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Restoring Solidarity: "Accountability" in Radical Leftist Subcultures

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RESTORING SOLIDARITY: 'ACCOUNTABILITY' IN RADICAL LEFTIST SUBCULTURES

by

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ABSTRACT

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In radical left activist subcultures, 'accountability processes' are a form of DIY transformative justice dealing with abuse and sexual assault, focusing on the needs of the 'survivor' and transformation of the 'perpetrator.' Within activism identifying abuse is particularly difficult because it means acknowledging abuse by a person considered politically virtuous. The specifics of a process are situational and provisional. The overwhelming pattern is male identified people abusing female identified, gender non-binary, and transgender people. My research examines why activists are developing processes to address problems and whether or not they are successful.

Within the subculture, the topic is important enough to hold workshops and trainings, create curriculum, spend hours of time, form groups and end communities. But the significance is not reflected in academia. I interviewed 12 activists who participated as a survivor, abuser / perpetrator, facilitator / mediator, or general support. In addition, I collected supplementary information from 121 zines to analyze experiences around sexism, consent, men's groups, and transformative justice.

The problems I found include activists' use of community-based strategies in a youth subculture, the complexity of creating flexible social institution alternatives, and the

development of cultural norms consistent with prefigurative politics around gender equity, especially in inevitable sexual relationships between activists. And all of these issues converge in a subculture with an unstable and mobile population, whereby activists are continuously engaging with dominant institutions and cultural practices.

Activists' argot includes reflexivity and privilege, but admitting fault and committing to change is not in our cultural repertoire. Dominant culture, as seen in the political sphere and the "#Me Too" movement, has proven individuals benefit from denial of fault. In 'accountability processes,' even if transformation occurs, it is rarely recognized. If activists' aim is solidarity, activists can not condone injustice and the marginalized can not continue to be marginalized.

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INTRODUCTION

Though it is made up of a malleable configuration of various groups, shared social,

ideological, and cultural practices substantiate the existence of a distinguishable radical social

movement subculture. Various groups, organizations, individuals and locations make up the

dense and expansive network, with old groups disbanding, new ones arising, and the boundaries

between them blurred. Individuals often have multiple group memberships, connecting with one

another through organizing, friendships, and sexual relationships. Activists self-identify as

members of a 'community' to convey a sense of interdependence and emphasize solidarity.

Though these groups do not use the label 'subculture,' they display unique cultural

characteristics within the context of larger, predominant or 'parent' culture.

Radical activists share an overarching intent to confront the prevailing power structures,

viewed as the source of various social problems. There is continuity, if not necessarily

consistency, of ideology in the amalgamation of anarchist, anti capitalist, anti racist, feminist,

queer, and other politically left radical groups. Social problems are seen as innate to and a

product of modern political and/or capitalist systems, maintaining the privilege and power of

few. Radical leftists argue that reform, especially by way of mainstream, institutionalized, and

non profit organizations, maintains and reproduces inequalities, offering temporary solutions that

preemptively dissipate upheaval. Phrases like "Solidarity, not Charity" criticize the

condescension of those with established power and wealth. They question both the

institutionalized goals and the means of achieving them.

The application of politics to daily life is imprecise and the emphasis on solidarity within

the movement can obfuscate complications faced by women, gender non binary, and transgender

people. Interpersonal dynamics and integration into radical left social movements are seldom a topic of inquiry. My thesis is epistemologically rooted in the fields of social movements and cultural studies. Drawing on these disciplines and the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu, I studied organizers who have been addressing problems of sexism and abuse as they arise and activists' experimentation with transformative justice. Exploring how activists confront problems, attend to rifts, and feminist responses contributes knowledge for the study of social movements, alternative justice models, and gendered interpersonal dynamics.

MY INTRODUCTION TO 'ACCOUNTABILITY'

I first became involved in the Brooklyn activist community in 2007 as a primary organizer of a Food Not Bombs chapter. Food Not Bombs (FNB) is a vegan, DIY, anarchist-affiliated group that collects food that would otherwise go to waste and redistributes it without getting permits or permission from the city. In looking for a kitchen space for our group to use, I found an anarchist community space where numerous other activist groups met. FNB participants became active in other groups that used the space, such as a free bike building workshop and prisoner letter writing. A few of us became active in the day-to-day running and maintenance of the space.

The community space was an entry point into the larger network of anarchist and radical left activists. Connections result from akin political issues, shared resources, and social relationships between participants. Social ties of friendships, romantic and/or sexual relationships shape groups and their locations in the larger activist network. Along with daily work and direct action, activists frequently hold music benefits to raise money for causes and go

to non activist parties together. The community is 'sex posi,' supporting pleasure seeking

attitudes and anti shaming discourse.

After being involved in the self identified community for roughly one year, a friend from

the space began to have a well publicized disagreement with her ex partner. She told me that she

was organizing an accountability process with a group called Support New York. A mutual

acquaintance had volunteered to mediate the process and she asked me about my opinion of their

character. I wasn't sure what a process entailed, but I told her my assessment of the person and

offered my support and assistance.

I learned an 'accountability process' is the way organizers are applying transformative

and restorative justice models. Unlike state justice, accountability processes focus on the needs

of the 'survivor,' a term I will later unpack, and transformation of the person who caused harm.

Within activism identifying abuse is particularly difficult because it manifests differently and

means acknowledging abuse by a person thought to be politically virtuous. In an accountability

process, the person who caused harm is held accountable by both the survivor and the

community as a whole. The specifics of a process are situational and provisional. Though both

women, men, and gender non binary people can be the survivor or person who caused harm, the

overwhelming pattern is of male identified people abusing female identified, gender non binary,

and transgender people.

When I decided to begin an accountability process, I was introduced an area of activism

previously unknown to me. I became involved with Support New York, a group that used

transformative and restorative justice models to deal with sexual assault and abuse within the

activist subculture. I found that a few of my friends were survivors and mediators in ongoing

processes. We read, wrote, and copied zines about abuse and accountability processes, gave talks on strategies to deal with abuse in activism, and implemented and enforced safer space policies in activist venues and at events.

These issues around abuse and gender are ubiquitous and have become points of contention in activist circles. Groups dealing with such problems have formed interstate and international partnerships around DIY justice, communicating about known perpetrators who refuse to be held accountable. One of the most popular zines about abuse, *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities*, was published as a book by AK Press in 2011. Members of Support New York pushed for the development of safer space policies at the annual Anarchist Book Fair in 2010 and Occupy Wall Street in 2011.

Yet, the preeminence of solidarity can mask discourse of privilege and inequality. "The threat of fragmentation is too often used as a means of achieving an uneasy, unhappy unity" (McRobbie 1997: 174). Amongst some activists, issues rooted in gender and sexuality are seen as low priority or dependent on identity politics and therefore divisive to the movement as a whole (Horn 2013). The development of tactics and work around such crises of ideology frequently fall along gender lines.

My study specifically addresses these relationships within activism. I have researched how contemporary leftist social movements address women, gender non binary, and transgender people's needs within cultural experimentations of social justice. Specifically, my research addresses the question of why activists are developing 'accountability processes' to deal with problems in radical social movements and whether or not they are successful. Using key concepts from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, I illuminate the creation of DIY institutions to deal

with interpersonal violence. I do not believe there is an increase in problems leading to these developments, but changes in the ways activists organize around ideas of 'community,' adapt prefigurative politics, and define and understand abuse have lead to these developments. I hope that my research will benefit the fields of social movements, subcultural studies, and alternative justice models, as well as the activist community that continues to grapple with these problems.

METHODOLOGY

While discourse surrounding gender and interpersonal dynamics has become copious within radical left subculture, their prevalence has not been reflected in sociological inquiry. Of concern are the ways women, gender non binary, and transgender people experience these social movements and the various practices in which they address problems. More specifically, I will explore how activist ideals can allow for sexism, why they are developing justice designs to undertake the problem, and if there are consequences to longterm retainment of participants.

To pursue such questions I interviewed 12 activists who have participated in accountability processes in the role of survivor, abuser / perpetrator, facilitator of a process, a member of a mediating team, or general support. I asked about experiences in the subculture leading up to their activism, the process itself, and their opinion as to its effectiveness. I interviewed four people I knew personally and the remaining interviewees were suggested by those already interviewed or had ties to groups and literature dealing with accountability. The population is not necessarily representative of the unknown number of people who have participated in processes, but will allow for an intricate examination of their involvement. I recorded interviews to ensure I was able to retain the language use and emotions of the interviewee without my translation in documentation.

In addition, I collected supplementary information from zines circulated in leftist social movements. Zines are artifacts of the subculture and are a DIY form of publication akin to a brochure or booklet, written by an individual, collective, or a collaboration. Derived from the word magazine, zines have traditionally been photocopied and circulated by individuals or 'distros,' zine distribution collectives, at activist related events or using mail order. Zines address an array of subjects and the tone of writing is usually informal, personal, and intimate, similar to a journal. Theoretical approaches to sexism within activism, personal stories of abusive interactions and relationships, and guides to transformative justice practices have all become popular zine topics.

ORGANIZATION

In the chapters that follow, I explore how activists are addressing sexism, creating forms of justice, and experience solidarity in leftist activism. Participants are empowered to establish affinity groups, organize events, and create objects and art. Activities and tactics are subject to time, place, context, available resources, and the desires of the activists. The combination of an antiauthoritarian vision with these available resources and cultural context mean that actions stress DIY methods, pleasure, and are frequently unorthodox in form.

Activists in the social movement field struggle over cultural practices and meaning. Solidarity across heterogeneous populations within continually changing conditions is requisite for the generation of social change. Mutual sentiments toward social justice root collective claims and framework (Polletta and Jasper 2011: 285). This unity is an emotion understood and shared by participants. Activists recognize patterns of inequality and enact these beliefs in their

practices. If their aim is solidarity, radical left activists can not condone injustice and the marginalized can not continue to be marginalized.

In Chapter 1 I review previous studies on subcultures and social movements to contextualize my research. First I consider my of object of study as a "radical left subculture." It is important to parse the definitions of subculture and politics to understand their interplay. I also access literature on the cultures within subcultures and internal relationships between participants. I then consider my object of study as a "radical left social movement." The culture of social movements is rooted in prefigurative politics, which define activists perception of solidarity and relationships with one another. I review key concepts developed by Bourdieu and echoed in Resource Mobilization Theory help to bridge conventional disciplinarian divisions and clarify cultural dimensions within social movement groups. I conclude my review by examining some academics' and activists' proposals of new models for a more equitable and just social movement.

In Chapter 2 I discuss the methodologies I've employed in my study. I have used historical accounts, conducted interviews of 12 activists, and analyzed more than 100 zines. In addition, I have used my own anecdotal experience as a form of auto ethnography to elucidate my study. I believe my multifaceted approach will allow for both more expansive and richer understanding of accountability processes and the use of transformative justice in radical left subcultures.

In Chapter 3, I will situate the current problems faced by activists in a historical trajectory. Many similar problems around sexism and abuse were present in the New Left social movement field of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Specifically, I explore a compressed history

of the social movement organizations the Student Non Violence Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party, and Students for a Democratic Society/Weather Underground Organization (SDS/WUO). I am interested in whether or not activists acknowledged the problems, how they were negotiated, and how these experiences might provide useful knowledge that would contribute to the trial and error nature of DIY activism. I will also access the long term consequences of such approaches to the movements.

