and socially ostracized at times. The bus would always be half full when I got on it so I would have to sit next to somebody but nobody would want to sit next to me so it was always like a part of the day that I dreaded; getting on the bus and figuring out where I was going to sit and having everyone make a big deal about not wanting to sit next to me. That kind of took on a more like sexuality based thing around sixth grade and lasted through middle school at least. I actually ended up going to a private school in eighth grade because there was so

many things that happened in seventh grade [like] graffiti around the school that named me.

Considering that Ryan was not gay but faced intense bullying based upon his perceived sexual identity may demonstrate the pervasive effects of heterosexism on mainstream boy culture. Kimmel and Mahler (2003) argue that this represents heterosexism as a building block of masculinity and male socialization. More specifically, that acting outside the strictures of the “man box” – being tough, strong, and not “like a girl” – means being gay and subject to marginalization and violence.

John summarized the youth marginality described by many of the interviewees succinctly saying that “the mainstream child rearing of boys is socially sanctioned child abuse.” The abuse faced by these interviewees included violence in the home, by peers, and in school. As John's quote suggests, and indicated in each of the excerpts, this violence is precisely connected with what it means to be a boy. The stories signal that those who differ from the gendered norms structured around able-bodiedness, heterosexuality, and conformity risk violence and ostracism.

This is not to say that facing this violence is a necessary prerequisite for a radical consciousness. For those interviewees who did not talk about their boyhood in terms of marginalization, having progressive parents, progressive teachers, having friends of Color and/or female friends were all factors referenced as contributing to the beginnings of anti-racist feminist consciousness. Indeed, these factors also played a crucial role for the men who talked about facing violence in childhood. These themes will be discussed in the following section.

Furthermore, suggesting that facing marginalization and violence automatically leads to radical consciousness would be a mistake. Facing violence and abuse is likely built into the fabric of growing up for boys (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003), yet the majority of boys do not learn feminist or anti-racist consciousness.

It defies common sense notions (Carroll, 2011; Dyer, 1997) to think of White men as victims of social/cultural marginalization and abuse. Even many feminist frames conceptualize White heterosexual masculinity simply as an oppressor category (Pfeil, 1995). It was, therefore, somewhat surprising to encounter marginalization from the interviewees as they recounted stories of growing up. In fact, nearly every interviewee described stories of either marginalization, abuse, or both. This high level of prevalence is supported by research. For example, a recent meta-analysis shows that 1 in 3 children are victims of bullying; boys are twice as likely as girls to be bullied; and Whites are about as likely as Blacks and Latinos to be victims. Further, those most likely to be victims are children perceived to be disabled and/or LGBT (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). Because I asked the interviewees specifically to tell me about the development of their critical consciousness and that they rooted this development in marginalization, this would suggest that this marginalization follows the theoretical framework of *radical marginality* (Hall & Fine, 2005). Radical marginality posits that marginality creates the conditions for experiencing the dominant culture as both an insider and outsider, and activism can develop when a person rejects the norms and prescriptions of the dominant group.

One aspect of radical marginality is that the experience of marginality offers a location outside the center for viewing power structures. A second aspect is having a framework for understanding the experience of marginalization in order to promote progressive growth. In this vein, the interviewees discussed finding a community with which to make sense of the pain was a central aspect of healing and learning about the roots of that pain. In the following section, the interviewees discuss their *radical education*, as I call it, especially learning from within a community and from adult or peer mentorship.

Radical Education: Interpretive Community, Mentorship, and Action

Learning about and embodying an anti-racist feminist praxis is a long and never-ending process. Most of the interviewees talked about a gradual process marked by turning points along the way. Some of the interviewees talked about this process with metaphors of “waking up” and “being lit on fire.” For others it started with early curiosity and a slow, growing commitment over many years. Three of the interconnected themes that interviewees discussed were (a) learning in community, (b) having mentorship in the process of learning, and (c) taking action. These themes resonate with similar themes traced in the introduction in studies of “empowered activists” (Kieffer, 1984), anti-racist White activists (Perry & Shotwell, 2009; Warren, 2010), and feminist activists (Anzaldúa, 2002a; White, 2008). An aspect of the current study that is novel to this literature is that the content of this learning is specific to both Whiteness and masculinity. In other words, the radical education

within community, with mentors and taking action revolved specifically around the social and personal violence (including the privilege) of White masculinity.

Learning in Community

Marginalization in and of itself is not positive and does not directly lead to critical consciousness, but rather creates a cognitive and emotional readiness to think outside of hegemony (Unger, 2000). Developing a framework for making sense of marginality for many of the activists in this study included doing so in a community of other activists. Carrying on Ryan's story from above that included being ostracized for being perceived as gay, Ryan continued that in high school a community of other students interested in social change helped him to feel accepted and, important in terms of critical consciousness, not only accepted but that what he learned from being ostracized had value in political change. The feelings of marginality never fully went away for him, and in high school, he helped to start an anti-oppression study group:

It was in high school that I was part of starting an anti-racist discussion group and I think we had visions of being an Anti-Racist Action chapter but we didn't really know what we were doing and we didn't really have a very powerful analysis yet so it actually became [a group] more for us than it was for fighting racism outside of our group. It was getting together, and a couple times we would have speakers come and talk to us about different things, and that was positive. It was interesting because it was sort of like practice for organizing, I don't feel like we organized much but some of the things

that we did I now do as a part of community organizing mostly like having meetings and getting people together to try to do something.

Somewhat similarly, Adam described the importance of finding an activist community in high school to his personal and political development. Adam talked about growing up in a neighborhood in Boston in which most of the students at his elementary school were children of Color. Moving to a mostly White middle school was a “confusing,” “traumatic,” and “angry” experience for him. Joining a multi-racial, social justice-oriented gardening project helped Adam make sense of racism and White identity:

I was then spending my summers and some amount of after school and evening time at the Food Project which was an extremely multi-racial community and culturally felt much more imbued with more urban culture which felt more comfortable to me.... I think I was grappling with that – really about [that] I know I’m White but I don’t really like these other White kids and I don’t really identify with them culturally but now I live in the suburbs so I’m like, considered White and suburban, but I’m also Jewish. I think the Food Project program as the first place where I learned any sort of analytical language to talk about this.

Adam's experience is somewhat unique for a White person in the sense that he grew up with children of Color, and in moving to a mostly White middle school some aspects of Whiteness were already visible to him. He spent four years in this food

justice group and mentions it as a major turning point in his life. In this excerpt, Adam described the “now-you-see-it, now-you-don't” slipperiness of Whiteness for White people (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). According to some scholars, for White people to learn about racism and anti-racism, the learning must come *conceptually* through propositional knowledge (i.e. knowledge that can be expressed in words and evaluated by reason), *emotionally* through relationships and heart work, and *tacitly* through experience and activism (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). Some of this work is internal, but each of these components requires work in and support from a community. Although Adam seems young at age fourteen in joining this program and doing social justice work, some other interviewees were this age when starting to learn about White and male privilege as well.

For others, learning language and frameworks to interpret privilege came later. For example, James discussed learning about feminism with an anti-pornography activist group for the first time in graduate school. In particular, he explained that a fellow activist explained to him about a sexist joke he had made:

It was all the women in the group. They were really serious about holding men accountable, but it was in a spirit of collaboration, I never felt like I was being, you know, harangued or slapped around. It was: this isn't right, you can't do this, if you wanna be part of this movement, here are the rules, and all of the women I worked with were so down to earth like that, so grounded, so aware of how men were a part, but they were part of it in a very specific way with very

clear rules, and I look back and I feel so lucky about the people I first met.

James' narrative shows the group was a site in which his privilege was called out. James deeply valued the time and energy these women took with him in the early stages of learning about feminism. As this excerpt suggests, this process is not always easy. Doing emotional work in social justice movements entails seeing the political aspects of one's oppression, but it also entails seeing one's own privilege and the effects of that privilege on others. Being a part of a highly privileged group, White men typically have a very difficult time in hearing about privilege, especially their own (Cabrera, 2014; Kimmel, 2013).

Groups that give new activists a balance of exploring both oppression and privilege can be crucial to help work through the initial resistance to learning about one's own privilege. Research suggests that for members of dominant groups learning about the violent effects of domination on oppressed groups be complimented with within-group caucusing (i.e. White people making sense of anti-racism with other White people) and coalitional across-group activism that centers the leadership of marginalized groups (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Of course, such groups are rare and may not be accessible (due to geography and class barriers) for every person.

Mentorship

It would be hard to overstate the role of mentorship in the interviewees' lives; mentorship was the most commonly named factor in the interviewees' life

stories. Two aspects of mentorship brought forth in the interviews were providing access to radical education and supporting with conflicts that arose. The role of mentorship in the development of a long term commitment to activism has been studied by others (Kieffer, 1984; White, 2008). In the current study, mentors let many of the interviewees know that they do have a place in social justice movements while clarifying that they have particular work and responsibilities to do as White men, thus speaking to the necessary balance discussed in the previous section.

Charles talked about entering high school angry, rebellious, and never having had success in school. A turning point for Charles was taking a philosophy class all four years of high school, and in particular learning and developing a relationship with the teacher:

I had a philosophy class there *that* was really life changing. And it really opened up my mind to explore things, explore ideas, examine and analyze the world that we live in in a way that I had never done before. And that was interesting too because that class was taught by this teacher from Nicaragua, and he had a very difficult experience. His family had to leave there because of the war there. He came with his perspective that was definitely not like just a White privilege perspective, which I think is a problem in some philosophy classes, like in at the college level especially when you get these White kids who just like to hear themselves talk. And think they're like pseudo-intellectuals, but they're not really coming from real experience, it's all

very heavy. But the key was coming in really grounded and we were really talking about just the real stuff. What's really going on in the world, really analyzing it honestly. And so he was a really good mentor in my life.

Charles' teacher was able to present a vision of the world in which Charles felt he had a place in social justice movements, while not reproducing Whiteness or masculinist versions of those movements. Other studies of long-time anti-racist White activists have found mentorship from people of Color nearly universal in their life-stories (Thompson, 2001; Warren, 2010). Several interviewees described at length the impact that teachers and movement elders had on their anti-racist development, especially from people of Color and some from White activists, too.

Mentorship can come in different forms, and for some interviewees mentorship came from peers and friends. Scott talked about the importance of a female friend in his life that acted in a mentorship role. Before this excerpt, he mentions that he was in a vulnerable place in his life struggling with interpreting new experiences in his first year of college:

I've talked to her about this a little bit but maybe I should talk to her more about it. Like how influential overall she played in my life actually which is pretty cool. I remember talking to her a lot about patriarchy and sexism too because she's a feminist, a militant feminist, too, and I always like *really* wanted to just hear everything she had to say, but I think at times, it was too much. I think at times

she just read some things, one of those situations where I felt like I have the privilege to just ask her and she was going to respond to me and answer me. So I remember like reflecting on that later on in that year and my understanding deepened about that as well slowly throughout that year.

Scott's narrative speaks to the complexity of activist group spaces (i.e. spaces to make sense of one's own pain while being made aware of one's own privilege). Mentorship is a key aspect in balancing these complexities, which can seem like contradictions to privileged actors. Scott's mentor challenged his previous paradigms for understanding social change and his role in it. Over time Scott's eagerness to talk about these themes grew so much that it seems like he may have somewhat overstepped his friend's boundaries. Yet, in line with a feminist analysis, he began to see that it was his responsibility to continue to find other sources to inform himself about oppression and privilege. Previous research has demonstrated the importance of feminist women as peers and mentors to men who are open to learning about feminism (White, 2008). Mentorship can be an intellectual compass in figuring out the complexities of privilege and oppression, while feeling emotionally instructive and affirming (Kieffer, 1984).

Reading and Formal Education

Reflection and self-critique within a community is a process of learning from many relationships. It is also a process of learning from reading and engaging media like film and radio (Anzaldúa, 2002a). The interviewees were a highly educated

group; every person had a B.A. except for Scott who is an undergraduate at a university. This is high relative to the general population and to White men in the U.S. -- both groups are around 30% with B.A. or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Interestingly, most did not describe learning from university courses or from reading anti-racist and/or feminist books. Some of the interviewees mentioned that they read anti-racist and/or feminist authors, however very few elaborated on the importance of books. Scott, for example, brought a few of his favorite books (topics in the Black radical tradition, e.g. Ella Baker) to the interview, however only briefly talked about them in the interview.

James did describe the importance of reading feminist authors in his development. Before the interview he mentioned he had read Audre Lorde, and so I asked him about this:

The writing [that he has read] has been mostly White feminists, the anti-pornography movement has been defined by and still mostly pushed forward by White women. So, because that was my entry point that's the dominant literature that I've encountered, but along the way you can't help but realize there are these crucial thinkers. Audre Lorde is one of them. Angela Davis is one of them. When I was in grad school, there was a collection, This Bridge is My Back (sic.), which was the foundational women of Color in feminism collection, and Cherríe Moraga and people like that, Gloria Anzaldúa. There was a feminist philosopher when I was there at a small college, who was part of the group of women I was studying with. So it was literally a personal

connection. She wrote a couple of essays that were really powerful. It's like anything else when you're White, you have to go make sure you're looking for it, and I do and there are things that are really important, and all of that literature has been important.

Likely many more of the interviewees have read anti-racist feminist literature, and it is an important component of their consciousness development. I typically did not ask this question directly in the interview. Moreover, it seems likely that for most people in a life history interview key relationships and events in one's life would stand out more vividly than reading. The duality of highly educated participants speaking on the one hand directly to the influence of relationships and on the other mostly downplaying reading and formal education is paralleled in related studies (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; White, 2008). For White men to learn about oppression, it is hard to imagine reading not being a part of the process. This represents an important follow up for this study.

Taking Action: Commitment and Integration

A consistent theme discussed by nearly all of the participants was deepening their own involvement with social movements by taking action. Taking action meant something different for each person based on their ability, beliefs, and social position, yet the commonality was the commitment to push one's self further based upon social justice beliefs, and this action leading to turning points in many of these interviewees' lives. Kieffer (1984) conceptualizes the latter phase of empowerment consciousness as the "era of integration" and the "era of commitment," during which activists

integrate their learning and master their skills through taking action on the contradictions of inequality. At this level, activists deepen their commitments and fundamentally shift their sense of self in relationship to socio-political structures. In other words, there is no going back to life without commitments to social justice.

Bill, as a young pastor and activist, talked about the importance of progressive elder pastors in mentoring him to do racial justice work. After a time under their tutelage, he described the importance of taking his work to the next level by participating in mass actions and social movement organizing:

And then I got ordained and went to serve a parish in Tuscon, Arizona where a couple of really good liberal pastors, progressive pastors took me under their wing and getting involved in race stuff in Tuscon, and then by '65 I was ready to invest myself in the Civil Rights movement. I went to Selma and marched to Montgomery and then went to Chicago and started getting community organizing training from Saul Alinsky and his group and then came back to Oakland and I worked for Dr. King in Chicago while I was there when he came for the Chicago Summer, and so I then I was totally immersed, that was my total immersion.

Bill's taking steps to go to Selma and to Chicago to do organizing led to his "total immersion" in racial justice work. Bill helped to organize twenty-two marches, did workshops in various communities, and talked about a deepened commitment. At the end of this cycle of activism, Bill said "Stokely Carmichael in no uncertain terms told

us to go home get out of the ghetto and go free our own people.” For Bill this started a new cycle of learning to move from an approach of saving Black people to one focused on addressing racism in White communities and institutions.

Taking action had many consequences for interviewees. Often, taking action had a rippling effect in leading to more action, deeper consciousness, and new relationships/solidarities. Ryan described getting arrested for a political action and his time in jail deeply affecting him, not only for being incarcerated but also for meeting a comrade who altered his relationship to his Whiteness there:

When I was in jail one of my cell mates was a slightly younger Black man, and he wasn't a cellmate, but he was on the block I was on, so we talked during lunch and things like that. And I got his contact information and stayed in touch afterwards, and I ended up doing jail support for him off and on for the past 7 years. But early on when I was visiting him or when he was out sporadically when we would spend time together it was challenging sometimes because of our very clear cultural differences and my own discomforts and unsureness about how to act and what was okay and what wasn't. And I talked to a friend of mine about it and through that discussion it's obvious that deciding to not spend time with someone because they're culturally different from you is the more racist thing to do, and it's better to sort of be present and lean into that discomfort and do the best that you can and bring your true self, and be willing to make mistakes and through that

you'll have a more genuine understanding of each other and be more genuinely less racist.