Using identified thematics, I have divided my analysis into two chapters. In Chapter 4 I analyze how relationships spanning casual friendships, alternative family, and sexual and romantic partners, are built around leftist values and practices. The social and cultural environment of the field results in a particular activist lifestyle. Despite reflexivity, activists struggle over and frequently replicate power dynamics. Sexism persists and manifests in ways particular to the culture. I will look at differences around organizing, including leadership, meetings, and division of labor. I will then look at sexual relationships, the subculture's increasing focus on consent, and the use of cultural and social capital to acquire sexual partners. Finally I will discuss how security culture developing out of movements of the 1960s and 70s can be rooted in the aforementioned forms of capital, contribute to sexism, and shape discussions and prioritizing of problems faced within the movement.

In Chapter 5 I continue my analysis and address the application of transformative justice models within the movement.   Organizers are implementing new forms of community-based safety and justice within far left subcultures to combat sexism, racism, homophobia and other prejudices. The use of 'safer space' policies and survivor centered transformative and restorative justice are drawing attention to numerous problems.   I discuss the creation of organizational

pathways and completion of necessary work, how activists share information, a changing

understanding of abuse and relationship dynamics, and the development of social ties around

emotional support.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I discuss the results of transformative justice. Conflicts in the

field center around the practice's compatibility with ideology and persevering consequence of

cultural and social capital. Not all activists accused of harm are willing to go through a process

and there are various strategies of responding. Whether activists involved in a process view it as

successful is tied to how they feel about their role in activism. Activists involved may stay in

activism, move to different areas of activism, or discontinue participating altogether. The

outcome of these processes are significant for both as a consideration of prefigurative politics, as

well as the continuation and longevity of social movements.

CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE SCENE: A RADICAL LEFTIST SUBCULTURE

I've defined my object of study as a radical leftist subculture, though that is not how most activists identify. Participants deliberately self identify as a 'community' as opposed to other social group terminology such as 'subculture' or 'counterculture.' Community indicates a physical and ideological stability extending past pursuits of pleasure or style particularities. The term is laden with connotations, perpetually stated and insinuated as a mantra of the activist lexicon. It is a generalized catch all, a way *we* reference *our* community to convey a sense of camaraderie and intimacy amongst those with whom we are allying. Occasionally a descriptive term, such as 'queer' or 'anarchist,' precedes community. However, in most cases, participants neither specify nor define the word. Those included in the designation are left to infer the meaning entailed for membership, allowing for a fluid inclusivity. It reflects both contextual changes of the environment and biographical changes of individuals. To avoid ambiguity, I am defining my object of study as a subculture. Though in my writing I use the term in reference to a cultural community, I am using it interchangeably with the more precise designation of subculture.

The second descriptive qualifier I'm choosing to use is 'radical.' Some sociologists have used the word 'anarchist' or 'neo-anarchist' to describe similar communities, despite groups and individuals operating "without an explicit anarchist label" (Gordon 2007: 32; Robinson 2008, 2009; Shepard and Hayduk 2002). These academics reason that the intentions of these activists are anarchist, only the connotations of violent action and related government sanction prompt reticence in identifying (Gordon 2007; Robinson 2008). However, in using the anarchist label inclusively, researchers diminish the history and continual process of affinity groups forming,

uniting, quarreling, and dissolving along with the diversity of radical action. "Anarchist" comes to act as a subcategory, whereby individuals might become simultaneously involved in anarchist identified groups and groups eschewing the label. For example, if we were to define the entire community as anarchist, when an activist stated "After witnessing the turmoil in the anarchist scene, my attention returned to the feminist scene," the importance of her distinction is lost and the analysis of the researcher skewed (Exposito 2011).

In using the term 'radical,' activists are distinguishing themselves from previous social movements in having "a more fundamentally revolutionary stance" (Eisenstein 1984: 127). They are undertaking problems that connect to the cultural experiences of the members and recognize intersections between anti globalization, anti war, anti neoliberalization, ecological, anti capitalist, anti racism and feminism. Activists share an overarching explicitly radical agenda and construction of collective identity based on perceptions and actions intended to confront the source of these problems, the prevailing power structures. As an amalgamation of anarchist, anti capitalist, anti racist, feminist, queer, and other politically radical groups, there is continuity, if not necessarily consistency in ideology. 'Radical' lacks the negative connotations of 'anarchist' and is routinely used interchangeably with 'anarchist' when self identifying.

In my study, I will focus on the internal culture of the community. Within our milieu, the study of activism as only occurring within the confines of direct action dissociates the multifarious efforts of activists and the diversity of meaning around civic action. Members' participation confirms their belonging through shared difference and cultural practices. "Picket signs alone are not enough" and instead there is a need to look at experiences, ideas, and behaviors of participants (Zimmerman 1993: 52). A distinct activist subculture has developed

around prefigurative politics, or applying alternative approaches to daily activities and interactions.

AS RADICAL LEFT SUBCULTURE

Subcultures as Subversive

The culture I am studying is best categorized as an 'activist subculture.' The historical development of 'subculture' has lead to its conflation with political affiliation. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) examined emerging post World War II youth cultures as 'subcultures,' a term indicative of class divisions and resulting subversions. Working class subculturalists cultivated style and leisure practices symbolically expressing "an antagonistic relation to the prevailing culture and ideological practices" (Willis 1977: xiii). CCCS theorists used semiotics to 'read' these performances, carried out through a bricolage of commodities in which 'texts' become fragmented, old meanings subverted or replaced with new meanings in their re assemblage. Subcultural theory explored these commodities as "invested, by the dominant culture, with meanings, associations, social connotations" that appear natural, but are altered as a form of resistance (Clarke et al. 1976, p. 55). The punk subculture's shouted lyrics, the teddy boys' 'dandy' fashion, and the mods' motor scooters all communicated a critique of their environs. Because most of these studies were of men in masculine subcultures, in 1976 Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber wrote "[t]he absence of girls from the whole of [cultural studies]...is quite striking, and demands explanation"(209).

More recent theorists have revisited the research of the CCCS and its semiotic legacy. They have criticized limiting the label of 'subculture' to working class and for assuming class cultures are both homological and distinct along class lines (Muggleton 2000, Thornton 1996).

More contemporary studies, such as David Muggleton's *Inside Subculture*, have found subculturalists are reluctant to identify with a particular political ideology or group, often seen as another form of "imposing authority, conformity and uniformity" (2000: 150). Theorists like Michel Maffesoli reconceptualized subcultures as 'neotribes' that are primarily lifestyle based, "favour appearance and form," and do not create definite lines as to inclusion and exclusion, instead emphasizing overlapping affiliations (1996: 98). While a milieu of resistance might exist, these theorists argue it is often a vague or ambiguous opposition to a parent or conformist culture as opposed to larger authoritarian systems or power.

For this reason I am using the signifier 'activist' to distinguish the subculture I'm studying. The radical leftist subculture does meet the requirements as described by CCCS. Though not all activists are from the working class, many are and the subculture is rooted in working class values. The construction and modification of symbols and meanings expresses this opposition in the cultural sphere, resulting in "counter-hegemonic forms of individual and collective resistance" (Brotherton 2008: 55). It explicitly challenges the prevailing order in ideology, discourse, and action. More specifically, it meets Hall's criteria of revolutionary subcultures, in that it "offer[s] forms of action…which embody alternative structures" (2007: 6), as well as Hollander and Einwohner's criteria of resistance, in that it contains action, opposition, recognition, and intent (2004). Cultural practices rooted in social justice bolster the development of horizontal organizing and self reliance.

Activist Subcultures

Activist subcultures are unique because, while they share leisure activities and aesthetic style, they have an explicitly political agenda. That is not to say leisure and style are not issues

within activist subcultures, but collective identity is based in the perceptions and actions intended to confront larger power structures. The subculture's aesthetic is imbibed with politically charged artifacts, such as black hoodies, bicycles, day planners, and reusable water bottles. Unlike most CCCS studies of subcultures, participants in the field tend to be older, in their early to mid twenties, and in the process of defining themselves and constructing their lives around political ideologies.

Like Maffesoli's neotribes, the subculture I'm studying encapsulates multiple and overlapping cultural affiliations (Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003). Some academics have challenged the distinction between those subcultures centered around politics and those centered around pleasure as a false construct. The development of "carnivals of protest" and "anarchist bazaars" "committed to pleasure and politics" epitomize the merging of supposed incongruous elements (St. John 1997:65). Stuart Hall distinguished these groups, but hypothesized the two 'poles' of subcultures as intertwined. The individualistic expressive pole places "stress on the personal…the cultural…the aesthetic," "develop[ing]…revolutionary style" and "provid[ing]… language" versus the activist pole that "stresses the political, the social, the collective… commitment to organizing," "provid[ing] the social, shaping, organizing, driving thrust" (Hall 2007: 165).

The unique culture of the radical community reflects the interplay between political principles and larger cultural practices. Popular 'hipster' youth culture coincides with these radical left subcultures. The epicenter of the hipster aesthetic and lifestyle are urban areas, and more specifically Williamsburg and Bushwick neighborhoods in Brooklyn. The criteria of a hipster is subjective and it is not an identity those who meet such criteria would label themselves,

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i.e. everyone else is a hipster and no one identifies as a hipster. Community social events draw

in some of this population who do not otherwise engage in activist activities, such as the once

annual Anti-Valentines Day Riot Grrrl Cover Band Show. Activists also frequented non activist

events, such as warehouse parties and basement shows at the McKibbin Lofts. This overlap is

perhaps best exemplified in an article from New York Press entitled "Meet the Helpsters," in

which Emily Gallagher, a member of the non profit Neighbor's Allied for Good Growth stated

"We have a really hard time at NAG to find people who genuinely want to volunteer if there's

not beer involved" (Richards 2010). Some of these events are a part of or have ties to the radical

community. These undemanding and playful forms of activism are a way to socialize outside of

the usual bars and clubs.

The Culture Within Subcultures

Though clothing and hairstyle are important in subcultures, the radical community does

not have as precise fashion. As previously mentioned, one of the staples of the subculture for all

genders is black hoodies, due in large part to their use in black bloc demonstrations. Black bloc

is a form of direct action whereby activists wear all black, cover their faces and heads, and march

en mass. Wearing all black and hiding distinguishing features enables activists to remain

anonymous to law enforcement and distinguish their number. Another common artifact is the

Slingshot or Just Seeds planner organizer, which are both made by activist collectives and enable

activists to synchronize schedules and keep track of actions and events. General use of bicycles

and water bottles indicate the importance of environmentalism and avoidance of waste and

consumption. Otherwise, clothing is typically reflective of current punk and hipster fashion,

along with general jeans and t-shirts. Nearly all radical activists have at least one tattoo, though

the location, size, and content are diverse. A few activists are professional tattoo artists and are frequently sought out. There are also a few activist-friendly parlors that openly cater to vegans or collaborate in benefits for various causes. Still, tattoos are a "wholly acceptable, if alternative and hip, form of fashion," certainly not limited to activist subcultures in Brooklyn (Pitts 12: 2003).