Being in jail afforded Ryan an opportunity to challenge his Whiteness by forming a relationship with a Black man. It seems like theoretically Ryan wanted to engage this relationship, while at the same time he did not know how to embody an anti-racist relationship. Through mentorship, Ryan was able to learn and maintain a commitment to the discomfort of anti-racist work while trying to work on his own racism, or embrace being an “anti-racist racist” (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013)⁹. We do not mean to imply that White men should seek out such relationship, in which they will likely commit micro-aggressions or worse. The point here is action (protest and arrest) can lead to more action, growth (often through mistakes), and hopefully reflexivity about those mistakes.

The content of the mentorship, action, and learning matters for the type of consciousness that the interviewee develops. Rowan discussed learning about intersectionality in a gender studies course, and then learning how it works from forming a coalition and fighting Islamophobic discrimination in the university context:

⁹ After a member check, Ryan added in an e-mail message, “just to be clear, this convo was with a peer so I consider it more a comradely discussion from which I gained insight from my comrade, who was also a person of color, as opposed to an elder or mentor or something. I don’t know if this effects the analysis, but as a point of clarity the person on my block wasn’t there for protest. He was in for burglary, so, while protesting led me to be in jail and meet him and while my engagement in anti-racist activities gave me a ground work for thinking about my friendship with him, it wasn’t like ‘we protested together, than were in jail together, then worked out being buds.’ Again, not sure it matters, just wanting to be clear.”

I feel the first time that I learned about Black feminist theory and specifically about the concept of intersectionality was in a gender course I took in college, and I think my involvement with No One is Illegal and Solidarity Across Borders was one of the first times where the rubber hit the road so to speak. I remember I was an undergrad at McGill University and you probably remember like a decade ago in France when they banned Muslim women from wearing hijab... And so one of the things that we talked about was like how to use the gender non-discrimination clause that was part of the university's non-discrimination policy to say that like the banning of hijab is not only racist and xenophobic but it represents a form of gender oppression. And so I was part of this group called transgender alliance and so we were having meetings to talk about how to talk about the implications of that and how to be in solidarity and I remember those being really fruitful conversations. And, I think it's really important what came out of that – trying to see how I don't know just in the limitation of any kind of like policy reform change how to do that in a way where, and I feel this is a question that comes up a lot, how do you write policy or apply policy in a way that like, benefits one group without fucking over or further harming a group of other people. So, I think it was a moment of consciousness raising.

The cornerstone of anti-racist feminism is having an intersectional analysis of social structures and identities (Collins, 2000; White, 2008). This excerpt from Rowan's interview brings many of the aspects of anti-racist feminist development discussed here together. First, he entered this learning from organizing around his own marginalization (as trans). Concurrently, he made initial intersectional connections through reading Black feminism. Then, he deepened his consciousness and integrated theory and experience through taking action with a community. Moreover, this excerpt furthers the argument developed in the previous sub-section that academic work and/or reading prepares one for taking action, yet interviewees narrate relationships and direct action as the most salient aspects of their experience.

Discussion

It is striking that White men in this study narrate a path to critical consciousness from origins of marginalization and violence and an overall path that has similarities to racially and gender diverse activists' paths to empowerment (Kieffer, 1984), Black men's path to feminism (White, 2008), and even women of Color's path to spiritual activism (Anzaldúa, 2002a). Certainly, this path is not set with the same obstacles or embodied in the same way as for those who face racism and sexism. Noting the similarities and differences is important. In terms of similarities, the themes of overcoming violence, positive marginality, learning in community, receiving mentorship, reading anti-racist feminist texts, and deepening/integrating through action are all consistent with this previous literature (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuñiga, 2013; Kieffer, 1984; White, 2008). The key differences

are benefiting from and becoming reflexive of and accountable to Whiteness and masculinity.

The interviewees viewed their histories of abuse and marginalization as significant in their development in anti-racist feminism. Looking back on their lives, many found inspiration and pride in the hardships they faced. Yet, more than that, they indicated feeling pushed to the margins was important for developing an outsider's perspective. Many connected being an outsider with questioning norms and critical thinking, which they represented as the groundwork for embracing anti-racist and feminist perspectives.

Taken at face value, it was surprising to hear about so much abuse and feelings of ostracism. However, considering the intersecting systems of imperialist White supremacist capitalist cisheteropatriarchy and the violence they produce, perhaps this should not be surprising (Collins, 2000). For half (8 interviewees) having an oppressed identity, either LGBT or disability, were salient aspects of their radical marginality. For many of the rest, gender performance in childhood and being read as gay lead to marginality. Although other studies of anti-racist White activists (Thompson, 2001) and male feminists (Christian, 1994; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016) discuss activist's working class backgrounds as important aspects of their radical consciousness, the interviewees in this sample were mostly middle class or lower middle class and did not discuss class consciousness leading to anti-racist and/or feminist consciousness.

Adding to the argument of childhood alone as being a sufficient condition for experiences of marginalization (although not sufficient of positive marginality), children of all racial and class groups face staggering rates of bullying and marginalization at school (Cook et. al, 2010). Even for those who are privileged by their race and gender, that privilege comes with a price, and the boyhood cultures within which many of interviewees grew up were laden with internal hierarchies and violence (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 2013). From the perspective of building coalitions this may indicate that there are more possibilities to build solidarities that social justice movements might initially imagine.

Put in the context of outcomes of youth violence and marginalization, much of that literature predicts outcomes perpetuating more violence. Our study suggests that such backgrounds are not deterministic for such negative outcomes. Transforming cycles of violence is possible, and such a background can be transformed into a strength. Two of the most perceptible factors in this transformation that we have expanded on in this study were community involvement and mentorship, yet there may be others.

Focusing on the marginalization of our interviewees is not an argument that White men are oppressed. These stories of marginalization are in the context of growing up White and male – with privilege that those identities afford. What is particularly noteworthy here is the interviewees negotiating White male privilege with growing anti-racist feminist consciousness and practice (falling short of these ideals will be explored in chapter four and five). In large part, the communities with

which they developed their frameworks for social justice offered spaces of exploring their own marginalization while teaching them about their privilege. Having a mentor to help navigate these internal contradictions and tensions was very important for many of the interviewees. Developing accountability is a crucial part of anti-racist feminist mentorship and community building and some interviewees discussed the importance and challenges of developing accountability. This balance of learning about oppression and privilege in community with mentorship mirrors the intergroup dialogue model for conscientization (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013).

It was also noteworthy to hear about the diversity of the mentor's identities. The interviewees talked about mentors who were much older, but others had mentors the same age as them. Some interviewees had mentors who were women and men of Color and others talked about White women and men as important in their conscientization. These diverse social justice relationships go beyond the particular identity politics that imply social justice teaching and learning can only happen in one's own identity communities. There is not a clear equation linking identity and conscientization; and movement building is more about shared politics than shared identity (Cohen, 1997; hooks, 2006). This does not mean that women and people of Color should be expected to teach White men, merely that such learning across differences can happen and have a profound impact. By the same token, White women and men can have a profound anti-racist, feminist impact on White men.

The mentorship and learning in community work is the work of developing an anti-racist framework. Shotwell (2011) explains that this is a conceptual, emotional,

and embodied framework and practice. For some of the interviewees, classroom learning, reading and writing were important components. Connected to this conceptual framework is an emotional and embodied experience of doing social justice work that seems to be tied to forming relationship with others on this path and taking action in the world. Using Warren's (2010) terminology connecting the head to the heart and hands is the “total immersion” that Bill talked about.

The following two chapters will discuss making head, heart, and hands connections in doing solidarity work. The next chapter examines how the interviewees embody solidarity in their projects, relationships, and visions for the world. The final results chapter will explore the affective challenges and tensions of developing such solidarity from White male social positions.

Chapter 4: Solidarity: Toward Anti-Racist Feminist Praxis

The introduction laid the groundwork for the types of relationships and labor involved in anti-racist feminist solidarity. The framework for this type of solidarity is most clearly articulated in the activism and scholarship of women of Color (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). This is an empowerment politics that addresses various domains of power, intersecting systems of oppression, and building coalitions across identity categories (Cohen, 1997; Collins, 2000; Lorde, 2007). White men who have a consciousness of being a part of these systems realize they have a responsibility and a stake in transforming oppressive systems (Crass, 2013; Kivel, 2011). The particular forms of activism that people and groups with relative privilege take to transform systems of oppression is necessarily a type of solidarity activism rather than a model based in charity that leaves power relationships unchanged (Shotwell, 2011).

As privileged by raced and gendered power structures, there is particular work that White men need to do to in order to take up anti-racist feminist solidarity. Women and people of Color have written that solidarity activism from relatively privileged groups is possible, but it is up to these groups to do the intellectual, emotional, and material work to articulate what this activism actually looks like (Collins, 2000; Thompson, 2001). An important element of this study is to collect and analyze stories and answers to the questions of activism from White male positionalities.

In this study White men who identify with anti-racist feminist movements were asked what their activism looks like and how they envision relational work in

social movements. At the start of this study, it was not a certainty that the interviewees would necessarily talk about solidarity in how they view activism; perhaps they would take a charity model. If they did engage in a solidarity model of activism, would they evade difference and privilege or appreciate the ideas of solidarity in difference elaborated in the introduction?

We conducted a thematic analysis of solidarity practices as outlined in the methodology section. During the coding process, patterns of solidarity practices emerged, and we constructed categories of various practices. Grounded in the idea that solidarity is a multi-dimensional set of social and psychological processes (Dirik, 2016; Lorde, 2007), we discerned that the practices described by the interviewees indeed could be envisioned as an ecological model of activism. An ecological model accounts for social and psychological activity at multiple levels of analysis (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). More specifically, we grouped themes by the level of the activism: either at (a) the individual, (b) micro/interpersonal, (c) meso/community level of analysis. At the individual level, interviewees described practices and processes of personal accountability to social justice and the psychological work that necessitates. At the micro level, practices and roles pertaining to reproducing privilege in relationships were questioned and alternative practices were discussed. At the meso level, interviewees talked about the work that needs to be done amongst men and amongst White people to address sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression. At this level, participants also discussed the importance of building coalitions and movements.

In this chapter the excerpts that we chose are those that best fit the themes that we constructed but may not necessarily be the most sample-wide representative. That being said, each theme was present in at least half of the sample (unless otherwise noted, as we will do within). As described in the method section, our coding for this section is grounded in the anti-racist feminist literature on solidarity (Sandoval, 2000; Shotwell, 2011; Warren, 2010, White, 2008), and we were most interested in how White men embody (or do not) the principles of solidarity across difference. To some of the themes, we will also present pitfalls, or challenges that interviewees had with embodying the theme; and tensions, or lack of consensus among interviewees with the theme. We want to give the reader a sense of how widely shared each theme was among this group, and thus will use the terms few (1-3 participants), several (4-7), many (8-10), most (10-15), and every/all (16) to show approximately how widely the participants shared a given theme.

Individual Level: Self-reflexivity

Discussing solidarity as relationships between different groups, interviewees emphasized the importance of locating one's self in these relationships and the accompanying psychological work. In other words, a crucial aspect of doing solidarity work for this group was at the level of the individual by understanding and accounting for their social position. When I asked interviewees about doing solidarity work, most responded that the work they do is affected by their position in society as connected to being White and male. Their responses tended to start with, “as a White man...,” that is, speaking about White male privilege and solidarity work from a

position that is multiply privileged. The themes discussed at the individual level were: understanding one's own privilege, re-envisioning self, and embracing discomfort.

Understanding One's Own Privilege

Every interviewee discussed privilege, and many linked solidarity practices to understanding privilege. In explaining how they understood privilege, most interviewees discussed White privilege in particular. Harold tells the story of his boyfriend telling him that he “sounded White” when greeting a friend, and his response:

I was like “Oh my god!” It really hit me, cause I'd never been aware of my ethnicity before. That's part of being privileged: you don't have race, you're an individual. I just didn't realize it, and I am wearing this identity on my skin that people have assumptions about, and it is a thing to be White, to act White, and to suddenly be aware that you're attached to this entire group of people whose actions and beliefs reflect on you, and to be aware of that you say and do things you're not aware of that mean something specific to people. It was like being punched in the face, and I didn't like it at all.

Having an “a-ha” experience in understanding one's privilege in a way that they had not before was a common story in the interviews. Research shows that White people (especially White men) often react defensively and/or angrily when privilege is made visible to them (Cabrera, 2014; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). In contrast to this, most of the interviewees told stories of listening to others and trying to learn more about

privilege. For Harold, this event helped him clarify how his Whiteness showed up to others and was an important moment in his anti-racist education. Interestingly, Harold used the language of masculine violence, “punched in the face,” to describe how seeing his privilege felt. This was fairly common among interviewees, and although we did not code this aspect systematically in this section, we will discuss voices of masculinity and affect in the next chapter.

Pitfall: Privilege is “out there.”

Although most interviewees discussed their relationship to being privileged by systems of power, there was also a tendency to discuss the privilege “out there.” About half the group talked about their own complicity and contradiction with privilege, and about half the interviewees did not talk about privilege in such terms. Those in this second group did not deny their own privilege but directed their comments to criticizing other White people and men for not looking at their own privilege. Charles talks about the privilege that he encountered at a new school:

Coming from [a small community college] and going to [a larger University], it was much less working class, it was more a lot more privilege there. A lot more very highly White privileged people came from really very privileged background even way more than myself and didn't have to work for anything had everything handed to them.

In this excerpt, Charles does acknowledge his own privilege, but focuses more at length on the privilege of other White people around him. There is a tendency among even anti-racist White people to distance from other White people, thinking in

dualistic terms, that is, good White people vs. bad White people (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Mayer, 1997). In other words, being complicit in privilege may mark one as a bad White person. Part of this reluctance to talk about one's own privilege also likely has to do with being interviewed by me, a person most interviewees just met. This is a situation that would likely elicit White fragility and a desire to paint one's self positively (Di Angelo, 2011). Moreover, I did not typically ask, "How are you implicated in these systems?" but rather "What does your activism look like?" or "Do White men have specific responsibilities?"

Re-envisioning Self

For those interviewees who did discuss their own privilege, they often did so in concert with changing one's self, especially the internalization of racist and sexist ideologies. Bill talked about how authentic solidarity started for him when he learned to listen to and follow the leadership of people of Color. He believed that White people are under the illusion of racial superiority, and in order to start the process of solidarity, White people must unlearn these "White lies," including doing charity work and taking care of people of Color:

One of my major responses to that, and it's something we haven't talked about yet, is the degree to which my consciousness is the product of learning to listen to follow the leadership of, believe in, and trust in people of Color, to be accountable to people of Color. That part of the transformation has to do with giving up the lies, the White lies, that I was taught and was teaching – the worst lies are the progressive lies of taking care of people of Color – but

replacing that with understandings that come from people of Color, same as understandings that come from women, the understandings that come from the LGBT community, or from lower classes, that become our authority. One of the ways I put it is in terms of the internalization of racial superiority and our own imprisonment.

A difficult but important aspect of solidarity work is to unlearn the many stereotypes in society about marginalized groups, as well as the way those stereotypes create a sense of superiority among dominant groups. Part of internalized domination for White men includes assuming that they already know the answers and should be in leadership positions (Tappan, 2006). This transformation around Whiteness led Bill to critical consciousness around gender, sexuality, and class. Bill explained that paternalism is a vicious form of racism, and it keeps White people (psychologically) imprisoned. Interviewees discussed a focus on solidarity involved doing psychological work to unlearn lies and their implications.

Internalization of superiority translates to domination/power-over in interpersonal and group-level relationships (Kimmel, 2013). Because Whiteness is relational and imbricated in power relations, undoing the psychological superiority entails a material, caring practice in relationship with others (Ferguson, 2014). Adam recounted a story about taking leadership in a way that reflected the subtle effects of internalization of superiority:

I slowly sort of became the leader of the group, became the default facilitator, got feedback at various points like Adam you can't be involved in all of the

sub-committees, like tried to be called out by another woman in the group about how I was sort of dominating things and then slowly the group dwindled under my watch.... But the group, the original group had taken flight, almost died at that point under my watch because of certain ways in which I didn't understand good leadership. So I think it's not until like after college and maybe even a year or two after college that I felt like I'd realized what I'd done. Particularly around leadership and organizing and how I showed up in those spaces on campus which is very different from how I show up now.

Adam learned both from being called out by fellow activists as well as reflecting on the way he viewed his leadership nearly destroying an activist group. Many White male activists do not learn the ways that hierarchical leadership models with White people and men at the top can be destructive for everyone involved (Danner & Young, 2003). Re-envisioning one's self not based in domination, but rather in cooperation and mutual interest was important for many interviewees. Ferguson (2014) explains that solidarity intersectional politics entail people entering social movements and coming out changed, not because of "de-identifying," but rather "re-identifying," which means having a more complex understanding of the identity networks and not marginalizing anyone in solidarity relationships. Most interviewees did not evade identifying as White men and understanding what that means in social networks. Paying attention to the language that interviewees used to speak of self-reflexivity: "oh, my god," "hit in the face," "our own imprisonment," it becomes clear

that there is a large emotional component to this work. In particular, interviewees linked solidarity and growth to embracing feelings of discomfort.