Though the subculture is formed around a politic, actions can be complicated. "Deep structure" is the "collection of taken-for-granted values, and ways of thinking and working that underlie decision making and action" (Rao and Kellehon 2005). These are the informal rules and relationships that develop between activists. Because the "horizon of thought" is invisible, radical left activists are replicating some of the power dynamics and assumptions they are simultaneously combatting. As stated by Nia King in her zine *The First Seven Inch Was Better*, "We were 'queer' in the straightest of ways and 'anti-racist' in the whitest. We all claimed to be feminist, so why did sexual assault keep happening within our scene again and again? We organized for immigrant rights without actually knowing any immigrants, we facilitated workshops on consent without knowing how to hold perpetrators we saw every day accountable." As in studies of other political subcultures, activists "liked to say that males and females shared a common status in the organization and that questions of gender were subordinate to group solidarity…[h]owever, on a range of issues there were deep schisms" (Brotherton and Barrios 2004: 192).

Internal Hierarchies

While many studies have looked at the relationship between dominant and subcultures, fewer have examined the social and cultural forces internal to subcultures. Amongst the various

definitions of subculture, a principle commonality is distinction from common culture. Members feel as though they share this distinction, that they belong. Historically critiqued for organizing around essentialist identities, current activist subcultures are aware of anti essentialism and identity politics. Organizers recognize patterns of inequality along race, class, gender, and sexuality and engage in a continuous dialogue of reflexivity, privilege, and calls for 'solidarity.'

From the early developments in the field of cultural studies feminist theorists have criticized the unspoken exclusion of female subculturalists. In her early studies of subcultural organizations, Angela McRobbie found gender to be the "central organizing principal" within subcultures (2000: 14). The culture of girls, their membership in subcultures, the roles they play, and how they define themselves required further study (2000: 14). McRobbie concedes this lack is in part based on the perceived gender identity of the researcher. Access to females and their willingness to communicate can be difficult due to the "closed, suspicious world of girls" (2000: 4). The dynamic between the ethnographer and the female participants alters depending upon the gender of the researcher and entry into more private sites of study.

A number of feminist scholars have found social hierarchies privileging males within youth subcultures (Reddington 1997, Leblanc 1999). Doreen Piano observed young male punks defending female punks from outsiders, yet harassing and objectifying them within punk culture (2003). Female punk's role was "one of 'doing' (making zines, playing in bands, reading zines, organizing conferences) rather than in 'being' (viewed as spectacle)"(2003: 254). Norma Mendoza-Denton's female members of gangs would "smile now, cry later," put on a tough facade and hid their emotions. Others outside of the gang critiqued the aesthetic appearance of the girl gang members and labeled the women lesbians when they did not conform to cultural

ideas of femininity (2008). Nancy Macdonald found female graffiti writers had to 'get up' more often and in difficult places to prove they were not "timid, delicate little thing[s]" (2001: 130). The feminine is devalued and the devalued feminized. For the most part "[m]ale[s]...work to prove they are 'men', but female[s]...must work to prove they are not 'women'"(Macdonald 2001: 130)

Even though the radical subculture includes definitive arguments against social inequalities and espouses feminism, it has similar gender divisions within its own distinct forms of cultural capital. Like other activist communities and social movements, sexual and/or romantic relationships are widespread and have significant repercussions (Shepard 2005, Goodwin 1997). The combination of collective effervescence, closeness of relationships, and sexual empowerment produce a prime environment for romantic interpersonal relationships. The freedom from a traditional lifestyle can also allow for more fluid definitions and expressions of gender and sexualities. Noted by Ben Shepard in "The Use of Joyfulness as a Community Organizing Strategy," marches can be places to meet attractive people and 'cruise' for sexual partners (439-440: 2005). In the radical community culture, the consistent stream of late night house/apartment parties, bands playing shows, and dance parties further the potential for these relationships. When social ties cease, it can mean the end of participation in activism.

AS RADICAL LEFT SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Prefigurative Politics

The integration of the personal practices and political intention affords a multitude of issues and methods by which radical left activist subcultures can address social change. Participation entails prefigurative politics (Gamson 1991), or "the experimentation and practice

of new cultural models" (Melucci 1989: 60). The interpretation of politics is not homogenous or fixed, however, there is a process of what McAdam called 'cognitive liberation,' or "the collective perception of legitimacy and mutability of those conditions" of structural inequalities (McAdam 1986: 35).

The process is not in a vacuum, but develops parallel to larger cultural norms and behaviors, "'within the womb' of pre-revolutionary society" (Hall 2007: 163). The attempt to apply ideological contentions in material reality is a prefigurative politic developing out of trials, errors, and negotiations. The results are fragmentary and customized to those involved, the context, and the political ethic. Attending meetings, going to demonstrations, writing blog posts, organizing benefits, and tabling at events are interwoven into activists' daily routines of jobs, classes, and familial responsibilities. Participants must reconcile beliefs about social justice with their surrounds, creating a multifaceted lifestyle.

In the enactment of prefigurative politics, the community shifts emphasis to agency and the potential for significant change. The distinction between protest actions and leisure activities is blurred. Radical left subcultures encourage creativity and artistic exploration. Participants are empowered to establish affinity groups, organize events, and create new projects. Activists "use their personal lives to prefigure their goals" (Williams 2016: 74). The combination of an antiauthoritarian vision with these available resources and cultural context mean that actions stress DIY methods, pleasure, and are frequently unorthodox in form. The prefigurative politics of radical social movements are experimental and the need for autonomy from the sources of social injustice, namely the state, require collective development of alternative models (Scott 2014: xxi).

The experimentation takes place in a changing landscape. New social movement literature has argued social movements are not empirical objects, but interactive processes. Instead of examining them as singular entities with precise points of coalescence, agendas, and methods, social movements are a continual negotiation of ideas and meanings. Individuals' collaboratively define goals, actions, and constraints, while communicating with one another to 'organize' collective action. This process of "formulating cognitive frameworks" shapes the involvement, "relationships...and...emotional investments" of activists (Melucci 1989: 35).

Activists are attempting to live in alternative ways based in cultural schema that recognize hierarchies and inequality. Issues such as race, class, gender and sexuality are in a continuous dialogue of reflexivity, privilege, and calls for solidarity. Activists focus on non hierarchical power distribution, consensus decision making, and dividing labor equitably (Holland, Fox, Daro 2008, McDonald 2002, Bevington 2008). When applied, these prefigurative politics incorporate acknowledgement of social stratification and counteraction through non hierarchical structure. Intragroup routines reflect mutual social justice politics. To maintain a balance of power some participants turn their gaze inward. In his study of anarchist subcultures, Uri Gordon discussed the acknowledgement of "a re-emergence of patterns of domination within and/or among communities, even if at a certain point in time they have been consciously overcome" (2007: 45). The aim is not oneness and awareness of intersections is not the same as unity of interests or approaches. More precisely, the goal is to support one another across a changing heterogeneous landscape in such a way that there is no hierarchy and no charity. The familiar expression 'another world is possible' demonstrates the conviction in these prefigurative politics and endeavors at social justice organizing.

Dismantling hierarchical organization and challenging current power structures is pivotal to the collective solidarity of the community. Groups are non hierarchical or horizontal, with no participants having greater authority or rank over others (Fitzgerald and Rogers 2000). Everyone in the group must state whether they agree, disagree, or abstain from the decision. The group recognizes everyone's opinion and must be in agreement. Consensus provides clear, established channels for speaking and offering opinions, discouraging the monopolization of conversation. Though these groups theoretically operate outside of hierarchies, leaders inevitably emerge (Freeman 1972, Sahasranaman 2013). Often, people who posses privilege in society mirror their position within radical groups if there is no explicit attempt to balance power.

One strategy for addressing these inequalities is rooting the culture in DIY, or 'do it yourself.' By nature, DIY focuses on agency and accessibility. Individuals and groups can define their project, when, where, and how they will carry it out. There is more room for flexibility and immediacy. Organizers develop and share strengths and skills, opening up new possibilities and opportunities for artistry. An essential quality of DIY ethic, anyone can (and perhaps should) express themselves without monetary or technical limitations. Instead of depending on others, DIY emphasizes self empowerment and self reliance. Because individuals are able to start their own groups, existing social networks can encourage group development and shape group membership. The DIY ethic tends to lead to organizing within existing friendship networks (Freeman 2009). Yet DIY is not without a price. In taking on this work, activists sacrifice resources such as time, labor, and sometimes their own money.

Entry and Networks

Recruitment greatly shapes the subculture. When deciding whether or not to participate in activism, people do not use instrumental reasoning (Melucci 1996). The most seemingly obvious reason to participate in a social movement would be ideological agreement, however, having grievances and disenfranchisement is not reason enough to explain participation in social movements (Melucci 1989).

Alongside common ideology, our social networks, cultural context, and biography influence whether or not we take part (Ibrahim 2011, Blee 1991, Passy and Giugni 2001, Melucci 1996). While it might seem individuals without previous commitments and limitations of time and energy would be more likely to participate, there is more nuance to the coupling of "biographic availability" and social movement engagement (McAdam 1986: 70). By this logic, one can easily explain students' strong involvement in the community. Nevertheless, biographic availability alone is not enough to account for participation. Those who are unoccupied, have time and ability, are not necessarily involved in activism. Contrary to expectations, those who are already socially and politically active are more likely to become involved in social movements (Verba et al. 1995, Munson 2010).

Those entering and participating in the radical community are often at a transition point in their lives. Transition points are a time when routines and networks are shifting and people are "more open to new ideas and new ways of thinking about the world" (Munson 774: 2010, Robinson 2008). Changing networks lead to the development of new relationships and access to new ideas and cultures (Taylor 2000: 222). These relationships and friendships are a resource for recruitment into the community (Taylor 1989, Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). Participants are frequently drawn into the community through their social attachments. Young

adults seeking work or education frequently move to urban centers, resulting in an abundance of potential community members undergoing a transition point in their lives (Roberts 2013). Social ties shape who joins, not to mention those who do not, effecting the gender, age, and racial concentration of the community.

The subculture is internally structured as a network of affinity groups and individuals (Melucci 1996, Jasper 1997). The network is dense, with overlapping groups and individuals. Affinity groups are informal, impermanent organizational forms focused on a particular issue. For example, For the Birds is a feminist collective that addresses women's creative endeavors, POC Zine Project is a collective that concentrates on promoting and distributing zines written by people of color, and Ghost Bikes is a group that advocates for cyclists and constructs memorials for cyclists killed around the city. Affinity groups form, reshape, and dissolve over time. The fluidity of groups results in the network relationships between these groups being loose or temporary. The rise and fall of local affinity groups alters the design of the community network.

Affinity groups have small memberships and are built from or contribute to social relationships between participants (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006: 740). Because individuals are able and empowered to start their own groups, existing social networks can encourage group development and shape group membership. The DIY ethic tends to lead to organizing within friendship networks (Freeman 2009). New in-group relationships alter social networks and ending friendships can be instrumental in the disintegration of groups.

Solidarity

The common feminist expression "the personal is political" is homologous with prefigurative politics, albeit with additional connotations of emotion and intimacy. Carol

Hanisch wrote an article with the same title in February 1969. The article is a response to radical movements of the time dismissing women's groups "discussing their own oppressions as 'naval-gazing' and 'personal therapy' - and certainly 'not political'" (Hanisch 2006). Hanisch believes personal experiences should be seen as legitimate and pertinent within political activism. In his book *Nomads of the Present*, Alberto Melucci argues the internal tensions of social movements are becoming more centered on interpersonal relationships and lifestyles. Conflicts are both "increasingly personal and revolve around the capacity of individuals to initiate action and to control the space, time, and interpersonal relations," as well as aimed "towards the production of meaning" (Melucci 71: 1989).

The maintenance of social movements requires the construction of alternative cultural frameworks and the individual's investment in those frameworks. Whether participants feel solidarity and the culture of a movement adjusts to their needs, can feasibly dictate the sustainability of a movement (Gecas 2000, Collins 2001). Melucci defines solidarity as a product of interpersonal interactions between members of the group; "the ability of actors to recognize others, and to be recognized, as belonging to the same social unit" (1996: 23). Activists sharing beliefs or ideology is not requisite, but the development and maintenance of solidarity is more critical than instrumental goals (Melucci 1996: 103). I consider solidarity to be the recognition of fellowship that is both 1) rooted in shared belief in social justice and 2) experienced in interactions with fellow activists. The building of an activist 'community' is a process, a constant endeavor (Scott 1992).

Solidarity entails a measure of reciprocated care, responsibility and interdependence. Feelings of belonging shape the community, yet the community shapes who feels they belong.

In a study of young urban Canadian activists, Jacqueline Kennelly found participants' race and class greatly influenced their feelings of membership and belonging. Unspoken knowledges determined power and therefore the feelings of membership and belonging of participants. Many of these subcultural norms developed out of "middle-class young people taking on a working class identity, or performing grunge" (304). Though presenting a lower socio economic status, the subculturalists demonstrate their privileged position in their defining of activism as a form of charity, "something that some people do for and on behalf of others" (299). Lower class and people of color "experienced a sense of 'not quite fitting'"(301). Kennelly found the lack of integration resulted in these peoples' withdrawal from the social movement. Similarly, in her study of Scandinavian global justice activists Maria Zackariasson found the young male participants felt their presence purposed to "fight for someone else: suppressed women, the poor in the world" (2009: 36).

Relationships and Sex

Various studies have shown joining a social movement is more easily "explained by whom people know, not by what they want or believe" (Kitts 1999). Preexisting and developing social relationships are strong factors in the development of solidarity and the success of alternative cultural blueprints (Passy and Giugni 2001, Gamson 1991, McAdam 1982). Participants' incorporation into affective relationship networks shapes their level of involvement in social movements. Expressed in terms such as "collective" and "solidarity," friendships and sexual relationships greatly contribute to feelings of belonging. Though social justice issues are important, interpersonal relationships greatly influence affinity group development, membership, and intergroup associations.

The relationships developed through participation shape and maintain the radical community. The connections that develop between activists create networks of interpersonal relationships both creating and hindering solidarity. In his study of the Huk rebellion in the Philippines, Jeff Goodwin found the emotional relationships between activists create a libidinal economy in which pleasures of interpersonal interaction depend upon emotional connection and reciprocated affection, resulting in a "structure and economy of affectual ties" (53:1997). Though 'libidinal' connotes sexual, Goodwin's use of the term considers other forms of relation defined by the feeling of 'love' (54: 1997). Consequently, libidinal bonds encompass sexual and familial relationships, friendships, and a love for humanity.

The libidinal ties in a "soladaristic" group run in two different directions (Goodwin 55: 1997). The first is a relationship with the group and/or cause. For the population I am studying, libidinal ties exist with the radical 'community' as an operational entity, or an alternative family (Halberstam 2006). The tie distinguishes the group and/or cause from the rest of society. The Participant's moral consciousness incorporates collective feelings and clarifies systems of value and virtue. In his study of new anarchist formations, Gordon argued the participants' cohesion extends "beyond the level of personal ties," creating a 'tribal solidarity' whereby fellow activists are "perceived [as] members of one's extended family or tribe" (Gordon 2007: 33). Unlike traditional families, activists might express membership in getting tattoos together, volunteering to help with a project outside of activism, backing the person up in a physical fight or riding bikes home together at the end of the night. Outside of immediate, interpersonal relationships, obligations or duties to the community at large might consist of accompanying an unknown

intoxicated person to get home safely or providing a place for transient friends-of-friends-of-friends to sleep.

The second orientation are the libidinal ties within the group. As an economy, repeated interaction and the building of mutual affection create interpersonal relationships. The shared connection to the cause and ideology produce trust and loyalty; "We trust those we agree with, and agree with those we trust" (Jasper 1997: 112). Consistency and ease of building these relationships greatly influence participants' intensity of commitment (Taylor 1989). Accordingly, the strength and reciprocation of participants' interpersonal feelings reinforce their libidinal ties with the group. There are erotic motives for entering, participating in, and organizing community activities. In a study of the feminist movement, Verta Taylor found partnering with a woman can "facilitate feminist work because these women's personal lives meshed well with their political commitments" (Taylor 770: 1989). It is not uncommon for sexual relationships to lead to activist projects. Organizers tie monogamy, polyamory, sadomasochism, and various other forms of sexuality to politics and put them into practice (Portwood-Stacer 2010). While having these ties assists or possibly accelerates involvement, relationships with outsiders can discourage engaging in activism. As stated by community member Suzy Z "I didn't have to coax [my girlfriend] to come to the march; she came because she helped organize it" (Exposito 2011).

POWER, CULTURE, AND PRACTICE

Bourdieu's Framework

Dynamics of the subculture can be examined through Bourdieu's analytic framework of fields. Fields are structured spaces in which actors struggle over power through relative forms of

capital. Field boundaries are not fixed and have connections with other social fields. Actors in the field have shared cultural understandings, rules of the field, and a "'feel for the game'" (Bourdieu 1990: 66).

The actions of those in the field, including their belonging to /participating in a field, are shaped by their habitus. An individuals' habitus is the dispositions they have as members of a social group, namely class. Habitus is "internalized as a second nature" and "tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common sense', 'behaviors'" within the norms of a field (Bourdieu 1990: 56). Habitus reproduces social stratification in ways that might be taken as natural, and therefore is both structured by and structures social stratifications.

Stratification is reproduced in culture through cultural capital. Cultural capital is knowledge, either objectified, embodied, or institutionalized, that is culturally valued, embedded in culture, and reproduced from generation to generation. What is valued is associated with those with more power, is assumed to be natural or an objective reality, and is "acquired by means of a sort of withdrawal from economic necessity" (Bourdieu 1984: 54). When objectified, cultural capital is "in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.)" (Bourdieu 1986: 243). In embodiment, cultural capital is "perceived as the most natural expression of innermost nature" (Bourdieu 1984: 192) and is "converted…into a habitus" (Bourdieu 1986: 245).

Bourdieu also explores social capital as a means of replicating power dynamics. Social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of…relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986: 248). These memberships can act as a "'credential, which entitles them to credit, in the various

senses of the word'" and allow for various forms of capital and resource exchange (Bourdieu 1986: 249). The capital is not only dependent on the relationships themselves, but the holder's ability to mobilize their networks.

Bourdieu conceived habitus, capital, and field to result in practices as represented in the following equation: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice (Bourdieu 1984: 101) . An individual's habitus and forms of capital, when in the context of the field and the rules of the 'game,' results in practices, which in turn "condition" lifestyles (Bourdieu 1984: 171). Lifestyles are clusters of practices and tastes, creating a homology or 'theme' across seemingly autonomous areas of life. Though taste might seem like a personal decision and way of distinguishing ourselves as individuals, Bourdieu argues it is "the particular stamp marking all the products of the same habitus" (Bourdieu 1990: 60) or "the source of the system of distinctive features which cannot fail to be perceived as a systematic expression of a particular class of conditions of existence, i.e., as a distinctive life-style" (Bourdieu 1984: 175).

Applying Bourdieu to Subcultures and Social Movements

Concerning social movements specifically, Bourdieu has been critiqued for placing "habit and assumption" of habitus in dichotomy against "discourse, reason and reflection" (Crossley 2003: 48). This is in contrast to the easily paralleled Resource Mobilization Theory, which emphasizes the agency and rationality involved in such forms of collective action. Nick Crossley argues Bourdieu's examinations of social movements tend to be limited to ideas of temporary crisis instead of established social fields and the development of habitus that "draw upon a stock of historically and culturally variable 'techniques' of protest which agents learn: for example, petitioning, marching, occupation, tunnelling and bomb- making" as well as

"improvisation or…the potential of agents to invent new techniques to add to the stock" (2003: 49).

Some theorists have adapted Bourdieu's idea of fields to collective action and social movements as social action fields (SAFs) or 'fields of contention' (Crossley 2003, Fligstein and McAdam 2011). These fields have their own 'rules of the game,' habitus, and forms of capital resulting in particular activist practices. Activists' lifestyles, including their activism, work, use of cultural artifacts and social lives, are all defined by their politics and practices are carried out respectively.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has been modified to study the internal cultural practices of subcultures. In her study of British ravers, Sarah Thornton found subculturalists reproduced established hierarchies at a subcultural level, discovering a 'hipness' as capital. Being 'cool' was dependent on a culture-specific values and knowledges. 'Subcultural capital' derives from being 'in the know', wearing the 'right' clothing, having the 'right' haircut, liking the 'right' music, and moving the body correctly within a given situation (1996). The valued customs, aesthetics, and knowledges correspondingly infer one's subcultural capital. Gender, on the other hand, is of far more consequence. For Thornton's ravers, class can be a factor, but it is often "willfully obfuscated by subcultural distinctions...a fantasy of classlessness" (1996: 12). Female subculturalists either "acknowledge the subcultural hierarchy and accept their lowly position" or if they participate they "reject and denigrate a feminized mainstream" (1996: 13). Instead social hierarchies privileging males and masculine qualities are often acknowledged, upheld, and sometimes adopted by females.

In social movement studies, Resource Mobilization Theory has considered 'cultural resources' and 'social-organizational resources' components when considering the creation and mobilization of social movements (Edwards and McCarthy 2007). Cultural resources include strategies of protest, how to communicate with news and media, organizing group meetings, and creating cultural products like music, videos, and publications. An individual or group that has these resources could be argued to have cultural or subcultural capital. Social-organizaitonal resources are social networks and organizational connections that enable recruitment and mobilization. These resources can be directly compared with Bourdieu's concept of social capital.

In the radical subculture, being 'in the know,' can mean knowing the valued and newest information. Familiarity with the common vocabulary and colloquialisms like 'zines,' 'infoshop,' 'COINTELPRO,' 'CrimethInc.,' as well as anarchist, Marxist, and socialist theories and leaders are all symbols of cultural capital. In addition, activists value when others help to organize a particularly large, clandestine action or have relatively unknown knowledge. Reputation as an activist and social network ties can reify status. Activists considered important or dangerous enough to appear on the federal government's radar are also held in esteem.