Embracing Discomfort

As opposed to simply performing a type of allyship of “doing the right thing,” some interviewees discussed that to be accountable to solidarity means embracing discomfort. When telling stories of solidarity, we coded every interviewee as having emotion-laden language around challenge and discomfort. In the following excerpt Rowan put the themes of understanding privilege and re-envisioning one’s self with embracing the discomfort that this practice entails, specifically that this discomfort is at the level of the body was a crucial part of lasting solidarity work:

I’m really wary of what I see as a certain kind of performativity of White allyship whether it be in terms of anti-racist politics or feminist politics and it’s really concerning to me because when we’re talking about that performance I think it’s really hard to be honest about some of the contradictions that are involved in being someone in the world to whom the power and privileges of White masculinity at the moment attach. And it [could] become a project of disavowal rather than thinking about how to like really embody, like actually feel in my own body where those feelings exist. And when I’m confronted with the ways that I live out those contradictions, when I think about it in terms of relationships and identity I can actually feel in my body the moments where I might get defensive or have a strong emotional reaction. The performativity of White allyship, and a lot of people

have talked about this, to disavow one's own racism or the way one plays out one's racism often involves [what] some people have described as leaning away from other White leftists who fuck up or fail. So I don't know if that's a helpful starting point but I think at this point in my life my intention and aspiration in a daily way to try to live in anti-racist and feminist politics, it's thinking about relationships of care and really trying to like be as honest with myself as possible about where like my own ego hang ups come up in terms of being able to see or perceive or like understand how I might be complicit in racist practices in any given moment or if I get feedback from someone like my partner who is a queer woman of Color or friends I feel how can I just really pause long enough to understand something that I hadn't understood a moment before and to really be able to see and empathize with someone in a way I couldn't even a moment before.

Rowan brings attention to the idea that solidarity work is emotional labor. For Rowan the work is connected to paying attention to defensiveness and other difficult feelings that can arise. Rowan critiques the tendency among so-called White allies to claim one is not complicit in oppression. Rowan's anti-racist feminist practice is to sit with that defensiveness, to feel it, and ask to himself how that is connected to being socialized as White and therefore complicit in racist practices. Having "bad affect," or White guilt, shame, and/or anxiety is next to inevitable for White activists in solidarity work (Langhout, 2015; Shotwell, 2011). Anti-racist scholars recommend "owning" these bad feelings by naming them and realizing that they are part of the

wounds of racism (Ellison & Langhout, 2016; Shotwell, 2011). Feelings of shame, guilt, sadness, and anger can teach those from dominant groups about privilege and oppression, and are an important stage in healing and critical consciousness (Anzaldúa, 2002a; Langhout, 2015). Rowan seems to realize this by listening to these feelings for places from which to learn and grow.

Taken together these narratives suggest that reflexivity is a central practice for these interviewees in doing solidarity. This entails understanding one's own privilege, re-envisioning one's self, and embracing discomfort. Accordingly, much psychological work goes into asking questions of both the intrapsychic and relational effects of White masculinity and privilege. Questions of how to engage collective spaces, unintentionally hurting others, delving into negative emotions of guilt and defensiveness, and the effects of the work that one does came up when discussing White masculinity and solidarity. Of course, it is clear from research on racism and sexism that people who are not White men do this type of psychological work on a daily basis (Lorde, 2007; Sue, 2010). Yet, this should not discount the challenges that doing solidarity work entails for everyone involved.

White men have the “convenience of the unmarked,” vis-à-vis Whiteness and male privilege, and in a so-called liberal multi-cultural society can hide behind the illusion that they are “good guys,” for merely tolerating diversity (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Trouillot, 2003). It is crucial that dominant group actors not indulge in this logic, yet because the convenience of the unmarked happens in countless ways every day, as McIntosh (1989) recounts, a paradox of privilege often takes place where

radical self-reflexivity takes psychological work for people who may never have been socialized to do this work and are encouraged by dominant society not to engage in these ways. Building relationships of accountability at the micro and meso levels can support individual actors in self-reflexivity, while building power to make ideological shifts in the logics that uphold these domination/subordination relationships.

Micro Level: Interpersonal Relationships

Re-envisioning Roles

As some of the previous excerpts suggested, as interviewees re-envision their sense of self they correspondingly re-envision their roles in relating to others in their lives. Interviewees extended the idea that an identity based in solidarity intersectional politics is connected with roles that differ from traditional ideas of leadership rooted in hegemonic masculinity. These roles looked different for each of the interviewees based on life circumstance and the project they were involved in. Feminist masculinities scholars explain that changing roles and changing the definition of manhood is important for feminist development for men and for solidarity with feminist movements (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016) A common idea expressed in this vein was “stepping up/stepping back.” In the following narrative, Scott explains that for him working in groups means to start by “stepping back” to listen:

I am there to understand solidarity to support and to help and ultimately provide space, and something that I talked to actually a lot of men about is providing space. So a lot of men, especially cis White men, don't understand what that actually means. To provide space for other people to speak up

means to stop speaking and to stop occupying that space and that's really hard to do when you've been trained your whole life to occupy that space. That takes an incredible amount of critical thought because you're acting like – I'm constantly battling – I've always kind of been an introverted person that on an individual level I don't feel the need to take up a lot of space. But also in terms of my position in society as I still need to be constantly thinking about my privilege that I have in almost in any social setting in order to go about it accurately, and I'm not saying that I do it like perfectly every time like it's still something that like I'm working on like will be working my entire life.

Scott's narrative focused on his socialization as someone who is supposed to “occupy space.” Saying that this takes “an incredible amount of critical thought” and “constantly battling” indicate the high amount of psychological work (and masculinist framing of issues related to affect) that can accompany this type of reflexivity (Langhout, 2015; Reagon, 1983). As Bill discussed in the previous section, listening to women and people of Color, especially in leadership positions, is often a new role for White men.

In being aware of one's relationship to and performance of White masculinity, some interviewees questioned whether or not even being in multi-racial groups served social justice goals. This represents a break from dominant culture and many Left social movements, in which many White men who engage in social movements assume that their presence in groups is a taken-for-granted good thing (Crass, 2013).

Ryan most clearly named a feeling that others also shared about one's presence in diverse spaces being triggering and creating an unsafe space for others:

People perceiving me as a White man, which I identify as also, but the fact that people perceive me as that can in itself be a silencing or triggering thing for people who have like experienced trauma or oppression from White men, which is most of the people in our society and not wanting to activate people in that way. If I had a sort of like 'a-ha' moment in [doing prisoner solidarity work in a person's] case, it was when we were kind of having some reflections on why as [this person's] case went on fewer of her Black friends and Black supporters were actively involved in the ongoing support work, and I think there's a handful of reasons why that is, but I think that what I came to realize is that there's a thing that can happen where even if you're trying to be welcoming, if there's a certain critical mass critical of people with a certain identity whether it's like two-thirds or three-fifths, three-quarters maybe, I don't know but that it like just like by the nature of numbers and the way that group looks starts to become more and more off-putting to people that like aren't of that group like you look at that group and think "oh, I'm going to be on the margins here. I'm going to have to work harder. This is not a comfortable place for me." And that dissuades people from being a part of it. I think that something that was interesting was [person's name]'s case and it created an interesting dilemma because um, you know then it raises the question should I not be a part of this support committee? In the end I think I

brought a lot to it and I was glad that I was a part of it but that's an interesting question. Like as a person who is wanting to keep this Black transgender woman out of prison, and she has a support committee and I'm invited to be a part of it, should I take that invitation and go be a part of it or should I not so that these other folks that might feel triggered or marginalized by too many people that look like me being a part of it can be a part of it?

Ryan asked the question whether he should even be a part of the group doing solidarity work because of his White male identities. He realized that just his body being in the space has an impact on the other participants doing this prisoner solidarity work. Ryan's perspective reflects what Mayer (1997) calls "contextual anti-racism," which emphasizes that anti-racist activism must be attentive to the needs and dynamics of specific contexts and there are no formulae for doing the "right" thing. This is in contrast to "dualistic anti-racism," which assumes there are "good" and "bad" White people, and that it is enough to proclaim one's anti-racist intentions. Furthermore, that Ryan has this feeling represents learning at the affective and tacit levels of consciousness (Shotwell, 2011). In this example, Ryan's decision is informed by intersectional social movement strategy that includes body level awareness informed by anti-racist feminist learning.

Tension point: Stepping back or Stepping up?

Many interviewees articulated that being aware of their privilege means being able to take up different roles in social movements. Some of these different roles included listening to women and people of Color. As Bill discussed, he had been

taught not to listen to women and people of Color, and a big realization for him was that to undo internalized superiority meant to reevaluate this behavior. Certainly, for people from oppressor classes to engage social justice work, listening to oppressed groups is a well-established and necessary prerogative (Freire, 2000).

No interviewee said that listening was not important, however many interviewees emphasized stepping up. James challenged the perspective that it is White men's role only to listen in the following excerpt. James pushed the argument that anti-racism means that White people need to be able to act as much as they need to be able to listen:

I think that's cowardly quite frankly, and I see it and I talk to students about this, and they say, okay I'm a straight White male, "my job is to always listen." Your job is not to always listen. Your job is to figure how to make a meaningful contribution to both an intellectual project and a political project and a lot times that means you need to speak. Plus, we are all human beings, we all have a need to express ourselves. I don't think the idea of going mute for the rest of your life makes any sense. You don't learn by always talking, right? It is important to shut up sometimes, but you also don't challenge yourself if you don't talk, and I see White people all the time terrified of saying the wrong thing, and so they speak in cliches, or when there's a need to intervene they don't, because it's easier to step back, and that is just a different form of privilege, alright? To see a difficult, probably emotionally charged issue and to say well I'm White, it is not place to intervene is often

the exactly the wrong thing to do. Because you have a moral obligation to intervene, and it's always about context, there's no recipe book to read, when do I intervene? Oh lemme check my guidebook, oh the six and the eight criteria is present there to actually intervene, you are always working on your best guess, it's always a hunch. Sometimes you are wrong, sometimes you have to apologize because you said the wrong thing in the wrong time, but I think just as dangerous as White people talking too much is White people not talking at all sometimes.

James described the “convenience of the unmarked” that allows White people to decide when and how to intervene (Trouillot, 2003). For James there is an imperative to not stay unmarked and instead to be the “craziest person in the room,” as he called it, so that women and people of Color are not burdened to always take the lead on conversations about sexism and racism. Although this practice has its own risks, as James noted, silence can also foster oppression. The paradox remains that these are very difficult decisions for anti-racist Whites and feminist men to make, *and* it is a choice contingent on systems that privilege them while socializing them to have few tools to make these decisions.

In about half of the interviews, participants emphasized listening. In the other half, action was the emphasis. In our analysis, our research team did not see James' argument here as portraying listening and acting as mutually exclusive, simply that he more strongly emphasizes action. This could represent White people at different stages of anti-racist development. This follows White racial identity development

models (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 2003). In the earlier statuses of anti-racism, listening is more important for development. In later statuses, especially in contexts in which one is speaking to other White people, direct action and confrontation is necessary. We believe this also relates to the contextual anti-racist perspective discussed by Mayer (1997). There is no clear recipe for “stepping up” versus “stepping back,” thus learning to read the context and particular situation is crucial.

Care Work

Interviewees told stories of learning to listen and taking action, however stories of doing caring and social reproduction labor were not as common. This is the labor that is often feminized, racialized, and invisibilized, yet is crucial for society and movements to sustain themselves, for example caring for children or cleaning up after a rally (Bryson, 2014). The solidarity work of taking up social and psychological roles that are historically forced on women and people of Color in social movements, however, was present in some of the interviewee's stories of activism. In fact, the first thing Rowan described when doing activism was caring labor in social movements. He described passionately how important this work is:

I think about like social labor and especially when it comes to so much political organizing who performs the social labor. That's so often seen, or just invisibilized and not recognized for the value and critical, just like sort of the fact that it makes everything fucking happen. And thinking about, how women, people who are feminized, and people of Color perform that labor all the time and that it's a real shortfall of a lot of movement culture that what

gets valorized are the people who have perfected the critique, who are on the bullhorn or at the podium, or the people who are invited to speak at conferences. And not to say all of that is mutually exclusive, I know a lot of people who are like incredible speakers and very savvy, very media-spokespeople who do all of the really hard, on-the-ground grunt work that never get recognized or rewarded.

Rowan was very clear that caring labor was among the most important ways White men can support social movements. Although some of the other interviewees also discussed their practices of doing this caring labor, they talked about it as important but without any stories about it. Tim summarized these issues as he talked about the importance of this work and how little this work is being taken up by White men in movements and even less so by White men in society at large.

Tim: That's the work that traditionally women do and people of Color do, but for those of us who are White and/or male and/or other kinds of dominant privilege, we really need to roll up our sleeves. And do the basic daily work of maintaining organizations and households and collectives and understand the essentialness of that to the changes that we wanna see.

Bob: Do you see that as developmentally happening? In the last decades that White men are taking that call?

Tim: Um, no. Only in very small numbers. I mean there's a men's child care collective in the area that provides childcare for women of Color led organizations and things like that. You know there's more men doing more

childcare in their families for collectives. But overall in our society, not at all¹⁰.

Viewed in these terms, caring labor can happen in many contexts, thus could be micro (within a family) or meso (at an organization/in the community) level activities. For example, a recent nationally representative sample found that women still do 60-70% of the core household chores (Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, & Robinson, 2012). Further, feminist scholars argue that it is sexist, racist division of labor on which capitalist cisheteropatriarchy relies, and thus this work has the potential to work at the macro level as well (Ferguson, 2014). On the one hand, it was encouraging to hear stories from some men who strongly emphasize its importance. On the other hand, most of the stories about solidarity in the interviews were not about care work. This could represent the subtle reproduction of hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes White men taking up dominant positions in both obvious and not so obvious ways (Connell, 2005). The question of care labor was not one that I asked specifically, so perhaps if interviewees knew I wanted to hear about it that would have changed how much it came up. Yet, I did ask about what solidarity means in general, and upon analysis these stories came up more infrequently than the hopes of Rowan and Tim alluded to.

Meso Level: Within Group and Coalitions

¹⁰ After our member check, Tim added in an e-mail message, “I would add further that some men who do perform more childcare and housework because their partners are also working rely on paid domestic work from primarily low-waged, immigrant women of color for a significant part of the childcare and housework thus reinscribing the class, race, and gender hierarchies they are likely opposed to.”

At the meso level (i.e. the small group, community, and organizations level) interviewees talked about their work in two overarching distinct spaces: (a) within their communities and (b) in coalitions. First, many interviewees emphasized the importance of doing anti-racist education and movement building with other White people, and doing feminist education and movement building with other (cis) men; in other words, within “one’s own home” (Reagon, 1983). Specifically, this follows the anti-racist feminist model that White people and men ought to fight racism within White communities and sexism with men, instead of trying to “fix” oppressed communities (Freire, 2000; Kivel, 2011). Conversely, most interviewees talked about coalitional activism within diverse groups. Coalitions are “dangerous” places, in which people of various background come together, and in this case work to change oppressive social structures (Reagon, 1983).

Within Group: “In One’s Own Home”

Education.

Most interviewees discussed at length the work that they do within their families, friend groups, and communities. Some of the interviewees discussed sustaining a lasting educational practice with other Whites and men. Ryan explained that in many ways White men are the best positioned to work with other White men and have the responsibility to do so. He also shared experiences of some ways men educating other men and Whites educating other Whites can go wrong, discussing the importance of staying accountable:

It is the responsibility of people with privilege to deal with people that have that same privilege in working to undermine it. I think that that's largely true, I still think that's largely true.... I was in a men's group that I had sought out. I hadn't been in a ton of men's groups but I had sought out that sort of men's group for a while; people that I felt like I shared enough commonality with that we could relate in a way that felt good. I think that I had experimented with different men's groups in the past that hadn't really worked for me because I hadn't had the level of trust and affinity in shared vision. So I agree with that to an extent and I try to answer the call if I'm asked to be helpful in some way or like fill some role to fight sexism or racism. I think that it's men's responsibility for example to deal with other men's sexism the like flipside of that is that it's not women's responsibility to deal with men's sexism.... We work to be comrades, supporting each other and fighting alongside each other in the ways that like we're best positioned to do and there are ways that men are like best positioned to work with other men on fighting sexism, there's also ways that they're not. If you get a bunch of men together without any sort of feminine guidance, feminist guidance whether that's from feminist comrades, women or trans comrades or literature or whatever, they can come up with some pretty anti-feminist ideas. And I've seen that happen, it's pretty nuts, so there is a way in which like we need to be working together on it.