In some cases knowing not to speak of knowledge, i.e. adhering to security culture, is a source of capital. The phrase 'security culture' refers to the need for secrecy within the community. Security culture is an abbreviation of the need for discretion within all aspects of radical activist culture. It dictates who should and should not have sensitive information and when and where they can discuss this information. Activists keep potentially illegal or proscribed activities within a limited group. The fear of repercussions from the state, by way of

direct or indirect surveillance, guides these policies. This information can be about things that have happened in the past or will happen in the future, about an action or person. Because of security culture, activists' clandestine actions are, by nature, exclusionary.

Those who regularly know exclusive knowledge or are in (unofficial) leadership positions are frequently cisgender men. In a handful of internal disputes, women, gender non binary, and people of color felt silenced under the guise of security culture. When they criticize organizers for not involving them, the common, sweeping response of "security culture" places the objectors' commitment to social justice and authenticity as an activist into question. Evoking security culture is a way of simultaneously casting aspersions on an opponent while upholding one's own authenticity and shutting down the argument. Akin Thornton's ravers, bragging about high-risk activities deflates subcultural capital.

A SOCIALLY JUST CULTURE WITHIN A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

In its annual assessment of gender in social movements the Bridge Program has argued for the possibility of "gender-just" movements. These require "self-critique…patience as well as support as people work with and reconstruct their belief systems and political worldview" (Horn 2013:66). There resulting social movement:

> • Affirms the importance of tackling gender inequality and patriarchal power as an integral component of justice for all and names this as an explicit priority for action.
> • Creates a positive environment for internal reflection and action on women's rights and gender justice.
> • Provides active and formalised support for women's participation and leadership in all areas of movement practice.
> • Consistently tackles gender-based violence and establishes zero tolerance for sexual harassment in movement spaces.
> • Assesses gender bias in movement roles and redistributes labour along genderjust lines.
> • Enables full participation of both women and men, taking into account care work and reproductive roles.

> • Appreciates the gender dimensions of backlash and external opposition faced by activists.
> • Engages with norms and notions around gender, taking into account context-specific gender identities, trans and intersex identities and shifting understandings of gender in social life and activism. (Horn 2013: 5)

Despite attempts, the radical left social movement I studied did not meet these criteria in their prefigurative politics.

Many women, gender non binary, and transgender people face sexism and abuse in radical left subcultures. The lack of solidarity and support have lead to them shifting their participation or leaving. As stated by one zine writer, young women "end up being identified primarily as sexual objects, eventually get frustrated with the boy's club, and leave" (*Said the Pot*). Previous academic articles and investigative journalism have alluded to some of these issues (Schneider 2013, Graeber 2009), but do not specifically address these problems in favor of examinations of the movement's stated political goals.

Activists must remain ethical and conscientious of power dynamics when their communal and intimate boundaries blur. Though the Bridge Report does not include an in depth study of the 'deep structure' dynamics, they raise the question of social movements developing "formalised methods and structures of accountability" (91). The subculture must find a balance in having preexisting pathways of holding one another accountable and maintaining ideological beliefs while not reproducing the structures of the state. The recreation of social institutions requires consideration of the radical activist habitus, forms of capital, and resulting lifestyle. I have researched how contemporary leftist social movements address these issues in hopes of elucidating the process of prefigurative politics. Specifically, my research addresses the question

of why activists are developing 'accountability processes' to deal with problems in radical social

movements and whether or not they are successful.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

Though social movements are a common topic in sociology, the issue of interpersonal

dynamics, and specifically sexual assault and transformative justice, have not been represented in

academia. Most studies of social movements view them in relation to larger society and their

political goals. The dearth of studies seems to parallel arguments by some contingents in

activism, that emotions and relationships are "petty problems" existing outside the sphere of a

social movement. Yet for those involved in activist subcultures, issues of gender and

transformative justice are incredibly important.

The radical left subculture I'm studying unifies around loosely defined political beliefs.

There is no underlying basis in racial / ethnic identity, religion, gender / sexuality or exclusive

focus on a specific issue. Sociologists have critiqued the possibility of singular resistances, but

do not have many accounts of solidarity across multi issue struggles (Hall and Du Gay 1996).

While they continue to employ more traditional methods of activism such as occupations and

street marches, community members are more attentive to their internal praxis and culture. A

cluster of practices relating to political prisoner support, animal rights, bike advocacy, food

justice, housing rights, and more, activists share an explicitly radical agenda and construction of

collective identity based on perceptions and actions intended to confront the source of these

issues, social inequality.

To answer my questions about accountability processes, I have used historical accounts,

conducted interviews of activists, and analyzed zines. In addition, I have used my own anecdotal

experience as a form of auto ethnography to elucidate my study. I believe my multi-pronged

approach will allow for both more expansive and richer understanding of accountability

processes and the use of transformative justice in radical left subcultures.

HISTORICAL

The use of transformative justice through formal accountability processes might be new,

but the gender related issues underlying problems have existed throughout New Left social

movements. Though the subculture I'm studying is not a direct descent of these social

movements, the field is part of the New Left social movement trajectory. History and ideology

developing out of the post citizenship movements are instrumental to the community's longevity

and resilience. The subculture is a result of the cultural third wave transitioning from equality

struggles to radical politics. There is an awareness of privilege and intersections of power,

requiring reflexivity and empirical application of beliefs.

The revolutionary principals of post civil rights activists inspire the community, which

"unlike mainstream civil rights groups...sought structural changes in American society

itself" (Bond 2000). Current affinity groups maintain correspondence with and advocate for

political prisoners of this period, including the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee's

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, the Black Panther's Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Student for a Democratic

Society's David Gilbert. Revolutionary activists' concern for social justice continues with the

aspiration of cultural change and recognition of intersectional oppressions.

To better understand the problems organizers are facing, I have researched three mixed

gender, youth oriented, multi issue activist groups employing prefigurative politics. Using

autobiographies and historical accounts and interviews I have delimited a brief history to look at

the role of women in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panther Party,

and Students for a Democratic Society/Weather Underground Organization. It is important to consider what issues were, how activists addressed them and how they effected the respective social movement.

THE CONTEMPORARY CULTURE OF THE FIELD

The subculture is an overlapping network of anarchists, freegans, punks, academics, and various forms of leftist activists. In calling themselves a community, participants are metaphorically grounding the movement, implying durability, consistency, and cohesion. Programs for events such as the Anarchist Book Fair emphasize that attendance is a form of participation in "our community" and the cohesiveness of said community is necessary to ensure amenities such as free childcare and safer space policies. Membership is a flexible designation, undefined with no requisite markers or qualifications. Community is then a process reflecting both contextual changes of the environment and biographical changes of individuals.

Participants label scattered urban localities a community to evoke the intimacy and connotations of a spatially traditional neighborhood or small town. Vegan eateries, bike shops, collective living spaces and radical bookstores in these neighborhoods become the town's tangible borders, to some extent self contained and self sustaining. Regular, face to face interactions and shared cultural markers are important for the development of relationships.

 'Local particularisms' based in their specific context link to a larger, global network (Featherstone 2005, Shepard and Hayduk 2002, Robinson 2008). Because the subculture exists on a local level, yet is a part of this social justice "solidarity network," the word 'community' is used to reference the broader spirit of radical left activism (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006). To different audiences, 'our community' will have different meanings. The protest chant "From

NYC to Greece, Fuck the Police!" is a way of acknowledging these network connections and commonalities relative to comparative prevailing power structures.

While some affinity groups are the product of particular local conditions, others are the result of transnational connections and cross interest groups. Issues happening outside of the local are brought into local contexts. Coalitions and alliances connect groups and communities at a global level. Groups or "social movement organizations" such as Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF), Food Not Bombs (FNB), and Anarchist People of Color (APOC) exist as non hierarchical affiliations with local branches; a kind of anarchist franchise operating as an umbrella label for associated groups in cities across the world. These usually have a handbook or set of basic tenets as to ideological basis, detailed issues, and method of activism. There are also larger, umbrella "movement industries," such as prisoner rights, animal rights, and anti war categories of activism.

The connections between affinity groups can vary from merges and divisions to collaborations and conflicts. Individuals often have multiple group memberships, connecting with one another through organizing, friendships, and sexual relationships. Groups might co-organize events, or act as allies to other groups, assisting with fundraising or organizing a benefit. As stated by a queer woman of color activist "the punk scene, in the queer community, in community organizing, in activism, among people of colour...all these communities have been linked for me" (King 2012: 96).

Though entering the community provides a network for meeting new people, the extensiveness of the network can result in some affinity groups not being in contact with others. Likewise, individuals who are a part of the network are not familiar with or have even met all

other members. Layers of social and affinity group connections can lead to concentrations of people within areas of the network. Groups connect with others, relationships change over time and there is no single center organization or group, making radical communities "difficult to control, monitor and police" (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006: 740).

Punk

Radical activist culture has roots in 'do it yourself' or DIY, emphasizing agency and the potential for social change. DIY methodology is a means by which activists can apply radical left politics to behaviors and practices. Organizers see self education as a liberating force. The subculture prioritizes reading, teach-ins, and info shops, or meeting spaces containing books, zines, and pamphlets. 'Skill shares' are meetings whereby activists learn practical skills from one another, typically acquiring knowledge by doing the activity. There is no payment, but organizers often exchange skills with one another. Examples include sewing workshops, bike building, screen printing, and transformative justice workshops.

The bricolage of various elements results in a multifaceted taste culture and lifestyle tailored to those involved, the context, and the political ethic. If there was a soundtrack to the community, it would be punk music. Historically, punk has incorporated political viewpoints, both conservative and liberal (Moore 2010). When asked, activists frequently cite certain music or bands as their reason for becoming politically active. The genre is innately democratic and DIY, encouraging anyone to participate. A variety of unconventional cultural practices integrated into the daily lives of participants, such as writing zines or throwing parties to benefit a cause, communicate political discord. It is common for punk bands to play benefits to raise money for court costs, rent for community spaces, and various other projects.

More specifically, in feminist and queer related affinity groups, the 1990s punk sub genre riot grrrl remains popular. Embedded in third wave feminism, riot grrrl developed as an offshoot and response to the traditional male centered punk (Gottlieb and Wald 1994, Siegel 2007, Piano 2003, Kearney 1997, Leonard 1997, Wadkins and Konkiel 2011). The sub genre is unabashedly female and has explicit political interests and goals, communicating within the subculture as well as feminist movements. In ideology riot grrrl recognizes intersectional identities and inequalities, but the subculture is based around a traditionally white musical form, limiting participation to members of a taste culture and maintains punk's inadvertent racial exclusions (Piano 2003, Schilt 2005).

Despite punk's critical role in the radical culture, some try to dissociate from the genre and its latent racial restrictions to become more appealing to non punks. The genre is heavily white and young. The punk aesthetic of torn clothing and unkempt hair intentionally signals disorder and defiance. As with Hebdige's study of punk in the 1970s, the aesthetic continues to express "an antagonistic relation to the prevailing culture and ideological practices" (Willis 1977, p. xiii). In the radical subculture, punks can be a deterrent to non punks becoming involved, especially within gentrifying neighborhoods. The communication of "antagonism" is ambiguous and the aim unclear, particularly to those without knowledge of the subculture's symbols. Strategies for racial and ethnic diversification include targeted event promotion, modifying the genres of music performed at benefits, prioritizing neighborhood relationships, and deliberate networking with radical groups not associated with punks or punk music.

Demographics

The demographics of the radical subculture reflects the changing visage of urban youth culture. Most participants span an age between early 20s through mid 30s. Neither significantly male nor female, some identify as queer or gender non conforming. As in previous studies of social justice activists, many come from middle class or working class homes (Ibrahim 2011, Ruth 2005, Bagguley 1995). Participation is racially and ethnically diverse with groups such as APOC (Anarchist People of Color) and the POC (People of Color) Zine project. On the whole, however, there is an overrepresentation of white activists (Holland, Fox, Daro 2008). The lack of racial and ethnic diversity is a regular concern of the radical subculture (Freeman 2009). Participants are rarely religious, there is no associated religion; however, forms of astrology and witchcraft are popular, especially with LGBTQ and female identified activists. A few individuals and groups have even created their own tarot card decks with politicized interpretations of the cards, such as The Collective Tarot, Next World Tarot, and Slow Holler.

Participants are transitioning into adulthood and do not have the teenager's freedom from necessity. Some might own vehicles, but often own bicycles and use public transportation. Some activists are current students or recent graduates and have parental support, scholarships, and student loans. Common employers conducive to radical politics include vegan restaurants, health food markets, feminist and queer identified sex shops, and various non profit organizations. Some participate in the informal economy, undertaking jobs such as dog walking, alternative medicine, and sex work, which allow autonomy and schedule flexibility.

Numerous participants attend or associate with academic institutions and have some college education. As previously mentioned, college campuses have established activist groups and are a resource for and have ties to the activist subculture. College students are in a position

to experiment with alternative cultural practices (Ibrahim 2011). Friendships formed in classes, clubs, and other school events build new social networks.   Both inside and outside of the classroom, students encounter criticism of current conditions and prevailing ideas, as well as new ideas and ways of thinking.

Though some might live with their parents or in their own apartment, many live with fellow activists or in collective / shared houses. Some engage in squatting, or occupying vacant property. When possible, larger living spaces housing activists double as meeting, event, and multipurpose locations. There are a few houses specifically established to function as both living and community spaces.

Participants in the community are seldom married or have children. While this is in part due to age, it is also tied to ideology and lifestyle. Marriage, either hetero or homosexual, forces engagement with the state, has foundations in religion, and upholds traditional gender roles. There is a range of sexuality practiced, including polyamory, multi partners, and bondage, dominance, sadism, and masochism. As a result, some in the subculture see marriage as a process of assimilation into a culture that is socially unjust.

Parenthood is also a limitation to participation. Activities would be inconvenient if not impossible for those with children. Meetings late in the evening, events held at night, and potentially illegal activities require substantial time commitments and are generally not child friendly. When organizing events, groups I was in or working with did not intend to exclude children, nonetheless we inadvertently overlooked or did not consider the matter. In response to this problem, some activists wrote *Don't Leave Your Friends Behind: Concrete Ways to Support Families in Social Justice Movements and Communities*, a book offering different ways to

integrate activist and family lives. A few groups are conscious of these limitations and are altering their practices to be more accommodating to parents and children, with events like the Anarchist Book Fair offering child care and child-friendly workshops.

INTERVIEWS

Because I am studying a little known social process in a distinct group, I do not intend for my interviews to be mathematically representative, but to elucidate these processes and experiences of activists. Numerically, it is unknown how many processes activists have attempted, completed, or the number of people involved. I interviewed 12 people from April to September of 2018 to gather data concerning gender, interpersonal dynamics, and transformative justice models. Four of the interviewees were people I met while involved in various activist groups. The remaining eight were a snowball sample, recruited through outreach to known activist groups and social networks. Requirements for participation were that they were 18 or older, were willing to have the interview audio recorded, and were directly or peripherally involved with an accountability process.

I audio recorded the interviews to provide accuracy and specificity in language use and tone of interviewees. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and three and a half hours. I conducted all interviews in English with people located in the United States. There are significant groups and individuals working in Canada, Australia, England, France, Germany, and other countries; however, I did not want different issues of culture and criminal justice systems to convolute the study. Because activists tend to relocate with some frequency, 10 interviews were over the phone and 2 in person. The IRB expedited approval of my application because I did not

record the names of the interviewees and they remain anonymous. I use pseudonyms to distinguish the voices of different activists.

 Of the 12 I interviewed, their demographic information varied. Though not representative of leftist activists, they are likely representative of activists involved in transformative justice. All but one were in their twenties to thirties when they started participating in activism and accountability processes. Racially, 11 self identified as white and 1 self identified as "mixed" Asian and Middle Eastern racial identity.

 Gender and sexuality in the subculture are more fluid and experimental than in more mainstream society. It is not uncommon for activists to identify as gender non binary or gender non conforming.   The term 'cisgender,' meaning identifying as the gender you were assigned at birth, is a part of activist vernacular and used to create linguistic balance with 'transgender.' Two interviewees identified themselves as cisgender male. Two interviewees identified as gender queer or non binary, one as a transgender female, and the remaining seven as cisgender females. As to the sexuality of interviewees, 3 identified as straight or "mostly straight," 1 as bisexual, and 8 as queer. Queer as a sexual identity means their sexuality does not adhere to the gender binary.

TABLE 1: INTERVIEWEES' SELF IDENTIFICATION

Self-identify as	Number of Interviewees
Gender	
Male / Man	2
Female / Woman	8
Gender Queer / Non Binary	2
Race	
White	11
'Mixed'	1

Sexuality	
Straight / Mostly Straight	3
Bisexual	1
Queer	8

I asked interviewees open ended, general questions about their experience of activism leading up to their involvement in accountability processes, the processes themselves, and the outcome. I followed with more specific questions about the format of the process, requests, and role of community. I also asked them to access if they believed they were successful and if they had any regrets concerning accountability processes.

Interviewees played various roles in numerous processes. Of those I interviewed eight mediated processes, carrying out a role that connected the survivor and perpetrator. Two were survivors and six were on a survivor support team. One was a perpetrator and three were on a perpetrator support team. And one did not play a formal role in any processes, but was close to a process and wrote a well circulated zine on the topic.

TABLE 2: INTERVIEWEES' ROLE IN PROCESS

Role in a Process	Number of Interviewees
Mediator / Facilitator	8
Survivor / Harmed Person	2
Survivor Support / Friend	6
Perpetrator / Person Being Held Accountable ' 'Called Out'	1
Perpetrator Support Team / Friend	3
Other	
Attempted Coordination	3
Wrote a Zine as a Member of a Group	3
Wrote a Zine as an Individual	4

TABLE 3: INTERVIEWEES' NUMBER OF PROCESSES

Number of Processes Involved In	Number of Interviewees
0	1
1	1
2	3
3	2
4 or more	5

Understandably people who have participated in these processes might be reticent to participate in my research. Researchers who study social movements can leave activists disappointed, feeling as though their interviews are "merely as part of a research itinerary to be ticked off one by one" and rarely contacted after or provided the resultant article or document (Kempson). There are also some issues around legalities, such as activists making public statements and allegations about specific individuals and the use of physical retaliation and violence. A few of those I interviewed asked for verbal confirmation of their anonymity.

At the same time, for some who have not had an opportunity to voice their opinion or experience, I was sought out for interviews. A number had participated years ago and had chosen not to think about the processes since. Our interview gave some a place to air grievances or reconsider their activist histories. Others still do this work, and hope that in participating in the interview, they can contribute to pooled knowledge of activist practices.

ZINES

Zine literature plays a crucial role in the community. Pronounced like the third syllable of 'magazine,' a zine is a DIY form of publication akin to a brochure or booklet, written by an individual, collective, or a collaboration. In her book *Stolen Sharpie Revolution*, zine writer Alex Wrekk defines zines as "physical, printed, self-published creations that can consist of a single

sheet of paper or many, fastened together, usually with staples" (Wrekk 9). There is no correct criterion, though most zines are the size of a standard sheet of paper, 8 1/2 by 11 inches, folded in half. Zines are usually made from photocopies, "but can be offset, letterpressed, mimeogrpahed, or Risograph printed" and "can have a print run from 1 or into the thousands but generally have a run under 1,000" (Wrekk 9).

Zines are DIY both in their form and content. The layout of zines intentionally displays their DIY character and process. Zines "incorporate many different skills from writing, art, production and even research" and enable the writer to "use more than text to tell stories" (Wrekk 13, 19). Most have a cut and paste aesthetic, meaning it looks as though the writer has removed words, images, and other contents from their original source and pasted them into the zine. Text often mimics typewriter style fonts are cut out in sections, and pasted on the pages. Writers might coordinate fonts with the topic, add handwritten sections, and intentionally vary styles. Images are cut out and collaged onto pages or hand drawn. The combination and layers of styles reveal multifaceted meanings.

Because there is an emphasis on artistic endeavor and informal education, these cultures are highly prolific, creating and communicating pools of shared knowledge and history. Zines can be about "every imaginable subject matter, from food politics to thrift shopping to motherhood" and tend to be reflexive about the experience of activists (Piepmeier 2). As zines are typically written as part of participation in a political subculture, they often include DIY or 'how-to' guides, such as vegan cooking, urban gardening, personal health, or starting a collective. Particularly, queer and feminist identified people embrace zines as a platform of self expression and sharing of experiences.

Individuals or zine 'distros,' meaning distributors, circulate zines. Distros "are generally small hobby mail orders, online shops, or, occasionally, collections of zine and other items brought to shows or events to sell" (Wrekk 11). Organizers 'table' zines at events, meaning that groups have table space to put out zines and other group information, patches, pins, and fliers. They are free, for barter, or sale with the cost usually under $5.00 to cover printing cost or raise money for a group. Rarely do zine writers make a profit. Much of this information is now online, though paper zines are still written and heavily circulated. Currently, zines are widely available online as PDF documents or are purchasable online from distros or zine archive websites. In addition, both Barnard College and CUNY's Brooklyn College now have zine libraries on campus.

Zine writers have addressed implementing restorative and transformative justice models in the subculture. Because the subculture is generally anti authoritarian and combative towards the criminal justice system, activists are using available resources and their own cultural contexts to create prototypes for more ethical justice. Discussion of these policies has become prevalent at events and meetings, in zines, emails, and blog posts.

To carry out this study I used 121 zines to look at the experiences of activists. Fewer than half were hardcopy and the remainder were in PDF form found and circulated online. I collected many of the printed zines while I was participating in activities and the zines were in circulation around the subculture. These would include zines from the local Brooklyn and Feminist zine festivals, organizations tabling at events like the Anarchist Book Fair or POC Zine Project Tour, or ones made by friends. I purchased others at Bluestockings bookstore in NYC or Wooden Shoe Books in Philadelphia, activist publishers like AK Press, or online zine distros. I

obtained PDF copies of zines at websites of transformative justice groups like Philly's Pissed and

Support NY, or online zine libraries such as the Queer Zine Archive Project.

Zines might be specific to a local area, listing localized resources and information, yet

they also cross national borders. My interest is primarily in zines circulating in the United

States, which does not mean all of the zines are written by people in the US. I limited my study

to zines in English, as they are the most circulated; however, I did find zines in Spanish, German,

and French on topics of sexism, consent, and transformative justice. As a member of Support

New York, activists in other countries would have meetings on Skype with our members about

how the group carried out processes. As a member of the For the Birds Collective, we scanned

zines to send to overseas collectives. The flow of information makes it difficult to limit and

demarcate along a country's boundaries.