In this narrative Ryan brought to the fore that he believes that people with privilege have the responsibility to educate others who have the privilege. Because of racist and sexist ideologies many White men will discount the validity of claims made by women and people of Color. For example, whereas White men are respected for engaging in diversity-valuing behavior like working with diverse groups, women and people of Color are often seen as divisive for engaging in the same work (Heckman, Johnson, Der Foo & Yang, 2016). Thus, while this represents a problem, it also indicates that White men need to be speaking up precisely about racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. On the other hand, toward the end of this narrative, Ryan explains that in some ways men are not the best teachers of other men, and he has seen men's group progress in anti-feminist ways¹¹. The history of the men's movement that Connell (2005) traces from its feminist roots to anti-feminist practices (e.g. disavowal of feminism, cultural appropriation, and even hostile misogyny) confirms this idea. Some interviewees talked about developing certain accountability practices when doing work with other White men with a feminist framework: not

¹¹ After a member check, Ryan added in an e-mail message, "One thing I like to challenge is the idea that, because it's men's job to deal with sexism, women and trans people shouldn't have to deal with it, and so they shouldn't be looked to or asked to engage. I think it's trickier than that. It's important to be mindful and not always be casually making our friends with more marginalized identities deal with how we are struggling with our own potentially oppressive behavior, on the other hand, whether it's fair or not is beside the point. It's a fucked up situation that we inherited and it not being "fair" isn't enough of a reason to not expect some comradely engagement. Let's figure out how we are going to end racism and then do THAT. I think this perspective isn't what is said but is true to life in so far as it's mostly not men doing anti-sexism work; it's mostly not white people fighting racism; and it's mostly not the owning classes fighting classism."

taking funding from women and people of Color-led groups, developing relationships with those groups, and seeking/listening to feedback.

Certainly, the work of educating other White people and men is about understanding privilege and institutionalized oppression, i.e. conceptual knowledge. This work, however, is also about affect and having an emotional openness to transforming the outcome of dominant forms of socialization. As compared with cis-men, Rowan had a different standpoint to experience of the emotional qualities of this work, having been on the target side of sexism as a woman, and now on the “insider group” as a man:

No longer being the object or target of sexism in the way that I was as a White woman I’ve come to realize how seductive it is, specifically maybe we could call it homosocialism, basically the sort of affinity among men. Especially when it comes to White men it’s interesting the way that the way that I would be ignored as like a queer White woman by just sort of random straight White dudes on the street. Sometimes I’ll have a weird sort of – it feels like a homophobic interaction with them – but often times like when people just seem like they’re trying to bro down or something like I get confused because I think there’s actually a tenderness to that exchange that has the potential to be something other than sexist or misogynist. But it’s most often based in misogyny that’s the other edge of that sword. I was surprised to have learned that when I started being read as a man in the world more consistently, I guess I’m still trying to figure out what to do with like what I see as the potential for

some of that tenderness or affinity that's there and how that could be a certain basis I don't know trying to encourage other White men together to think about just how to be in the world in a way that's more anti-racist and more feminist. Not from a really heady place of trying to like convince people of something but like more of like a particular kind of relating that actually is like about letting the sort of like egos relax enough to just like go to have something different to happen in that exchange and it's so fleeting.

Rowan's past experiences with being read as a woman and current experiences as being read as a man gives him a particular perspective of male bonding. From the position of a queer woman, male bonding felt like exclusion. From the position of a man, although Rowan still realizes some of the roots of this bonding is misogyny, he was able to pick up on a tenderness of feeling that is also present. He believes that in the tenderness of this bonding there may be possibilities to let the guard down and open up to transforming this misogynistic socialization toward something feminist. Masculinity scholars believe that certain expressions of male violence are rooted in a vulnerability and lack of love (Katz, 2006; Kimmel, 2013). In a patriarchal society in which boys and men do not get emotional needs met and witness role models and media images using violence to get needs met, a vicious cycle of reproducing violence exists. On the other hand, experimental research has shown that under egalitarian conditions the same trigger (social stress) for male bonding can be redirected into cooperation and compassion responses (Berger, Heinrichs, von Dawans, Way, & Chen, 2016), which supports Rowan's theory of change. The

educational work described in this section is at micro and meso levels, and, in as participants had visions of structural changes, they discussed working within one's own group in terms of movement building.

Movement building.

Ultimately, many interviewees discussed these activities as social movement work and aimed toward liberation. Tim discussed movement building in this way:

One the limits of any of these words like ally is that they really focus on what we do as individuals. And what I learned going all the way back to the college was that I can show up, and that's a good thing, and do what I can do to support the struggle, but when I show up with other White folks or with other men that that's where the real work is. That's where it amplifies what were, what we're able to do. That's what organizing is all about, right? Organizing other people to show up with you. If there is anything that I would add to that whole talk we had on allies is that the most important thing about an ally is that they should show up with other allies that they create. Organize other people to be allies.

Tim emphasized that working with other men and White people is where the "real work is" for White men. White men are the least likely to understand the history and structures of oppression yet have the most power in these systems (Cabrera, 2014; Freire, 2000). Educating White men, dealing with ignorance and defensiveness, promoting anti-racist feminist consciousness and practices as described above

certainly seems like building social movements or labor that could support intersectional social movement organizing as Tim indicated.

Tension point: Skepticism and non-engagement of “identity spaces”

Stories of educating other men and White people were predominant among the interviewees, however they were not universal. Moreover, a few interviewees expressed skepticism with this type of activism. For example, Andy questioned the usefulness of identity-based groups for White men. He did not dismiss them but showed skepticism and ambiguity:

One of the limits in those kinds of identity spaces is they try to do work – not always but in a lot of instances – they have run into those troubles [not creating a mass movement] and for me there aren’t that many, first off there aren’t that many [anti-racist feminist] White dude spaces! Let alone individual categories amongst those, and I’ve always been turned off to them for a certain reason I think and part of it I’ve mentioned is because of my personal history. I have certain comrades who in respect to these questions just kinda laugh or like think the groups are strange, like why would you want to create more political affiliations between White people on the basis of Whiteness. Sometimes I think it can be helpful because it can like help ground you in these kinds of commitments. You can talk to White people about what it means to intervene in certain things, but shouldn’t we be trying to affiliate – like isn’t breaking out like Whiteness as a ruling class social formation my analysis of what Whiteness is sometimes (trails off) Shouldn’t I be trying to

developing more political affinities with non-White people and making those interests my interests more? And I can see that there are sometimes these like White groups that do really good work in solidarity with folks in Oakland and elsewhere, but sometimes because they don't have a politics beyond anti-racism, I think I've made clear through my story it's hard for me to bracket that off like anti-racism from other politics and so sometimes I think that am I gonna have a shared basis for that in the space that I go into, or I don't know? Part of it is ignorance too of a lot of these spaces, and I haven't I'm so busy with everything else I just don't go¹².

Andy wavered about the merits of such “identity” work. His criticisms – building more affinity with White people based on Whiteness and doing non-intersectional work – reflect some of Ryan's concerns about such groups. Ryan's critique of

¹² After our member check, Andy added in an e-mail message, “On the last point, I think that I was being very unclear! To try to be a bit more specific: I don't take issue with the practice of addressing white chauvinism or the ideological work of challenging the oppressive attitudes and behaviors of other white men, but I do have some reservations about radical white male spaces being the best space to ground and conduct that kind of work. In my limited experience, getting white women, white queers, and other working class white people on board with anti-racism has been most successful when you can point to the idea that their liberation is bound up in the liberation of all people of color, that their own lot in life is tied to the racist strategies that wanna create material differences, real hierarchies in working class life. So I'm all for autonomous spaces when it's apart of this wider, multiracial, multigender politics, but most spaces that are specifically for white men seem to approach it as a moral obligation or a moral issue, which I think won't win most white people over to an anti-racist politics. Obviously, I'm not advocating to dilute our organizing against white supremacy. I'm rather looking, with others, at the demographic situation in the US, thinking about how white supremacy works as a state strategy, and thinking how we can build a winning force for revolutionary politics. My skepticism comes perhaps out of ignorance, but my worry is that these kinds of spaces produce white people handwringing each other, playing gatekeeper, and atomizing their anti-racist politics from their other commitments. White supremacy as a ruling class social formation, as a state strategy, doesn't exist in a vacuum. So I think confronting it will demand that we approach it in an integrated fashion, which doesn't take its appearances for granted. I think it requires us to figure out ways to bring large numbers of working class white people into mass anti-racist movements, to think about how the struggles of POC are actually in their own interests. I just don't know if the model of the radical white male education / affinity space can do that.”

identity-based work is not that such groups are useless but rather that they can go wrong when they are not accountable to anti-racist feminist movements. The difference in perspective may also be developmental, such that the mode of activism represents a different status of anti-racism and/or feminist development (Tatum, 2003). For Andy, he had made a choice at some level to spend his time in other ways. At a social level, such differences can represent different conditions of each person's social context. As Andy said, he has been connected to more radical coalitional activist groups than all-White or all-male groups.

Overall, many of the interviewees articulated their felt responsibility to confront, educate, and contribute to movement building, with other White men. And for many of the interviewees these were complicated projects. For many reasons (hurt, frustration, lack of knowledge) interviewees did not engage this work easily. Some have not focused predominantly on it, while others have made it their life project. Interestingly, all of the older men (Bill, John, Aaron and Tim) situated the majority of their work with other Whites and/or White men. At the least, they show that it is possible to sustain this focus in structured and accountable ways. That the older men are more engaged in work on/with other Whites and men comports well to White racial identity development models which indicate that earlier in development connection with other Whites or men is experienced as undesirable (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 2003). Whereas earlier in development one may want to escape Whiteness and masculinity and therefore White people and men, later one may realize to do so means tackling privilege in the dominant group (Tatum, 2003).

Coalitional Movements: “Work not Done in Your Own Home”

As discussed in the previous sections, solidarity includes doing the psychological work of understanding one's social position, and it also includes taking responsibility to work with other White people and men. In this final section, narratives in which interviewees talked about participating in and supporting multi-racial coalitions and campaigns, which we argue represents doing the work at the meso level and toward the macro level. According to Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) the macro level includes analysis at the nation, global, structural and ideological level. We argue that doing social movement work that takes aim at structural change is at the heart of the coalitional work that interviewees discussed. More specifically, doing coalitional work revolved around the ideas of analysis of structures of oppression, mutual interest, and caring labor.

Analysis of oppression and mutual interest.

Successfully engaging in social movements and coalitions requires social and political analysis. Multi-racial coalitions are spaces of dangerous work that is never comfortable (Reagon, 1983; Sandoval, 2000). Being able to see one's own positionality, as well as one's own stake, in a movement was indicated as important by interviewees. Moreover, being a part of coalitions with “radical visions” can have lasting structural impact (Warren, 2010). A long-term veteran of such movements, Tim clearly articulated the idea of mutual interest that summarizes an intersectional analysis of coalitions:

We tend to talk about mutual interest. We need to understand our own interest in showing up, how we're impacted, what the cost is to us. I think the value of the concept of being an ally is that there are different roles to play. And so, we both need to understand our mutual interest, but as a White person I need to understand that I'm not on the front lines of the struggle the way people of Color are, and therefore, my accountability is to them and those struggles. So I have a tremendously mutual interest in eliminating racism because it messes all of us over, right? It devastates our society and all kinds of other things, but that our roles are different. So, mutual interest helps on the one side overcoming that separation, that charitable the I'm helping you kind of framework.

With many of the interviewees, finding a balance of mutual interest and how to find one's own role in anti-racist feminist struggles was a theme. Interviewees pointed to stories that finding mutual interest often came through working on campaigns with diverse organizations and activists. This resonates with intersectionality in the sense that all groups are affected by systems of domination, yet they are affected in different ways (Collins, 2000). There is a political stake for everyone to understand oppression and build movements against these systems (Shotwell, 2011; Warren, 2010).

This type of solidarity requires both intellectual and emotional understanding. This emotional understanding involves *mitgefühl* (“feeling with”) rather than empathy (Shotwell, 2011). This means “feeling with” rather than “feeling for.” In other words,

solidarity entails being able to feel suffering, yet not equate one's own suffering as identical as the suffering of other groups. Tyler's own experiences in jail and his father's death in prison demonstrated this balance of intellectual and emotional understanding:

And so in as much as you're asking about solidarity I have to say that a lot of the way that I find myself showing up in the Black Lives Matter the really visceral like fire that I feel that compels me to march or to speak out or to act in accordance with those values doesn't all come only from an anti-racist ideology, it also comes from a like hey like I know that Black folks are subject to something that I'm not. That I have a lot of privilege here and I can really feel a thread between you and me that thread of solidarity because of the pain of the loss of my father, and what I went through with the criminal justice system. And I know that what you're experiencing is different here but there is a thread between us and you know I so I just wanted to acknowledge that that is part of solidarity for me.

Finding mutual interest reflected interviewees searching their own experiences and social justice lessons. This was not simply "following some algorithm," in Rowan's words. As Tim clarified mutual interest is different from a charity-style approach to activism. Greg also critiqued the type of allies who only seek to "serve" indigenous people in anti-colonial struggles. He explains that this stance of just following orders can be a burden on indigenous people and not lead to any deeper coalitions. Greg described working on fighting for land rights with Six Nation people:

My responsibility in the context of this struggle that's happening is not with the rest of the radical left, or especially the White left which goes to the Native barricades and hangs out with the warriors and is like, "Look we're with you. We're the exceptional White allies, what can we do to help you?" This kind of obsequious servitude to the point where you actually have White allies being told, "Hey can you go move this pile of gravel from here a hundred yards over here, in a bucket?" And it's just a joke to see if they'll do it because they're trying to keep them out of their hair and you've got you know these allies that feel that they're doing amazing work literally moving gravel from one spot to another for no apparent reason. And instead, what I thought was a much more accordant was to intervene on the other side of the barricade where there are thousands of angry White people saying racist things and trying to figure out what the fuck is going on and why their road is shut down and why there's cops everywhere and helicopters circling.... And so my involvement was obviously I connected with people and I interviewed people and I made friends and all kinds of relationships with people from Six Nations but the political focus was on the non-native population.

Greg's critique of such "exceptional White" resonates with Rowan's critique of allyship performativity and the concept of dualistic anti-racism discussed above (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Mayer, 1997). Doing this type of coalitional work combines many of the skills and self-work discussed in this chapter: listening and learning, self-reflexivity, and doing educational work within one's own community to

understand the interconnectedness of system of domination. Activity at these multiple levels, engaging one's intellect, emotions, and skills demonstrates that solidarity is a total body experience requiring one's head, heart, and hands (Warren, 2010).

Discussion

Many women and men of Color do not want to have any dealings with White people. It takes too much time and energy to explain to the downwardly mobile, White middle-class women that it's okay for us to want to own "possessions," never having had any nice furniture on our dirt floors or "luxuries" like washing machines. Many feel that Whites should help their own people rid themselves of race hatred and fear first. I, for one, choose to use some of my energy to serve as mediator. I think we need to allow Whites to be our allies. Through our literature, art, *corridos*, and folktales we must share our history with them so when they set up committees to help Big Mountain Navajos or the Chicano farmworkers or *Los Nicaraguenses* they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorance. They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 107).