The sample of zines I'm using are not intended to be numerically representative of zines

in general, but instead an assessment of zines organizers are writing and circulating about gender

related issues with in activist subculture. I've separated the zines I'm using into four major

themes: 1) sexism, 2) consent and rape, 3) men's groups, and 4) transformative justice and

accountability processes. Many are completion zines, written by more than one person or group,

with some pieces being in multiple zines. Some are also a part of a series and I'm only looking

at the issue that addresses one of the aforementioned themes or I am only using the issues I was

able to obtain as zines "are published and distributed erratically" (Freedman 2018). The source

or author of many zines are unclear, attributed to monikers, or are anonymous.

TABLE 4: ZINE THEMES

Themes	Number of Zines
Sexism	25
Consent and Rape	26
Men's Groups	13
Transformative Justice and Accountability	57
Totals	121

The first and most general category of zines I collected were about sexism in activism. These covered topics such as meeting structures, sexism and COINTELPRO, and gender's relationship to violence. Some are perzines, or zines "are focused on the author's life, opinions, and thoughts" (Freedman 2018). Others are general guides of how to deal with sexism. *The Super Happy Anarcho Fun Pages* and *On the Recent Occupations* include comic drawings. Of the zines about sexism, two especially of note are *The First 7 inch was Better*, which was later published in the academic journal W*omen and Performance,* and *Why She Doesn't Give a Fuck About Your Insurrection*, which was especially controversial in the subculture as a response to actions of insurrectionist anarchists.

TABLE 5: SEXISM ZINE TITLES

Sexism Themed Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
Betrayal: A Critical Analysis of Rape Culture In Anarchist Subcultures^
Brainscan #27: Ten Stories^
Brainscan Epilogue^
Breaking the MANacles: An Anti-Patriarchy Reader^
Bros Fall Back*
Dangerous Spaces: Violent Resistance, Self-Defense, & Insurrectional Struggle Against Gender*
Don't Be a Dick*
Erinyen: Anarcha-Feminist Inky #2^
From the Kitchen: Sexism, Anarchism, and Men*

Sexism Themed Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
Gendered Space, Volume 1^
How Can I Be Sexist I'm Anarchist*
How We Kiss: Privilege on the Dance Floor*
My Feminist Manifesta: A Call Out to Men*
No SafeHouses: Patriarchy on the Left Part iI of IV
On the Recent Occupations^
Said the Pot to the Kettle: Feminist Theory for Anarchist Men^
So You Want to Start a Feminist Collective…^
The First 7-inch Was Better: How I Became an Ex-Punk*
The Super Happy Anarcho-Fun Pages #3*
Think and Die Thinking*
Vampire Hunt: Manipulation in Interpersonal Relationships and Groups^
What Happened to Sisterhood? We Can't Fight Patriarchy If We're Too Busy Fighting Each Other*
When Women Attack*
Why Misogynists Make Great Informants: How Gender Violence on the Left Enables State Violence in Radical Movements*
Why She Doesn't Give a Fuck About Your Insurrection^

The second category of zines I've created are specifically addressing consent and sexual assault. While a few are perzines like *On the Table* and *Everything. Is. Fine.*, most of these zines are guides on defending yourself, having consensual sex, and conducting workshops about consent. Arguably *Learning Good Consent* was one of the most popular zines in the subculture and is still regularly found at various zine fests and events.

TABLE 6: CONSENT AND RAPE ZINE TITLES

Consent and Rape Themed Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
A DIY Guide to Prevent Sexual Assault*
A Streetcar Named Consent: Tactics for Sexual Consent and Delight*
AKA: How to Hit on Someone^
Ask First! Resources for Supporters, Survivors, and Perpetrators of Sexual Assault*

Consent and Rape Themed Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
Blackout #3^
Consent is Part of My Operating System*
Don't Rape Each Other! Consent is a Community Issue*
Everything. Is. Fine. Issue 1, Volume 1^
Fucked: On Being Sexually Dysfunctional in Sex-Posi Queer Scenes*
Haay Hottie! Consent, Communication & Boundary Setting in Party Spaces^
How to Put Together Your Own Participatory, Community-Specific Radical Consent Workshop!*
i'm Having a Long Sequence of De Ja Vu, #1*
Learning Good Consent^
Let's Talk About Consent Baby*
Let's Talk Consent^
Let's Talk: Feminist Communication for Radicalizing Sex, Consent, & Interpersonal Dynamics*
Listen, Punk, Maybe You Misunderstood: Not Without My Clear and Full Consent!^
My Body, My Limits, My Pleasure, My Choice: A Positive Sexuality Booklet for Young People*
Not Without My Consent! (Asshole!)*
On the Table: My Sexual Assaults*
Purge #3 Stories from Survivors of Sexual Assault^
Sexual Violence Isn't Only on the Streets: Ask Before You Touch Me^
Silence = Death*
Smart Tart: A Sex Positive Zine on Sexual Health for Women, Queer, and Trans People #1^
Support^
Women's Self Defense #2: Stories and Strategies of Survival*

A third type of zines I've included are written either by men's groups and or/are especially intended for male activists. *The Philly Dudes Collective* was a particularly popular zine when I was a member of Support New York and The For the Birds Collective. One not listed here because it was only included in the later book version of *The Revolution Starts at Home*, is The Challenging Male Supremacy Project's essay "What Does it Feel Like When Change Finally Comes?: Male Supremacy, Accountability & Transformative Justice."

TABLE 7: MEN'S GROUP ZINE TITLES

Men's Group Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
Beginners Guide to Responsible Sexuality (For Men)^
Ex Masculus: Critical Reflections of Pro-Feminist Men's Groups*
Fight Rape: Dealing With Our Shit*
Masculinities ^
Men Can Stop Rape*
Men in the Feminist Struggle*
Men Speaking Out on Men and Sexism, Number 1*
Men Unlearning Rape^
Men, Sexism, and the Class Struggle^
On the Road to Healing: A Booklet for Men Against Sexism*
On the Road to Healing: A Booklet for Men Against Sexism, Issue 2*
Social Detox, Issue #1: Resources for Anti-Sexist Men^
The Philly Dudes Collective: Year One (And a Half)^

And the final category of zines are about transformative justice. These include perzines, guides to and critiques of transformative justice. A few of these are explicitly talking about a specific, named activist. I have removed the individual's name from the *Regarding Xxxxxxxx* zine for this reason. Through the name is a moniker used by the person, his name is known enough that it would be specific. Other zines like *Baby I'm a Manarchist* and *Brainscan* name a specific individual in their content, so in any quotes I will not include the names of people accused of abuse or harm. Of these zines, *Support*, *Taking the First Step*, *Gender Oppression*, and *We Are All Survivors* were especially common.

TABLE 8: TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ZINE TITLES

Transformative Justice and Accountability Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
A Job for the A Team: A Zine on Awareness and Community Accountability*
A Radical Mini-Guide to Self-Care After Trauma^
A Stand Up Start-Up: Confronting Sexual Assault With Transformative Justice*

Transformative Justice and Accountability Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
A World Without Sexual Assault*
Accountability Processes are Ableist as Fuck^
Accountability^
Accounting for Ourselves: Breaking the Impasse Around Assault and Abuse in Anarchist Scenes*
An Accountability Process Primer: How to Prepare For and Facilitate a Process*
As If They Were Human: A Different Take on Perpetrator Accountability*
Baby, I'm a Manarchist^
Beautiful, Difficult, Powerful: Ending Sexual Assault Through Transformative Justice*
Behind the Closet Doors: Confronting Emotional Abuse in Intimate Partnerships^
Bitterness and Rage: On Being a 'Bad Survivor'
Brainscan #21: Irreconcilable Differences^
Brainscan #26: So, What's the Deal With You and Microcosm?^
D.I.Y. Accountability: If You Don't Get It From Them - Do It Yourself^
Fix My Head, Issue #2*
For Your Safety and Security…*
Gender Oppression; Abuse; Violence: Community Accountability Within the People of Color Progressive Movement^
Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now: Support and Anarchist Communities^
Hoax #12: Feminisms and Healing^
If a Man Commits Rape in Newtown and No One Knows How to Deal With It…*
In Our Hands: Using a Community Accountability Approach to Address Sexual Violence, Abuse & Oppression #1*
It's Down to This #2: On Sexual Violence, Accountability, Consent, Healing^
It's Down to This: Reflections, Stories, Experiences, Critiques and Ideas On Community and Collective Response to Sexual Violence, Abuse, and Accountability^
Making Spaces Safer^
Miklat Miklat: A Transformative Justice Zine*
Moving Towards a Culture of Transformative Justice^
My Friend's a Perp: What Do I Do?
No More Words #3^
Our Own Response: Creating Healthier Communities^
Quarrel: Stories of Survivor Self Determination Direct Action, Strategies for Safer Spaces & Ripping Patriarchy to Shreds*

Transformative Justice and Accountability Zine Titles (symbol indicating hard copy^ or PDF*)
Regarding Xxxxxxxx^
Salvage: Gendered Violence in Activist Communities*
See No, Speak No, Hear No: Articles and Questions about Sexual Assault^
Setting Fire to the Church of Social Justice: 3 Critiques of Identity Politics, Call-Out Culture & Other Models of Statist Thinking*
Strategies for Survivors*
Supporting A Survivor of Sexual Assault*
Survive, Empower, Resist: A Resource Guide for Survivors of Sexual Assault in New York City^
Taking Risks: Implementing Grassroots Community Accountability Strategies^
Taking the First Step: Suggestions to People Called Out for Abusive Behavior^
The Broken Teapot*
The Hammer in Our Hamlets: Patriarchy on the Left Part III of IV
The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities^
This is About More Than Who We Fuck (And Who Fucks Us)^
Thoughts on Possible Community Responses to Intimate Violence (Redux)^
Thoughts About Community Support Around Intimate Violence^
Tired of Paper People^
Transformative Justice and/as Harm*
We Are All Survivors, We Are All Perpetrators // What to Do When Someone Tells You That You Violated Their Boundaries, Made Them Feel Uncomfortable, or Committed Assault^
What About the Rapists? Anarchist Approaches to Crime & Justice*
What Do We Do When? A Zine about Community Response to Sexual Assault, Issue #2*
What Do We Do When? Radical Community Response to Sexual Assault, Issue #3^
What to Do When Harm Occurs*
What to Do When Someone Tells You that You Violated Their Boundaries, Made Them Feel Uncomfortable, or Committed Assault*
What to Do When You've Been Called Out: A Brief Guide*
Witch-Hunt: Addressing Mental Health and Confronting Sexual Assault in Activist Communities*

I read all of the listed zines and organized the content around particular themes developed out of my historical research. I divided content into issues in organizing and security culture, consent and sexual relationships, safer spaces, abuse and harm, survivors and perpetrators,

processes, successes and problems, the use of violence, critiques from within the subculture, and resulting changing of activism or leaving. In my assessment of the literature, I hope to give the most accurate representation possible of the context and sentiments of the writers as well as the information circulating in the subculture.