Analyzing the interviews our research team saw a model of solidarity for White men emerge, one of taking the lead from women and people of Color, that Anzaldúa writes about. We envisioned this as a multi-dimensional solidarity within an ecological

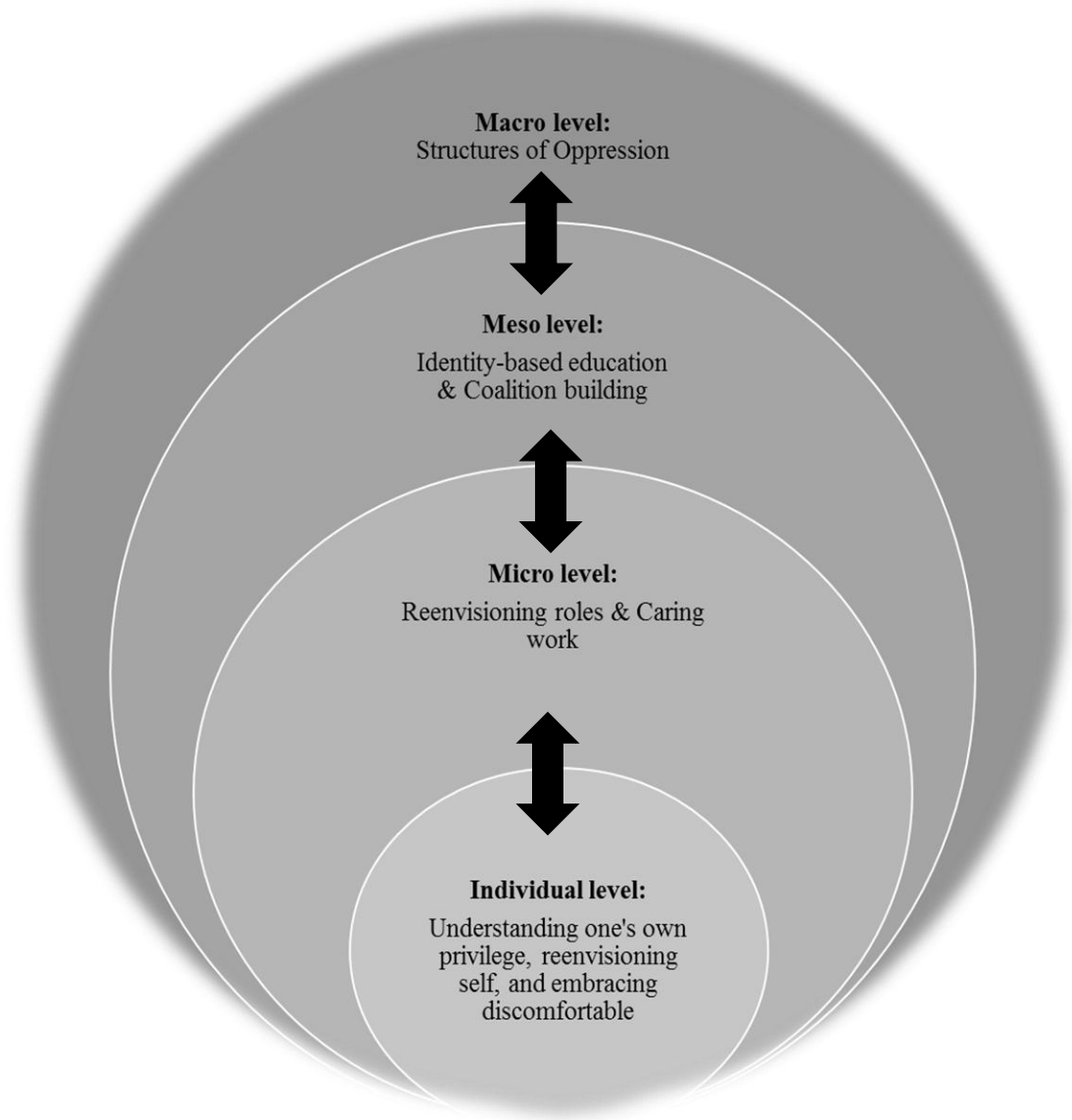
framework that includes intellectual, emotional, and skill-based work at the individual, micro, meso, and toward the macro levels (see figure 4.1 on next page).

At the level of the individual, we coded themes of understanding one's own privilege, re-envisioning one's self, and embracing discomfort. Although there was general agreement that all of these practices are important, the extent as to how much each interviewee accounted for their own privilege was hard to gauge: some directly making links, others leaving the connections unclear. Ultimately, it does not matter how much an interviewee is able to articulate their understanding of their own privilege in an interview space as much as how they are able to engage and embody this in everyday life (i.e. praxis, Freire, 2000). Nevertheless, how one implicates one's self in systems of domination has implication for the work one does at other levels of analysis (Leonardo & Zymbylas, 2013; Perry & Shotwell, 2009).

Considering the micro level of analysis, Whiteness has been likened to a technology of affect that creates not only intellectual but also affective and embodied ignorance to the effects of racism, which has no "outside" (Leonardo & Zymbylas, 2013). Even for Whites who identify as anti-racist, the dualistic logic of Whiteness can imperil anti-racism practice, creating a logic of "good" anti-racist White people and "bad" non-conscious White people (Mayers, 1997). Yet, perhaps being an anti-racist racist is not a contradiction. Engaging in anti-racist feminist solidarity that embraces this tension and discomfort can disrupt Whiteness as a technology of affect, and can have a strong impact on people engaged in this work. As stated above about

Figure 4.1

Ecological Model of Anti-Racist Solidarity Practices



half of the interviewees engaged this tension and complicity in racism and sexism, while the other half focused more on racism and sexism “out there.”

Interviewees also discussed the importance of changing roles, relationships, and definitions of leadership and masculinity. In this chapter and the previous, interviewees discussed friendship with and mentorship from women and people of Color, which represent breaks from hegemonic masculinity (White, 2008). The ways that some of the interviewees prioritized care work was another example of confronting hegemonic masculinity and White privilege. As mentioned before it is positive that many of the interviewees noted the importance of care work, but only a few had concrete stories of doing care work. This may reflect interviewees not prioritizing these roles, yet it also might represent that these stories are not “flashy” stories, and this could represent a flaw in the way the larger Left narrativizes solidarity. Furthermore, I did not ask this question directly, and this represents an important follow up.

At the meso levels, many interviewees explained that it was important to take this learning to other White people and men in their lives, as well as the institutions they participate in. Their methods were education and movement building. In their conscientization many picked up on the message that it is not people of Color or women who need charitable help, but rather change has to happen in the dominant communities: for White people to address their racism and for men to address their sexism. The interviewees generally said that these were very challenging projects. Organizing others who hold privileged identities is fraught with challenges (Mayer,

1997), and the feelings of frustration could be interpreted as successfully engaging this work (Shotwell, 2011). Bailey (1999) explicates what it might take for those with privilege to develop as traitors to the systems that give them privilege. She suggests that not retreating from places that put one ill-at-ease is a part of this work. Some interviewees were successful in building sustainable anti-oppression educational projects for Whites and men; for others the project looked like doing this work one-on-one or in small groups for a protracted amount of time. Many interviewees emphasized the need for balance in such work between doing this work at “home,” staying accountable to anti-racist feminist principles, and working through frustrations.

At (or toward) the macro level, interviewees talked about mutual interest/collective liberation and the need to build mass movements against systems of domination. Almost every interviewee discussed being a part of multi-racial, multi-gender groups and coalitions that worked for anti-racist feminist goals. Here too, sustaining coalitional work was challenging for interviewees, and reflects what Reagon (1983) calls the difficult and dangerous place where you “feel as if [you’re] gonna keel over any minute and die” (p. 356)¹³.

The type of activism, and in particular the type of solidarity activism, that people practice says something about the consciousness that they embody. Taking a broader perspective, it was not a given that solidarity would be the type of activist

¹³ That most interviewee did not talk explicitly about how their work transforms the macro level is likely at least partially related to the interview protocol itself. After speaking for half the interview or more about themselves, it may be a leap to transition to talk about one’s effect on structures.

relationship that White men would take up. Historically and currently, charity and savior-oriented activism in the name of the “powerless other” has been the dominant approach by oppressor group members. The group that I interviewed explicitly criticized this approach. Further, feminist scholars and activists have clarified that a solidarity approach must take differences into account in order to understand the differential impact of systems of domination. In other words, a solidarity model should be intersectional and account for the ways a White man is socially positioned and affected differently by systems of domination than a woman of Color. The interviewees had a relatively high awareness of their Whiteness and male privilege and articulated that their roles are in important ways different from men of Color and from White women.

Tatum (2003) writes, “White people who are doing [solidarity] work need to make their stories known to serve as guides for others” (p. 109). By elevating the stories of the participants and developing a psycho-social model of solidarity, we have attempted to take this call. Such work is challenging and always imperfect, but also transformative and connected to building love, social justice, and community.

Chapter 5: Voices of Resistance and Resistant Voices

In the previous chapter we analyzed the solidarity practices articulated by the interviewees. In this study we also wanted to explore the interviewees' psychological responses to practicing anti-racist feminist solidarity. For people from dominant groups, embracing discomfort is essential for practicing coalitional work. Thus, it is our goal to document the ways interviewees respond to this discomfort as influenced by their anti-racist feminist commitments. Specifically, what are the affective dimensions of solidarity for these interviewees? What resources and discourses do they draw on when practicing solidarity?

A life story narrative approach offered an ideal method to document and analyze these challenges. Even though this approach could not document the psychological conflicts as they were happening *in situ*, the setting of the life history interview did allow the interviewees to articulate development with a rich contextual background before telling stories about their solidarity. The approach also allowed interviewees to tell stories at their own pace in a comfortable environment. In fact, many interviewees noted that the interview space was valuable to them precisely because it was an occasion for making meaning out of life experiences.

These stories of solidarity work were complex because interviewees described multiple, contradictory feelings and thoughts about their actions. Moreover, upon examination with the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 2015; Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008), we discerned multiple voices that interviewees deployed to position themselves and their relationships to their actions and the actors involved in practicing solidarity. As

described in the methods section, we used the Listening Guide and voice poems to discern the constellation of voices that interviewees wove together specifically at moments of psychological tension in the interview, particularly tension discussing racism, sexism, other forms of structural violence, and solidarity (or lack thereof). Typically, voices have a relationship to one another and may be aligned or in conflict with one another (Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008).

Conceptually, we envision voices to be aspects of a *dialogical self* model of the psyche (Hermans, 2001; Davis, 2015). This is a model of the self that theorizes a fluidity between “inner” and “outer” world, conceives of both social and personal identity, and integrates an analysis of systems of domination into people’s construction of self/identity. Hubert Hermans (2001), weaves together Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the self as a polyphonic novel and William James’ multiple selves conceptualization of the psyche to explain that our inner psyche is made up of various voices from our social world (e.g. parents, friends, etc), who speak/dialogue with one another “inside our head,” and exist always within relationships and not as atomized. In this model, there are both many selves (i.e., voices) and one continuous self (i.e. the “I” that pulls voices into an integrated self).

Internal dialogue and external dialogue with others are closely interwoven according to Hermans (2001). In external dialogue with others, certain voices can dominate, but context matters and certain people/environments can bring out different voices. In this study, we presented an environment to which interviewees were nominated as anti-racist feminists. Before the interview, I explained that I thought

they had something important to offer scholarship-activism. After the majority of the interviews, participants expressed appreciation for having a space to make sense of their life experiences and someone to listen attentively. These conditions optimize possible mutual understanding (Hermans, 2001), and therefore we would expect an exploration of more voices (i.e. aspects of one's self). This assertion is speculative, as each interviewee and interview was different, and the nascent but growing Listening Guide literature does not (yet) support strong claims as to how/when/why voices emerge in external dialogue. From our literature review, it appears that only Davis (2015) has explicitly linked the Listening Guide and voice poems to the dialogical self.

In order to discern patterns of voices used by interviewees, Listening Guide researchers recommend tuning one's ear to theoretical perspectives that may elucidate or bring into focus possible voice emergence (Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008). We relied on two bodies of literature to focus our analysis: (a) anti-racist feminist solidarity (from the previous chapter) and (b) the emerging literature on White fragility and its particular inflections with hegemonic masculinity reviewed in the introduction. White fragility is a response to socio-emotional structures of Whiteness being challenged. Although we would expect interviewees to deal with and perhaps embrace these disruptions. Concurrently, Whiteness is so deeply embedded in White experience that we also expected some fragility responses. During the section of the interview in which participants discussed solidarity, many discussed tensions and challenges to

fully doing this work. Some of the challenges represented social barriers (e.g. lack of resources) and others represented psychological challenges (e.g. fear).

This chapter is organized to introduce and describe the voice patterns that we discerned after our extensive analysis using the Listening Guide. Describing the characteristics of each voice, as well as how interviewees typically used each voice, we present a voice poem for each (in the following subsection we describe what these are; also please refer to pages 44-46 in the Method chapter for more details about this process). We will then explain some of the ways that interviewees used each voice with an emphasis on (a) voices in tension with one another, (b) voices in harmony or melding together, and (c) the co-movement of voices with one another. Lastly, we present a case analysis of three excerpts from three interviewees that demonstrate the complex relationship that voices have with one another and ways they can foreclose or open possible avenues of solidarity. As a reminder, the Listening Guide and voice poetry are methods of interpretative analysis that allow for multiple readings. Our readings are based in collective, consensus-based interpretations of our research team, which we grounded in the various literatures that conceptualize this study.

Voices of Navigating Solidarity: Tension, Fragility, and Integration

When I asked participants about solidarity, social justice, activism, and privilege, interviewees responded with a symphony of seven voices. Not every interviewee had each of the voices, but most had all of them to some extent, and all of the interviewees utilized most of them. We named these voices: narrator, critic, reflexive White-male-privileged citizen, outside/victim, voice of the subaltern, voice

of the movement, and voice of compassion (see Table 5.1 on the following page). We will next describe how interviewees utilized each of these voices, except the narrator voice, which is self-explanatory. At times, particular reliance on certain voices seem to hinder anti-racist feminist solidarity in some interviewees, and we will indicate these pitfalls. Similar to Davis' (2015) Listening Guide exploration of participants' voices as aspects of their sexual selves, in this study we view these voices as dimensions of an interviewee's social justice self. These voices and their relationships to one another are the groundings that interviewees rely on (consciously or not) to make sense of doing solidarity work and the challenges/discomforts that such work entails.

In terms of analysis, the research team created voice poems during our second and third readings of each interview transcript in accordance with the Listening Guide protocol (Gilligan, 2015). The voices that we coded came from a process of creating voice poems at particular sections of the interview: those high in tension. The research practice of voice poems is rooted in a tradition of research poetry (Koelsch, 2015; Prendergast, 2009). We constructed poems by "standing alongside rather than gazing at" participants (Koelsch, 2015, p. 99); in other words, we arranged participants' utterances into the form: I/you/we + verb + important following words. Voice poems are an efficient and effective way of highlighting the (a) emotional level of the dialogue (Koelsch, 2015) and (b) creating a text in which a participant's voice or voices appear more starkly (Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008), and for both these reasons we will present poems that represent each voice in the next section. Creating a voice

Table 5.1

White Male Social Justice Voices

<u>Voice</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Narrator (text as is)	Tells autobiographical stories. Links life events to one another Typically with “I”
<u>Critic</u> (underline)	Critiques self, others, movements, practices This voice is like a double-edged sword Sometimes “I,” sometimes “you”
<u>Reflexive White- male- citizen</u> (double underline)	Expresses what men and what Whites have to do to engage anti-racist feminism Linked to social justice discourses Sometimes “I,” sometimes “we,” sometimes “you”
Outsider (bold)	Expressed one’s lived suffering/oppression Most men here do a good job of drawing from this but not getting lost in this. Danger of dwelling in one’s own oppression Typically “I”
<i>For the subaltern</i> (italics)	Speaks for other oppressed groups Danger when over identifying with it or conflating oppressions Sometimes “they,” sometimes “we”
Social movement (highlight)	Speaks for a movement (may be feminist, anarchist, etc.) that one is a part of Typically a “we” voice
<u>Compassion</u> (thick underline)	A compassionate heart voice Offers understanding and puts action into context

poem is surely a co-construction of the participant and the researcher. As such, following the literature on voice poems, we made each poem as terse as possible while trying to keep the meaning of the participant's ideas.

Critic

The critic voice showed up frequently and as a main voice for many of the interviewees. This voice criticized and made critiques of society, family, schools, the government, systems of domination, friends, conservatives, Left social movements, and themselves. Our analysis linked this voice to critical thinking, which provided the speaker with an analysis of "what is wrong." The critic voice is a double-edged sword, for critique is a weapon and can be over-used or misused. On the one hand, having a critical voice was part of many interviewees' perspective on systems of domination, and likely why some were nominated for the study. On the other hand, although it was not a large aspect of this samples' overall narrative voice, all of the research team experienced some degree of self-importance in some of the interviews.

The critic voice could act as an easy handle to hold on to for many of the interviewees. For people who have been in social movements for decades, critique can be a sign of bitterness. In fact, social movement subcultures can become riddled with a culture of critique that becomes a barrier for possible new-comers to activist spaces (Ziyad, 2016). In the context of this study, sometimes critiquing others acted as a rhetorical route to express what is wrong in the world and evade how the interviewee themselves was implicated in these systems of domination.

In the following voice poem, an interviewee¹⁴ explained that destroying the audio files of our interview was not a good idea, in case a misunderstanding arose between researcher and interviewee.

I'll just send you the link
I've been recently working on
I've been working with
I got one working with him
We haven't released that one
I think it's
I think
 you're a little bit nuts
I don't
I saw that
You'd want to
I never said that
You're misinterpreting
I don't know how
 you deal
You might wanna use it

¹⁴ We have chosen to keep interviewees' identities anonymous for this section. We do this for two primary reasons. Firstly, because we could identify most of the voices in most of the interviewees, we did not want to have one particular interviewee be the sole representative of a given voice. The second and related reason is that some of our analysis is critique, and we want to be read as critiquing structures of domination rather than individuals.

The interviewee established that he has experience with interviewing in his work and that the best practice is to keep the audio file. The voice poem shows several “I” statements, a “we” statement, and then “you” statements. The interviewee establishes credibility based on collective experience, and then offered commentary “you’re a bit nuts,” and a suggestion “you might wanna use it.” On the one hand, these suggestions make sense, and having the audio file might be useful. On the other hand, this dialogue came within the first minute of our interview, and several members of the research team experienced this as arrogance. At the time of the interview, I experienced this as friendly advice and appreciated hearing it, however members of the research team that do not have the same race, gender, class, and age privilege as I do expressed irritation that this interviewee seemed to always have the right answer. “I think you’re a little bit nuts” expressed in the first couple minutes of the interview can have an effect of re-centering the interviewee as the knowing center of the discourse, a rhetorical move typical of White masculinity (Cabrera 2014; Connell, 2005; Carroll, 2011).

Reflexive White-Male-Citizen (RWMC)

The reflexive White-male-citizen (RWMC) voice is related to the critique voice, except that this voice was aimed at the interviewees themselves and always includes an anti-racist feminist analysis. This voice helped interviewees critique themselves and other White men in their reproduction of privilege and oppression. The RWMC was sometimes associated with typical feelings of White fragility like guilt, shame, and anger, although these feelings were not always present for some of

the interviewees when this voice spoke (DiAngelo, 2011). This is a crucial voice from a social justice perspective, however the pitfalls in this voice include: (a) getting lost in the fragility and (b) allowing reflexive rhetoric stand in for action.

The RWMC voice was deployed when interviewees recognized their/others' social position as White men. Sometimes interviewees pointed out the effects of other White men, while at other moments interviewees named themselves as White men and the effects that has on themselves and others. Interviewees who were self-reflexive in this way named their own perpetuation of sexism and racism, which avoids dualistic ("us" vs. "them") anti-racism (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013).

The following voice poem exemplifies the RWMC. The interviewee discussed an experience being called out for taking up space in an activist group.

I had this sort of deep affectionate relationship

I couldn't find a real community

I wanted to be with

I had lots of individual friendships

I was rampantly hooking up

When did I develop

I don't know

I don't know

I don't think

I don't think

I had it on a conceptual level

I don't think I had it on a real level until after college

I sort of like took over a woman led group

I don't have enough data

I like coach people

I like to think of myself

I suspect I'm a harsher critic

I am with myself

I recognize dangerous patterns in myself

This voice poem includes only the pronoun “I” and no “you” or “we.” The interviewee narrated a story of taking over an activist group and, in doing so, almost destroyed a university organizing group dedicated to student issues. This interviewee named past transgressions of abusing male privilege “rampantly hooking up” and “took over a woman led group”, and by doing so he offered vulnerability to be judged on past abuses. For this interviewee, he repeated “I don't know” and “I don't think,” which seem to indicate some hesitation. This poem ends with reflection on himself -- “I suspect” and “I recognize.” The RWMC voice is complicated, and reflects a consciousness about power and privilege that is necessary in social movements (Collins, 2000; Crass, 2013), yet may be beset by underlying feelings of guilt and shame, which we read as being a part of this interview.

This voice is not necessarily connected to any actions to change the systems of domination that gave rise to these feelings in the first place. Although most interviewees talked extensively about taking action and not just analyzing and

critiquing, both the critic and the RWMC voice can both fall prey to the “paralysis of analysis” (Frankenberg, 1993) and “non-performativity of anti-racism” (Ahmed, 2004). By non-performativity Ahmed (2004) explains that anti-racist rhetoric like “I am racist,” and “I have studied Whiteness,” do not in and of themselves do anything, and in fact can be dangerous if the speaker sees these statements as the end of the line for anti-racism. The RWMC can be a valuable tool in being an anti-racist agent or it can be a vapid release of guilt.

Outsider Voice

The outsider voice puts into words the lived experiences or feelings of being on the outside, marginalized by violence, and/or the victim of violence. This voice was primarily invoked when discussing histories of heterosexism, ableism, ageism, and/or victimization at the hands of male violence. In general, especially among dominant groups, there can be a tendency to dwell on one’s own victimhood (Kimmel, 2013). Yet, in this study, some interviewees spoke with emotional intensity with this voice and, by and large, most interviewees used this voice to speak of the process of their conscientization. In other words, they used this voice to speak to a sensitization to violence that allowed for later anti-racist feminist consciousness to take hold.

In the following poem an interviewee talked about going to jail after a politically motivated collective action. He described his time in jail as both traumatic and enlightening:

I felt like I could feel it more

I was put in solidarity
I immediately felt
I saw the trauma
I saw it, I saw it
I was filed
I mean no one should be in jail
I had so many conversations
I stole a pack of beer
I'm an alcoholic
I'm homeless
I'm in jail
What we did by community members
I talked to all
I talked to so many
You need to go to school
You need to stay in school
I had to
I was just going to go to school

In this poem, the “I” perspective predominated. This poem reads as a person experiencing, seeing, and feeling the inside of a jail (“I saw it, I saw it”). The narrator describes feeling isolated when seeing other people’s pain in jail and ends with a conversation to stay in school with advice given to “you”. This interviewee

described his time in jail as an important turning point in his consciousness and commitment to radical activism, which reflects the process of radical marginality (Unger, 2000). This poem also indicates a merging of two “I” voices: (a) the “I” of “I saw” being the interviewee and (b) the “I” of the “I stole beer/I’m an alcoholic/I’m homeless/I’m in jail” being others in jail. The pain that this interviewee expresses is from his own suffering and the suffering of others. Anti-racist scholars stress the importance that feeling-with others is valuable for solidarity, however there needs to be a critical distance (Shotwell, 2011). In other words, people from dominant groups must understand they suffer from systems of oppression but not in analogous ways to oppressed groups, which relates to the voice of the subaltern.

Voice of the Subaltern

The voice of the subaltern expresses the knowledge and experiences of racism and sexism from the point of view of people of Color and women/genderqueer people. The subaltern voice put into words oppression from the point of view of the oppressed. Interviewees talked about the challenges of living in White supremacist cisheteropatriarchy for those who do not have privilege. This voice may represent the mentors, friends, teacher, comrades, etc. who interviewees have learned from. Like many of the other voices, this voice may be a double-edged sword: learning is valuable but taking others’ pain as one’s own blurs who is oppressed and who is privileged. When this happens, there is a danger of an over-emphasis on empathy in social justice education, which can lead to activism *for* others rather than solidarity *with* them (Langhout, 2015; Shotwell, 2011).

This poem from one of the interviewees was constructed from one of the sections of the interview where he talked about learning about White privilege from his romantic partner:

You don't want to be that person
I think
I've gotten better
I don't take it as personally
I am really worried
I will not do that again
I feel like everyone was always learning
You score on the oppression Olympics
You don't understand
You need to be ready
We are still evolving
You're willing to listen
You're willing to
I am sorry

Compared to the other poems presented so far, this poem contains many lines with “you” as the subject. One way to read this poem is the “you” is a general audience. From a dialogical self (Hermans, 2001) perspective, another interpretation is the “you” represents the narrator himself at a previous stage in life when he was called in by his partner. The author of this voice is telling, asking, explaining what oppression

is like and what the person should or could do, hence why we called this the voice of the subaltern. Anti-oppression literature makes clear that people who occupy privileged social locations must listen to the oppressed in order to learn about themselves and the world (Freire, 2000). At the same time, there may be an inherent danger in identifying too strongly with this voice. Although this voice may be accurate, this voice is still the narrator's psyche approximating or ventriloquating the experience of another person. Building on the analysis of the outsider voice, Shotwell (2011) explains empathy presupposes placing one's self in another's psychosocial world, which is not epistemologically possible, and thus fosters false knowledge (e.g. that I as a White person know how it feels to be Black). Instead, Shotwell offers *mitgefühl* ("feeling with"). Feeling with means still being moved by the suffering by others (i.e. listening to the voice of the subaltern) but keeping in mind that one does so from their standpoint and does not become the Other.

Voice of Compassion

A few interviewees expressed a perspective of compassion for themselves and for others. Among those that voiced compassion, this sounded like putting (violent) actions within social contexts and offering love and forgiveness for mistakes and shortcomings. hooks (2000) asserts that feminist activists, "should have the ability to show love and compassion, show love through their actions, and be able to engage in successful dialogue" (p. 102-3). We saw this voice as an antidote for an over-active critic voice, following Lorde's (2007) "I have to learn to love myself before I can learn to love you or accept your love" (p. 174). Although this did not come up in our

study, a pitfall for this voice would be its preponderance without a critical and reflexive voice. Compassion without a structural analysis leads to attributions at the personal and interpersonal levels (Talvacchia, 2003). The voice of compassion was more uncommon among the interviewees. We could not find a poem to succinctly highlight this voice, but will present examples of this voice in the following section called “Symphonies: Voices in Movement.”

Voice of the Social Movement

Interviewees signified various collectives when using “we.” Some of these collectives included: all of humanity, the United States, radical social movements, and White men. The group(s) that people see as their in-group matters a great deal for their actions in the world (Jobin-Leeds & AgitArte, 2016). For this study, we noted when interviewees talked about themselves as parts of movements (and which movements they indicated).

We constructed the following poem from one of the interviewees, who spoke of a “we” voice connected with student organizing on a college campus.

We already have
We have work to do
We know is unsatisfactory
What are we are fighting for?
What are we really trying to build?
I think that people
You know

I think that people
I've seen this unfold
I think it comes from place
I think that people
I actually dramatically reshaped
I immediately see
I think there is a kind of
I can see
We're not comfortable
We've been trying to think through and work on

Structurally the poem introduces an agitation and organizing that is taken up by a “we” collective. The narrator then takes a step back and reflects on this organizing from the place of “I.” The final two lines bring the “we” back and relate that this struggle is not over. Individualism and Whiteness intersect in ways to minimize “we” consciousness among White people (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Frankenberg, 1993). This interview had a strong “we” voice throughout his interview. Yet, we also wondered whether a preponderance of “we” could also act as a distancing mechanism and diffusion of responsibility. It is important to balance the needs and concerns of a “we” with the responsibilities of an “I.”

Symphonies: Voices in Movement

We turn now to examples of interviewees deploying the voices. We chose the following three examples for their highlighting the complex interplay of voices in

articulating, justifying, and questioning participants' own and other's actions. In each of these examples, the interviewee recalled an instance of solidarity that was challenging for them. As a research team we found each of these examples important for the ways that they highlight very complex sets of discourses that interviewees navigate, and for the interviewees' complex actions and ideas. In each excerpt, we indicate various voices with text effects (e.g. bold, italics, etc.) specified in Table 5.1.

Peter: "I'm octoroon"

In the following narrative, Peter describes a complex anti-racist tactic he uses to point out White privilege to other White people, or as he said, to "tell fish that they are wet." With this tactic, Peter identifies as "octoroon," a racial identification used to categorize Black people who were thought to be 1/8 Black. Peter appropriates this identity not specifically to identify as Black but rather as Irish, a historically derogated identity (Topp, 2003). He roots this tactic in his mother's actions of identifying as Black in order to call into question her mother's racism. Peter clarified that he uses this tactic only after checking in with people of Color present. We discerned Peter using narrator, critic, outsider/victim, and voice for the subaltern in the story:

So being my mother's child, often when I'm questioned about how I got to this, *I just tell people I'm octoroon because that's one of my favorite crazy American identities is octoroon*, and then I went to see the awesome revival that they call The Octoroon in Brooklyn this year which was rewritten and restaged by a Black playwright who did like a framing device around it of this

very popular play that was written in the pre-civil war era, and it's a melodrama and it's very kooky melodrama that, I think it's called The Octoroon and one is- I can't get it right, it's like a play on whether it's an or the when they reframed it but it's about somebody who is an octoroon and the identity politics and problems and of course um, **the way that works with me that's interesting is that I've always been told I don't look Jewish, like that's a failing on my part. Like that's another sort of, that's another bit of my intersectional experience is that my failure to look Jewish has then been as excuse for people to make incredibly anti-Semitic remarks in front of me** so that's why I'm sort of interested in exploring this totally fictional side of me, **because as far as I know I call my heritage mashed potatoes like every country that you think of having mostly White people in Europe there's a trace of me from there. So I call it mashed potatoes heritage of you let people wander all over Europe having sex with each other and getting married and you eventually get me, but, taking the piss out of it and sort of sharing a little funny sharing with you, one of the reasons I don't really LOOK Jewish is that I'm the spitting image of my one complete Irish great-grandfather. I'm literally his twin, so the one eighth of my whatever background created my actually face, *I'm octoroon if you will (laughs) and of course before Black people moved North, being Irish was a big problem right? So to that extent I am an octoroon because I'm one eighth—in the system of bigotry and semi-racism slash overt racism***

in the colonial era, being Irish was bad, so I would have been an octoroon according to them. But also, it, I think it, just pulls all these interesting chains identifying as an octoroon because first of all modern Americans don't even know that word even though it's only about a century of active use so it's a slightly anachronistic word and I'm a wordsmith, but I think it also begs all of these crazy identity questions, and it also is to me a way of my speaking in code to my brothers and sisters of color because when I will tell someone that I am an octoroon almost always any Black person within twenty feet of me who hears me starts to giggle, right? And then they might explain it to another Black person and then the White people are left looking whatever it's part of my telling the fish that they're wet because if I have to walk you through that, you clearly know you're missing something. Like I've clearly done something interesting as a little lightning rod, but like clearly what's interesting and slightly annoying to people who are more privileged and less aware is that when, when I get, I get a reaction they can't comprehend from people who shouldn't be understanding me, I'm telling them they're wet...

Peter rooted his use of identifying as octoroon in his Jewish heritage and experience of anti-Semitism when he passed as non-Jewish. In a twist, he justified the 1/8 heritage in being 1/8 Irish, a formerly derogated category. In doing this, he merged the voices of outsider/victim with voice for the subaltern, "I'm octoroon if you will," and "a way of my speaking in code to my brothers and sisters of color." He further

justified this tactic using the critic voice of “pull[ing] all these interesting chains,” and “clearly what’s interesting and slightly annoying to people who are more privileged and less aware.”

This tactic is very complex and potentially quite controversial even as Peter qualified that he does this with humor. We use two competing frameworks of anti-racist solidarity theory to analyze Peter’s narrative in order to deconstruct the complexities. The first framework interprets Peter’s actions as consistent with race traitor activism (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996). This framework encourages White people to subvert the logic of White supremacy by engaging in public actions that bring Whiteness into focus by performing its contradictions, sometimes with “outrageous acts of provocation” (p. 36). Ignatiev and Garvey give an example of being treated preferentially, a race traitor could say, “what makes you think that I’m White?” Peter’s ambiguously claiming a historically Black identity in order to start conversation about racism may be rooted in this type of race treason. Moreover, Peter mentioned that he checks in with people of Color before engaging in such acts, which demonstrates an awareness of accountability, and as a White person who may not be able to see the full impact of his actions. At the same time, one must wonder if he can check in with every person of Color present, and if doing so might tokenize certain people to authorize action.

From a differing anti-racist perspective, one grounded in White racial dualism (Winant, 1996; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), Peter’s claiming of an octoroon identity may represent an attempt at anti-racism that re-centers Whiteness. We coded

Peter's use of octoroon discourse as voice speaking for the subaltern. For a White person to claim a historically Black identity Peter is on shaky grounds within the history of White appropriation of Black culture (hooks, 1992). Although Peter claimed that he is not actually identifying as Black, he does claim to speak in code to his "brothers and sisters of Color," which seems to indicate some level of identification (perhaps unconsciously) as a person of Color. Several of the interviewees who have spent much of their life in social spaces where they are the only White person used slippery language around whether or not they identify as something akin to "honorary person of Color." That Peter's tactic is meant to arouse laughter among people of Color at the expense of clueless White people seems to put this tactic into a dualistic perspective on anti-racism of those White people who are "good" and those who do not get it (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), which undercuts the tactic as effective anti-racism.

Recall that Peter said that he checks in with people of Color in the room before using these types of tactics. Nevertheless, it is unclear – and cannot be made clear secondhand -- if others are truly supportive or merely say so. Peter identifies as a "wordsmith" and is a writer. On the one hand, his performance could be interpreted as trying something new to break through the veil of Whiteness (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). On the other hand, appropriating Black identity may serve to re-center White identities and White supremacist logics.

Ryan: “Get off the bleachers”

Ryan offered another set of perspectives on solidarity and another set of challenges that arise. In the following excerpt, Ryan discussed an experience in which a conflict erupted at a conference regarding whether or not a Black prisoner’s letter (who was not there) should be read out loud or not. The prisoner wanted the letter to be read in order to highlight the abuses he faced in prison. The letter, however, contained racist language used by the guards, and a Black man at the conference did not want the letter read out loud. Ryan described this situation and his heuristic for engaging in solidarity:

So I think that like, um, for me, finding um, women and people of color that I trust that I have political affinity with, that aren’t just like... You can find a token person of any demographic to say what you want them to say and I think it’s important that you not just one find just people that will affirm everything about them is great you know? Um... But, similarly like to think that there’s like um, and maybe this is something we’ve had the benefit of learning in the past thirty years or whatever since the New Left era, is that like, there’s not a singular um perspective of any demographic group either. So it’s like the idea of how do you support decolonization, how do you support like native self-determination? It’s going to be so different based on who you talk to and what their position is and so you kind of have to, figure out how to negotiate that by yourself and based on what your own values are. Um, I was recently at a conference last year, and, um, there was a really

complicated moment of race-based um... conflict. Um, where, um, basically it was a majority White grouping of people and this, and a black revolutionary former political prisoner um sort of called out this panel that was occurring, because of this racist letter that was read that, um, had like the n-word in it and things like that and this panelist who was White like spoke all the words, like said all these racist words but they were asked to by this other Black revolutionary who is currently incarcerated who these letters were written by law enforcement officers saying why he shouldn't be let out on parole. And so he wanted everyone to hear every word and hear how gross they were but it was really triggering for this other person, for this Black man in a room of mostly White people. And so it just turned into this really complicated horrible mess, and everyone's having reactions to it both emotionally and intellectually and viscerally, um, and I think that's an example of like here's these two, Black revolutionaries who have spent time in prison, one of them still is in prison, one of them does like, um, anti-prison activism and like, they can't agree on whether or not it's okay to read this letter in public, you know? And, so who are we going to, who am I going to stand with? On that issue maybe I don't have to stand with anyone specifically but it's like a conflict I'm viewing and kind of in the middle of um, I didn't read the letter but I was on the panel when it happened and um, so then the man who was at the event put out a statement and like, wanted people to respond in a particular way and this prisoner wrote a letter in response to that that was like what do we do,

we're kind of in a rock and a hard place spot and especially if you take a sort of politically correct like you follow the leadership of the people of color approach you're kind of in a lose-lose situation because like either way you're going to not be following the leadership of like an older Black revolutionary. And so if that's like the rubric we use then we're fucked. So we have to use something that like takes us off the bleachers and is like no actually we're like active agents in revolutionary change and it's like up to us as much as, well maybe not as much as anyone but it's up to us to like take a principled position and know what a principled position is when we see it, like not when we're told by the person of the right pigment, you know?

Ryan grounded his justification for action with voices of the critic, reflexive White-male-citizen, and voice of the movement. Ryan's critic voice criticized other anti-racist approaches in the Left that assume White people can simply find a person of Color to follow in order to be in solidarity. Ryan's RWMC voice clarified the stakes of the situation, asking questions of how to go deeper than simply tokenizing people of color but rather practice "decolonization" from a White positionality.

Furthermore, Ryan repeatedly positions himself as "we," which by the end of the narrative he clearly means "agents of revolutionary change."

Ryan clearly positioned himself as a part of a movement that cannot base solidarity merely on identities (Cohen, 1997, Milstein, 2015). Most of the interviewees said that it was crucial to learn from people of Color. Ryan did not appear to be contradicting this, but rather simply basing one's actions on being "told

by the person of the right pigment” what to do is tokenizing, and in this case gets one nowhere. On the contrary, Ryan implied that being a critical thinker, developing one’s own set of principles, and dialoguing with people of Color offers a more revolutionary grounding for solidarity than a method of only following leadership of people of Color.

Ryan did not clarify exactly what a principled position is in this situation or any other, but that it is important to know it when one sees it. He did not take a stand in this conflict, which seems somewhat contradictory when he later said that activists need to “get off the bleachers.” From a different perspective, perhaps Ryan not taking a stand represented his decision that a White person has no right to do so when the conflict surrounds anti-Black language¹⁵. Ryan left open the question of what exactly White male activists are supposed to base the foundation of their solidarity on. It was noteworthy to us that he did root this action in a voice of outsider or voice for the subaltern like Peter did in the previous narrative.

Ryan’s critic, reflexive voices and voice of the movement give him multiple perspectives on a complex situation. Sandoval (2000) praises the capability to have multiple perspective and be able to toggle between them as possessing differential

¹⁵ After a member check, Ryan added in an e-mail message, “It’s interesting that I didn’t talk more about where I fell on the issue at the conference because I definitely had a position. I think at the point that ‘taking a position’ mattered, however, there wasn’t much to be done. And, that, the position that I ended up coming to is beside the point for the purposes of this example. The more important point was that I couldn’t simply look to a singular Black leadership for the ‘right’ thing. I had to be free thinking, identify my stake in the struggle, and base what I thought was appropriate from my own experience and knowledge.”

consciousness. Ryan, a veteran of intersectional social movements and decades of organizing, repeatedly took complex perspectives in his interview. He seemed to want to talk about hard questions of identity, privilege, solidarity, and impasses in his experiences

Rowan: “There’s actually a tenderness.”

The final excerpt from Rowan brings to the fore another complex scenario. Rowan draws upon many discourses while describing his process of moving from being emotionally shut down by White men taking up collective space to finding compassion based upon his own experiences with transitioning.

Sure, um, yeah I mean um, I think you know then going back to context I guess it just kind of depends on the context I would say, um like I’m, a White trans man who um, has a lot of passing privilege and um and you know passing is a complicated, term, uh, in terms of like it’s racial history and then applying that to gender and another way of saying that I’m a White trans man who often receives a lot of um like, perceived, cis gender because I’m often these days out in the world, I think, not read as trans so I get a lot of cisgender privilege. If anything I’m more often read as like a queer or gay cisgender man, um, I think when I was like early in transition I really it’s like especially in political spaces I didn’t want to be seen as the enemy you know as like oh man I don’t want to be a White man what the hell you know, and I think at this point it’s like I don’t feel nearly as defensive about it um, as much of the time and uh, there was something else I was going to say

and I totally just lost my train of thought... About White masculinity um, yeah I mean I think I really, I you know I still have moments where like I'll be sitting and organizing meetings and, feel like a lot of frustration and even like feelings of hate for certain like White especially straight cisgender men who take up a lot of space and suck up a lot of air and I know that that you know whatever comes from dealing with sexism for a lot of my life and like you know so usually I can now just kind of sit with it and like try not to engage in the level where I'm just like fueling the fire, it's a really interesting thing um, in terms of the way that I relate to other like White men or masculine people, especially cis men you know the one thing about like uh, sort of what's the opposite of like sexism?

Bob: The opposite of it?

Rowan: **Or rather like what sexism sort of how do I say this, it's like no longer being the object or target of sexism in the way that I was as a White woman, um, I've like come to realize how seductive it is like specifically like maybe we could call it, um, like homosocialism like you, like basically like the sort of affinity among men and especially like, um, like when it comes to like White men like it's interesting the way that um, the way that I would be ignored as like a queer White woman by like just sort of random straight White dudes on the street, um, sometimes like there will be like I'll have a weird sort of it feels like a homophobic interaction with them but often times like when people just seem like they're trying**

to bro down or something like I get confused because I think there's actually a tenderness to that exchange that has like the potential to be something other than sexist or misogynist but because it's most often based in misogyny like that's the other edge of that sword but I was surprised to have learned that when I started you know being read as a man in the world more consistently and um, and I guess I'm still trying to figure out what to do with like what I see as the potential for some of that tenderness or affinity that's there and like, how that could be a certain basis for like, **I don't know trying to like, encourage other White men together to like, think about just how to be in the world in a way that's more anti-racist and more feminist like not from a really heady place of trying to like convince people of something but like more of like a particular kind of relating that actually is like about, letting the sort of like egos relax enough to just like go to have something different to happen in** that exchange and that's like it's so fleeting and, you know I've had moments where like um, I feel like I've been successful in like helping de-escalate a situation by trying to like relate to other men especially when they're getting really worked up in a way that's like not about trying to like feel that anger but trying to like, de-escalate and then sometimes it just like really doesn't work and uh, yeah I think just on the personal level I'm still trying to figure out in terms of like moments of where like interventions aren't helpful.

In this excerpt Rowan expressed five of the seven voices: every one in our chart except for the social movement voice (although he does use it in other parts of his interview) and voice for the subaltern. Rowan started the excerpt reflexively positioning himself as a White trans man and discussing passing privilege that he has. His outsider voice then described feeling threatened by other White men, but then describes using meditation practices to sit with the feeling and finds a degree of compassion. Rowan's compassion voice aligned with his voice of outsider/victim to sexism (that he especially felt when he was identified as a woman), and he expanded upon an insight that perhaps sexism and heterosexism are forms of bonding that could be deconstructed and changed through compassion responses.

Part of what makes Rowan's insight so moving is the alignment of his voices. Listen Guide researchers can determine voice alignment by examining how "I" statements are connected with certain voices (vs. "you" or "they" and those voices) and how voices move together or connect throughout an interview (Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008). Rowan's voices are indeed connected to "I" statements, and the pattern of voices connecting with another, rather than conflicting, is consistent in Rowan's interview.

Rowan drew from experiencing the world from being read by others as a woman to being read as a man. Our research team agreed that Rowan's reflexivity voice was his main voice. Concurrently, his critic, outside, and compassion voices were in alignment with his main voice. He was critical of himself and of others, while offering compassion for himself and others. He drew on his outside (and now

insider) knowledge to think about sexism from the perspective of the oppressed and the oppressor. He believed that transformation is possible, even for “bros,” while in the interview always centering the voices and experiences of those who are most affected by oppression.

This does not mean that he knew specifically how to intervene in these situations, and it seems possible that he might get stuck in particular situations like Ryan in the previous section. What makes Rowan’s narrative different from Ryan’s is that he is drawing on his own experiences of oppression. Whereas Ryan grounded his actions on “principled positions” of “revolutionary change,” Rowan drew on what it feels like to be victimized by sexism and then be an insider to the oppressor culture. As we have discussed in other chapters, this is affective and tacit understanding of oppression, that one “feel in their bones” (Shotwell, 2011). For people who face oppression (e.g. Rowan as a trans man) revolutionary principles (conceptual knowledge) and affective/tacit knowledge of oppression can be mutually reinforcing groundings for action. This is not to say that oppressed people always know what to do or that gender oppression allows one to know what to do about racism. The point is that for straight White cis men, who do not experience racial or gender oppression, one’s gut-level reaction may not lead in a social justice direction.

Discussion

The voice patterns that emerged in the analysis of the interview demonstrated a different pattern of White fragility and responses than the anger, deflection, and defensiveness fragility in the literature (Matias & DiAngelo, 2013). Peter, Ryan, and

Rowan embraced talking about Whiteness and masculinity, however we believe that each of them exhibited reaction of tension and utilized complex discourses to position their actions as anti-racist to normalize any feeling of guilt, shame, anger, etc. Having this “bad affect” is not necessarily a bad thing for anti-racist Whites (Shotwell, 2011), and being comfortable with the discomfort may be necessary for problems that do not have easy solutions.

In terms of the structure of voices, drawing on many discourses for answers, and not to get locked into one, allowed interviewees to express nuanced understanding of their place in social movements (Cohen, 1997; Gelderloos 2010). When voices harmonize with one another, instead of cause conflict, anti-racist feminist solidarity is possible, although it is rarely simple to integrate psychologically and rarely has easy answers. Both for oppressed groups (Lorde, 2007) and for anti-racist Whites (Frankenberg, 1993) turning silence into language and language into action is crucial for psychological integrity.

The narratives of the White men in this study demonstrate that this is easier said than done. Developing praxis while not reproducing systems of domination is difficult (Alexander, 2002). Peter, Ryan, and Rowan have been anti-racist feminist activists for most of their lives. What these excerpts bring to light is even for such seasoned activists, “doing the right thing” is challenging, might not exist, and one may cause harm in the process of taking action. For these reasons, we believe that White male fragility changes as one goes through anti-racist feminist conscientization, but never fully goes away.

We presented Peter, Ryan, and Rowan's stories in this section because they are stories of attempting to turn analysis into anti-racist feminist action. Part of working through these contradictions is developing an internal compass of right and wrong based on anti-oppression learning at the head, heart, and hands levels, balanced with humility because there is likely never one right answer (Milstein, 2015). In supporting this compass, the voice chart developed in this section is a vision of a guide for others on the path of anti-racist feminist praxis. Voices are connected to wider discourses (Davis, 2015). The critic, reflexive White-male-citizen, outsider, of the subaltern, compassion, and social movement voice were widely used by these interviewees, and we offer them with hope that their embodiment in this study can help others make sense of their own voices and actions.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study analyzed sixteen White male activists' anti-racist feminist consciousness development from the theory of conscientization as outlined by feminists of Color and other critical theorists. As discussed in the introduction, although conscientization is a process that centers the liberation struggles of oppressed groups, members of privileged groups can engage a process of "conscientization of the oppressor" (Freire, 2000; Allen & Rossatto, 2009). In order to promote collective liberation, it is important for social movements to understand how members of dominant groups come to work to dismantle the systems that give them privilege (Sandoval, 2000). At the same time, these efforts must not re-center the needs of privileged groups at the expense of oppressed groups (hooks, 1989). This study has attempted to navigate this balance and provide empirical descriptions of White men's anti-racist feminist conscientization through their life stories and development.

We conclude this study by summarizing our major results, making sense of these results in the context of social movements and feminist and social psychological theory, offering some implications of this study, as well as its limitations. Generalizability was not the goal of this study, and these results should not be taken as such. The primary goals are applicability and transformation. The models that we developed are compellations drawn from the lives of these activists and grounded in relevant bodies of literature. They may have applicability in other contexts, but other researchers and activist must make those considerations and decisions. In terms of

transformation, we mean in terms of the participants, the researchers, and systems of domination that structure this society. We will clarify some of those transformation at the end of this concluding chapter.

White Men and Anti-racist Feminist Consciousness

The results demonstrated that some of the factors important in conscientization for members of oppressed groups in their development may also be important for members of dominant groups. These factors include: experiencing marginalization/powerlessness, learning within communities, learning from mentorship, and learning from action/reflection praxis. The lives of the interviewees largely confirmed the working model of conscientization developed in the introduction (see Figure 1.1). Conscientization for the White men in this study included histories of powerlessness/marginalization and key turning points to start to question authority and commonsensical truths. Moreover, a process of organizing and learning in community and with mentorship were salient in almost every interview. The process of learning was not just in terms of concepts, but included affective and embodied learning. In terms of commitment, some of the interviewees only recently joined social movements and communities in struggle; others had been on such a journey for decades.

Although there were some similar patterns of development to others studies in the conscientization literature, differing patterns also emerged specifically around mentorship and non-intersectionality. Mentorship was the most frequently mentioned and often the strongest factor in the lives of the interviewees. Specifically, this

mentorship often came in the form of critique. Initial turning points included being “called out” for oppressive behavior. Yet, it seemed that relationships of “calling in” were even more powerful. For dominant group members, mentorship and learning must include attention to power and privilege at the personal and structural levels (DiAngelo, 2011). Certainly, White men can radicalize without anti-racist feminist aspects to this radicalization. What seems particularly noteworthy to the men in this study is that their mentorship and learning centered specifically on issues and relationships to Whiteness and masculinity.

Intersectional knowledge was a second difference in the pattern of conscientization of this group as compared to conscientization of women of Color. The social positions of White men clearly differ from women and people of Color, and social position affects group experiences around race, class, and gender and thus articulation of how those experiences relate to anti-racist feminism (Collins, 2000). Particularly, while the inextricable link between gender and racial oppression was articulated at times by interviewees in this study, at other times the link was not clear. In other words, interviewees noted the importance of taking race, gender, and other power structures into account, however many interviewees described their own strength of analysis on *one* axis of domination (race or gender). A sub-group that had a different pattern that diverged from this was among the gay and trans men of this study, who integrated their own sexual/gender oppression as intimately connected with their anti-racist feminist conscientization.

There are several implications that these results imply for thinking about conscientization and White masculinities. First of all, White men can engage in anti-racist feminist conscientization. That these men told stories of transformation and commitment that centered anti-racist feminist issues validates that there are some White men on this path. Beliefs that men categorically cannot engage in feminist movements or that racial justice movement need not include White people are unfounded, acknowledging that inclusion is fraught with difficulties. Secondly, although White men can engage conscientization, because of their social location and privilege, their relationship to feminism and anti-racism (i.e. their standpoint is not the outsider-within) is not be the same as women's and people of Color (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1991). Learning about sexist and racist oppression is not rooted in the interviewees' own embodied experience, although many did experience other types of oppression and marginalization. Because this learning is through other modalities, it is a different relationship to knowledge than for people who experience this violence directly (Harding, 1991). This means that White men can potentially contribute to anti-racist feminism but should do so realizing the limitations and privilege of their positionality. This point also has to do with solidarity practices, another key cite of implications of this study.

White Male Anti-racist Feminist Solidarity

This study also contributes to the understanding of solidarity and how relationships of solidarity exist in the lives of these White men. From their narratives we constructed an ecological model (see Figure 4.1) of solidarity practices of these

dominant group actors in social justice movements. Previous writings on solidarity among privileged groups emphasizes either the action components (Milstein, 2015) or psychological components (Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008). The ecological model brings together the social psychology of solidarity, which includes psychological dimensions, everyday/interpersonal interactions, and collective action within political projects.

For the interviewees, solidarity meant challenging and destabilizing structures and practices that uphold Whiteness, hegemonic masculinity, and other systems of domination. Many interviewees explained that this happens at multiple levels of analysis that are interconnected. For example, working with one's internalized superiority could lead to acting differently in collective space and/or organizing to work with other White men, which could lead to new questions around one's privilege. This cycling of internal work, action in the work, and action's effects on the person exemplifies radical praxis (Freire, 2000) or politics of empowerment (Collins, 2000). There is no one model of solidarity and the diversity of projects and emphases demonstrate solidarity can show up in many ways and depends on the particular context of people's lives. Nonetheless, the model developed should be viewed as a working rubric and could be a guide for future studies as well as dominant group activists interested in social justice.

White Male Fragility and Solidarity

The Listening Guide voice-centered approach to analysis allowed us to examine the interviews at a discourse level. We developed a map of the symphony of

voices that each participant deployed in the interviews as they discussed challenging moments in their critical consciousness development as well as activist projects. We envision the map that we developed (table 5.1) to be a helpful guide for the interviewees, other activists engaged in solidarity, and further theory development. We offer this map very preliminarily with acknowledgment that this is a specific group and there is only a small but growing literature of voice-mapping.

The particular voice map of this study showed various voices that the participants' internalized on their path to social justice praxis: a critic, voicing critical thought; a reflexive voice, representing consciousness of privilege; an outsider, voicing an outsider looking in; a subaltern, representing learning from others who are further marginalized; a compassionate voice, representing love and forgiveness; and a "we" voice, representing social movements. Consistent with Listening Guide scholarship, at times and in some interviewees these voices were in harmony and at other times they were in conflict with one another (Gilligan, 2015; Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008). Moreover, an over-reliance on any one voice, especially the critic and voice for the subaltern, can hinder more reflexive change and action. Finding balance and harmony with these voices seems like an important part of doing the challenging work of solidarity, continuing to grow consciousness, and not falling prey to fragility.

Methodological Implications: Critical Methodology and Limitations

This study was inspired by the activism, scholarship, and struggles of oppressed peoples in general and of feminists of Color in particular. Accordingly, we attempt to destabilize structures of domination that privilege White-supremacist

cisheteropatriarchy. Building on White and Dotson's (2010) "it takes a village to raise a critical researcher," the methodological processes themselves attempted to intervene on oppressive research practices. Specifically, a community of engaged researchers and the process of relating to interviewees were important approaches that we would like to see in more research projects. These considerations have to do with the transformational goals mentioned in the introduction of this section, and we will describe them further here.

Ultimately, much of this dissertation was written (with substantial support from others) by the primary researcher in this project, however this research could not have succeeded without a critically engaged, diverse, and accountable research team. By creating a critical and supportive research brave space (Arao & Clemons, 2013), we examine the interviews from our different social locations and dialogued about different perspective and interpretations of the interviews. Not only did this yield more valid analysis, but the research team itself was transformed by reading the interviews and our discussions. One of the research co-investigators on this project described their work on our team, the desire to connect it with activism rather than grades, and the collaborative space that we all created:

I appreciate your kind words about my participation in radlab. I had/have no expectation of getting credits of any sort (I don't even know what I would be able to do with them, haha), so my participation was fully based on just wanting to be there. This is also one of the first academic spaces that I've participated in that's had intention behind ([I

tend to look at a lot of classwork as, I don't know, less for learning and more so I can provide something to be graded on), and like I said at a meeting a few weeks ago, I do want to do a "good job" because I know and feel that your research is important (and also really cool and interesting) and I strive to treat it as such.

Far too often, undergraduate research assistants are exploited for their labor with compensation of grades in a hierarchical education system (Martin, 2013). Although I did give research co-investigators class credit, our project was larger than reproducing power in an academic setting. Our goal was to support each other in articulating our own relationships to liberation struggles and learning from each other. That took the form of transcribing and analyzing the interviews, but it also included attending talks at community centers, going to rallies, coming together for potlucks, sending each other zines, and weekly checking in with each other.

Our approach with the participants in the study was also an attempt to be accountable to the group of interviewees. We conducted member checks, an ethical and methodological practice (Simpson & Quigley, 2016) with the participants to calibrate our analysis and interpretations of their words with them. Research that takes from communities and interprets data without any feedback or accountability to those communities does not hold to social justice ethics for research. Although doing member checks created feelings of anxiety

for me, discussing the analysis and retuning some of it with the participants' feedback was valuable and promotes a dialogical research process.

Although this was not a participatory action research project, the interview may have acted to further facilitate participants' conscientization¹⁶. Many interviewees expressed how valuable reflecting on their life and activism in the context of an active listener was for them. For example, John wrote in an e-mail correspondence with me, "I am grateful for how your project and your interview enhance my current realizations." Some made intellectual and emotional connections for the first time. Some said that speaking to another White man about feminist and anti-racism was a new and welcomed experience. Friere (2000) explains that critical reflection and dialogue are important components of conscientization, and the interview offered space for these. A life-history interview script and process that focuses on critical consciousness could be valuable on the ground for activists to interview one another.

Limitations and Future Directions

The principle limitation of this dissertation is the structures of Whiteness with which this project is imbricated. In a White-supremacist society, people of Color should not be expected to research Whiteness. Yet, research on Whiteness by White people is impacted by structures of Whiteness in particular ways (Wiegman, 2012). In other words, White people ask

¹⁶ I'm grateful to Alexis Kargl for bringing this to my attention.

different questions and have different interpretations because they are not directly targeted by racism.

Although this project attempted to be as reflexive and accountable as possible, in the end this was primarily research on White men by a White man. Several practices of reflexivity were taken in this project to account and mitigate this. My dissertation committee was a supportive, critical guide, yet no women of Color were on the committee. The interviewees were nominated partially by women of Color, and this process was ethically challenging. The research team included mostly women and non-binary people of Color, but there is an unavoidable power and access differential between graduate students and undergraduates to the research. None of this is to disparage any of the people I mention here, nor do I think these are fatal flaws. As described in the method section, we attempted to be reflexive and accountable to each of these issues. Nonetheless, this project is limited by the standpoint of its principle investigator and must be read as such. Future studies could take an even more diversely collaborative approach in the research design and execution. Co-authors who occupy different standpoints would reduce these limitations related to White masculinity.

The standpoints of the interviewees are also a limiting factor in this research though in a somewhat different way. The interviews and analysis represent the interviewee's interpretation of his own life and actions. This limits the research question to how White men interpret their own life and

solidarity. This knowledge is important, yet more important in terms of solidarity is how others interpret their solidarity practices. Dominant group actors do not get to call themselves allies; this is for those at the frontlines of struggles to determine. For future research, interviewing people in these men's lives would be valuable to assess the effects of their solidarity. I talked about this possibility with some of the interviewees, and they noted how valuable this would be to get a fuller story.

One final two-part limitation for consideration is the education of the participants. First of all, as discussed at the end of chapter three, every interviewee had a B.A. or is in school. Although some of the interviewees discussed the importance of university education in their conscientization, many did not. Yet, this may have been because we did not have an explicit education question in the protocol. Thus, future studies should questions examining formal education's link to conscientization. Secondly, we would have liked an educationally diverse group of interviewees, however such was the result of the recruitment process. For those White men who formal education is not accessible or possible, what are the routes to anti-racist feminism and transformation? For a future study, following Christian (1994) and sampling from men's consciousness-raising groups, groups at places of worship, and even groups for perpetrators of domestic abuse may yield a more diverse group in relationship to education and class backgrounds.

This dissertation carries on the legacy of Martín-Baró's (1994), and many others who have given their life to liberation. Martín-Baró proclaimed, "we can assert that the fundamental horizon for the field of psychology as a field is *conscientization*" (p. 39, emphasis in original). In documenting and analyzing these White men's path to anti-racist feminist consciousness and solidarity, this study is a humble contribution to building social justice coalitions and collective liberation.

Appendix A: Interview Script

This is an interview about the story of your life as it relates to your activism and critical consciousness, as well as the content of that activism. In the first part of the interview, I am interested in hearing your story, including parts of the past as you remember them and the future as you imagine it. The story is selective; it does not include everything that has ever happened to you. Instead, I will ask you to focus on a few key things in your life – a few key scenes, characters, and ideas. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Instead, your task is simply to tell me about some of the most important things that have happened in your life and how you imagine your life developing in the future. I will guide you through the interview; it may take one hour on the shorter side or two to two and a half on the longer side. It will probably take a half hour to an hour for the first part on your life story, and a half hour to an hour on your activism and beliefs.

The interview is for research purposes, and its main goal is simply to hear your story. You have been recommended for this study as an *anti-racist, feminist activist*. I am most interested in the story of your life as it pertains to these commitments. Everything you say is voluntary and confidential.

Do you have any questions?

Life Chapters

Please begin by thinking about your life as if it were a book or novel. Imagine that the book has a table of contents containing the titles of the main chapters in the story. To begin here, please describe what the main chapters in the book might be. Please give each chapter a title, tell me just a little bit about what each chapter is about, and say a word or two about how we get from one chapter to the next. As a storyteller here, what you want to do is to give me an overall plot summary of your story, going chapter by chapter. You may have as many chapters as you want, but I would suggest having between about two and seven of them.

For each of the three or more key events we will consider, I ask that you describe in detail what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event. In addition, I ask that you tell me why you think this particular scene is important or significant in your life. What does the scene say about you as a person?

1. Turning Points

In looking back over your life, it may be possible to identify certain key moments that stand out as turning points -- episodes that marked an important change in you or your life story. Please identify at least a few and as many as you can think of episodes in your life story that you now see as turning points in your life that has influenced your activism or critical consciousness. If you

cannot identify key turning points that stands out clearly, please describe some events in your life wherein you went through an important change of some kind. Again, for these events please describe what happened, where and when, who was involved, and what you were both thinking and feeling. Also, please say a word or two about what you think this event says about you as a person or about your life. I will give you as long as you need to write these down, or reflect on these.

Now, we're going to talk about the future.

2. The Next Chapter

Your life story includes key chapters and scenes from your past, as you have described them, and it also includes how you see or imagine your future. Please describe what you see to be the next chapter in your life. What is going to come next in your life story?

3. Life Project

Do you have a project in life? A life project is something that you have been working on and plan to work on in the future chapters of your life story. Please describe any project that you are currently working on or plan to work on in the future. Tell me what the project is, how you got involved in the project or will get involved in the project, how the project might develop, and why you think this project is important for you and/or for other people.

That concludes the life story section of the interview....

[Part 2: Political consciousness and views on Privilege]

...The next part of the interview will focus on your social and political views as well as some of the projects that you are involved with. These are not meant to test you, but rather get a sense of how you are thinking about some current issues in activism. I would like to discuss your activism more concretely.

1. Are you a part of any political projects or groups involved in social activism?
2. Thinking about group dynamics in these projects, are there intentional practices around power and/or privilege that you maintain?
3. What does the word solidarity mean to you?
4. Shifting to interpersonal relationships like friendships, partnerships, and family relationships. Are there solidarity practices that you maintain? Can you describe one or two of these?

Shifting gears a little. The second series of these question deal with issues of masculinity, Whiteness, and privilege.

5. Do you identify as a White man? What does it mean to you to be a White man?
6. When did you first become aware of being White?
7. What feelings are now associated with White male privilege for you? Have these changed over time?
8. Do you believe that White men have particular responsibilities (in anti-racist and feminist struggles)? Describe this please.

We are almost done! Just a few more questions about how you maintain this work and keep going.

9. Do you do anything to keep yourself committed to your projects?

9. How do family and community figure into the topics that we have talked about today?

10.

Reflection

Thank you for this interview. I have just one more question for you. Many of the stories you have told me are about experiences that stand out from the day-to-day. For example, we talked about a high points, low points, and turning points. Given that most people don't share their life stories in this way on a regular basis, I'm wondering if you might reflect for one last moment about what this interview, here today, has been like for you. What were your thoughts and feelings during the interview? How do you think this interview has affected you? Do you have any other comments about the interview process? Is there something else I should have asked you? Do you have questions for me?

Appendix B: Listening Guide “Listening” Instructions

A listening guide comprises a series of sequential listenings (inter-active readings) to an interview in order to bring the researcher(s) into relationship with the speaker’s multi-layered voice. I think it would be a good idea to have several colored pencils or pens to indicate different listenings and elements of the listening.

Pre-listening, warm up questions to self (to get the mind going): who is speaking to whom? What stories are being told? Under what societal and historical framework?

First memo¹: What is your social position? How are you feeling in your body at the time of this listening? Keep reflexivity (your effect on the research and the research effects on you) in the back of your mind the whole time.

1st listening: Listening to the plot

Begin reading the transcript and memo of the following prompts:

Part A

In multiple colors of ink, highlighter underline:

Light blue: an influence (like a mentor or event)

Dark blue: a turning point

Red: a social or psychological conflict or highly charged feeling

Light green: instance of action or activism

Dark green: instance of solidarity action/activism

Yellow: explains their/his political belief

Orange: reproducing subtle oppression, distancing

Pink: intersectional conscious

Part B

At the same time, during the first reading, be thinking about your emotional response:

What emotional responses are you having to the text?

Where do you find a connection to the text/person? Where do you not?

Why do you think you are responding this way?

2nd and 3rd Listening: Listen to the text 2 more times, listening for voices in the text.

These voices may be in harmony, in opposition, or in contradiction with one another.

Read with the research question (**consientization, solidarity, White masculinity, privilege, and intersectionality** in mind. There are typically different ideas, perspectives, and actions in regard to privilege and solidarity. These differences show up in different voices in the same person.) Begin with an idea about a possible voice, create an initial definition or description.

Identify the predominant voice and mark in one color.

Can you hear one or two other (contrapuntal) voices? Define or describe it.

Mark other voices in other colors (use different colors than for the 1st listen)

Does one contrapuntal voice move with the I poem more than the others?

Does one separate totally?

Part B: Interviewee and Interviewer relationship

A step looking at the relationship of the interviewee to the interviewer

How does the interviewer respond to the interviewee's responses?

Is there tension?

Is there bonding?

Indicate where that is in the text.

Part C: I poems & You poems

During your 2nd reading, look for 5 sections to do I and you poems.

These sections can be any section that stand out to you.

My template is:

1st section: talking about parents

2nd section: talking about a low moment in life

3rd section: talking about a high moment

4th section: talking about conflict

5th section: talking about political philosophy/practice of solidarity

First, underline every "I" and the verb and any seemingly important accompanying words

Second, maintain the sequence found in the text.

Then collect all the "I" excerpts and put them in a poem like structure, one after the other.

Next, do the same steps for "you" in the transcript.

But make 2 columns: one: when you means the interviewer; two: when you actually means the speaker

Appendix C: Listening Guide Worksheet

Before your first listening:

Who are you? How are you socially positioned? How are you feeling today at the time of reading?

After your first reading:

What is your emotional response to reading this transcript? How do you feel about this person?

In 3-5 sentences write out the arc of this person's life story.

What are the major turning points or influences on this person (2-5 of them)? Especially in terms of anti-racist, feminist conscientization?

Looking at your various colors of highlights: are there any themes that you notice? Note them and describe them a little (if possible in the person's own words).

After the second reading:

What are the voices that you determined? Name them. Does the person have a main voice? And counter voices?

Looking through their political beliefs and solidarity practices, how would you characterize this person's understanding of privilege and practices of solidarity? Does this person have an intersectional consciousness?

After the second reading, did you notice any other themes?

What was the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer like? Did they seem to like each other or not? Was there bonding or repulsion?

“I” and “you” poems

In the follow space write the 5 “I” and “you” poems

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