In addition, I'm using other types of documents from the subculture to further explore the transformative justice practices. As previously mentioned, a few zines have been republished as books with additional chapters and articles added, such as *Learning Good Consent: On Healthy Relationships and Survivor Support*, *The Revolution Starts at Home*, and *The Encyclopedia of Doris*. There are also a few subculture related, anarchist newspapers and magazines like *Crimethinc*, *The Fifth Estate*, and *The Abolitionist*. A few transformative justice collectives have developed curriculums and toolkits for processes. Further, I am using some artwork and comics, organization hand outs and fliers, event brochures, safer space policies, blog posts, organization's websites and articles.

CHAPTER 3 HISTORICAL PATTERNS IN NEW LEFT MOVEMENTS

You can't claim that you love people when you don't respect them, and you can't call for political unity unless you practice it in your relationships. And that doesn't happen out of nowhere. That's something that has got to be put into practice every day.
Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

Because New Left movements were "grounded in American experience and language," they also reflect these power differentials (Flacks 2013: 840). Within radical left activism there is not a comprehensive understanding of the internal cultures of past movements. Organizers, both then and now, often view relationships as personal, separate from or not as important as the cause. But patriarchy and sexism are major impediments to the mobilization of women in gender-integrated movements (Horn 2013, Kuumba 2001). To elucidate these dynamics, I want to look at three social movements of the New Left to examine how they conceptualized these issues, how they dealt with problems, and how they effected the social movement as a whole.

I have specifically examined the history of gendered dynamics in the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party, and Students for a Democratic Society / the Weather Underground (SDS/WUO). When considering the overlap of a 'generational underground' and social movements, Stuart Hall cites "civil rights" (SNCC), "black power" (the Panthers), and "campus rebellions" (SDS) explicitly as existing in the "activist pole" of the cultural dialectic (2007: 160). These successive movements are simultaneously rooted in the norms and conditions of their respective times despite their struggles against them.

SNCC, the Black Panther Party, and SDS/WUO are best examined within their temporal framework. From 1960 - 1980 American women's lives underwent drastic changes. Many

women were taught to "accept male dominance and to consider [themselves]…a helpmate to men" (Jennings 2001: 146).   In the preceding 1950s, society defined women in relation to marriage and children, which was "part of the national agenda" against communism and the Cold War (PBS 2003). While women made up 32% of college students (LaGuardia and Wagner Archives), there was a frequent joke that women "went to college to get a "Mrs." (pronounced M.R.S.) degree, meaning a husband" (PBS 2003) and only 33.9% of women were part of the civilian labor force (Toossi 2002). By 1980, women made up 51.8% of college students (NCES 2010) and 51.5% of the civilian labor force (Toossi 2002). Public discourse around sex and sexual harassment / assault also drastically changed over this period.

Activists in SNCC, the Black Panther Party, and SDS/WUO were entrenched in these changing cultural norms. Elaine Brown of the Black Panther Party has stated "We didn't get the men from revolutionary heaven," pointing to the difficulties of carrying out ideology in the material realities of everyday life. Putting ideology into practice means activists are answerable to both current conditions and to the world they are attempting to create. They are creating a culture that promotes further social change and "revealing the underlying structures of the formal institutions with which [they]…are in conflict" (Brotherton and Barrios 2004:49).

I do not intend to create a conclusive history, but a succinct, organized examination of how gender, sex, and organizing intwine in these three social movements. Specifically I deduced four primary themes: the officially and unofficially defined roles for women in the group, how gender influenced group organization such as the division of labor and leadership, social bonds and sexual relationships within the group, and internal methods of dealing with conflict and self critique.

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC)

The Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced 'snick'), formed in 1960 to support student actions against segregation (Polletta 2013). Groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), met at a conference at Shaw University with the goal of incorporating a student branch into their organizations. Ella Baker, a founding member of SCLC and organizer of the Shaw Conference, had been critical of SCLC's hierarchical and patriarchal organization (Abu-Jamal 2004, Greenberg 1998). At the conference, she instead counseled the students, who included Julian Bond and John Lewis, to create their own autonomous group. She wished for the students to "maintain not only their zeal, idealism, and independence, but also their inclination 'toward group-centeredness, rather than toward a leader-centered group pattern of organization'" (Giddings 2007: 274).

SNCC developed as a democracy with minimal hierarchy. The organization had a chairman and some specialized positions and advisors, but was primarily a network of workers and local people operating independently in communities across the southeast (Urban 2002, Anderson-Bricker 1999). The group's early actions included sit-ins and voter registration. Staff created close friendships with other workers and local people. SNCC conceived the idea of a 'beloved community' as a kind of utopian, prefigurative microcosm. They reenforced this through staff taking on the clothing and mannerisms of the local, poor rural people, such as denim overalls and women wearing little makeup (Ford 2013).

At its largest, SNCC had a staff of 160 people (Polletta 2013), with significantly higher numbers of women than other civil rights organizations. Jean Wiley, an SNCC organizer, stated

she "had not idea there'd be so many women, so many Black women in SNCC because in all of the political groups that [she had] been in…were overwhelmingly male. Black and white, --but male" (Veterans 2004). Some SNCC members believed that local Black men were less likely to participate because they faced real, physical danger from local white people. Hardy Frye, of CORE and SNCC, noted "the men always were the last to come in to the church because they had been out surveying the situation, they had weapons in their trucks and they were basically security" against local white supremacists (Veterans 2004).

Though one or two accounts discussed women's treatment as "inferiors to men" (Urban 2002), most assess the organization as gender egalitarian (Veterans 2004, Fleming 1993, Carmichael 2003). If anything, SNCC valued tasks traditionally associated with women as strengths instead of weaknesses. Local Black women were both "substitute mother figures" and "militant…out-spoken…and willing to catch hell" (Evans 1980: 53, 51). They were "looked up to by the whole community because of their wisdom, tenacity, strength, and ability to transcend the oppressive nature of their lives" (Giddings 2007: 284). The group valued women's centrality to the family and integrated these ideas into their organizing. Women like Rita Walker "brought her husband and even the kids to the [Freedom] House…she just made the Movement her life" (Veterans 2004). Other organizers like Diane Nash simultaneously maintained movement involvement while visibly pregnant. Nash became "a forceful statement…that being a woman placed no restrictions on full and significant participation in the Movement" (Holsaert 2012: 486).

Organization and Leadership in SNCC

Ella Baker was an early advisor to the group and guided SNCC's "political orientation, moral outlook, and organizing principles" (Carmichael 2003: 305). Baker knew the complexity of power in few hands and even her own "guidance was so natural, so gentle and unobtrusive, as to have been almost imperceptible at the time" (Carmichael 2003: 305). She emphasized 'grass roots' activism, that members were not 'leaders', but 'organizers,' "who sprang from the organizing itself — not imposed by others from the top down" (Richardson 2015, Ford 2013). SNCC members often teased fellow members who drew more attention, such as Stokely Carmichael being called 'Stokely Starmichael' for his media notoriety (Greenberg 1998: 129). The group used consensus decision making to address larger concerns (Cornell 2016), and "acted on the basis of their own decisions and instincts" to operate daily (Anderson-Bricker 1999: 50). Activists rooted mutual trust in interdependence (King 1988) and viewing themselves as "a family of siblings" (Holsaert 2012: 386).

Though the chairman of SNCC was always a man, women were important leaders in the Movement (Holsaert 2012, Greenberg 1998). The organization encouraged both men and women to become field secretaries and project directors. Yet, in action women tackled traditionally female tasks, such as cleaning Freedom Houses, clerical work, and taking minutes (Urban 2002, Anderson-Bricker 1999, Giddings 2007, Evans 1980). SNCC organizer Judy Richardson remembered "only the women are doing the minutes… the guys aren't doing them — Julian [Bond] certainly isn't doin' no minutes. You know, Jimmy Bolton wasn't doing the minutes. You know, none of the men were doing the minutes" (Wiley 2007). As a response, a group of women, including Mary King, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, Mildred Foreman, and Judy Richardson, staged a sit in in front of Executive Secretary Jim Forman's office. Richardson

describes how Forman was "greeted by a halfway serious sit-in …all singing 'We Shall Not Be Moved' and holding picket signs that read 'Unfair'…and 'No more work till justice comes to the Atlanta office'" (Holsaert 2012: 361). As a result, both men and women began taking minutes in SNCC meetings.

Some have argued that there was logic underlying the division of labor. Due to the danger of their surroundings, men would drive vehicles because it was one of the most high risk tasks (Evans 1980: 77). Because of the taboo of Black men interacting with white women and threats from local whites, white women undertook administrative roles. Black women had a bit more "ability to make decisions and engage in high-risk activism" (Kuumba 2001: 37). At the same time, SNCC encouraged more men to take on domestic labor. Stokely Carmichael and James Forman notably lead by example, cleaning dishes (Greenberg 1998: 147) and sweeping floors (Wiley 2007). Much of the work carried out by SNCC involved working with local communities, creating interpersonal networks, and administrative work, "abilities that are commonly encouraged in women" (Evans 1980: 46). The administrative work was not simply typing, but larger scale organizing, managing meetings, and decision making.

Relationships in SNCC

SNCC's self conception as a 'beloved community' framed the interpersonal relationships in the group. Members' personal lives and activist work became enmeshed. Organizer Joyce Ladner has stated SNCC "relationships were defined…first and foremost by the task at hand" (Greenberg 1998: 144). Even after difficult meetings, organizers would transition to pleasure and relaxation. Mary King remembers "afterward there was always music, with beer and dancing late into the night, and our basic affection for each other would flow across the

wounds of the day's diatribes" (King 1988: 451). The pressure and danger from outside of the community intensified these bonds.

Sexual relationships were particularly important in SNCC's evolvement. Some who were children of "Old Left" activists and union organizers eschewed sex with other activists for fear of complications (Greenberg 1998, Veterans 2004). Others found it "easier to try to settle in to" a relationship because "[s]ex was a major preoccupation…it was getting both…distracting and unnerving" (Veterans 2004). Participants were young, challenging their existing social norms, and living under the threat of danger. For some this meant "'you would sleep with whoever was there'" (Evans 1980: 79), such as Chude Pam Allen's account of meeting Wayne Yancy. "I don't think it was 60 seconds, "Hi! You want to sleep together?" [Laughter] And I was a little prude, right? I mean, I'm not even sexually experienced, so I was just horrified. And of course then he gets killed, and then I'm feeling guilty" (Veterans 2004). The danger faced by activists was romanticized and inferred a form of cultural capital. In interviews Bruce Hartford and Willie B. Wazir Peacock have talked about how being a 'freedom fighter' imparted sex appeal, with Peacock positing resultant increased participation, because "local boys…got envious and jealous…[s]o a few of them started…getting involved (Veterans 2004).

Interracial sex, specifically between white women and Black men, was especially controversial. At the time, a white woman seen simply holding hands or in a car with a Black man could put them at risk of physical danger. Some thought interracial sex was part of creating the 'beloved community,' challenging societal expectations in the "concrete reality in the intimacy of the bedroom" (Evans 1980: 79). But in defining these relationships as part of the

creation of community, there was also pressure to break the taboo "to prove that they weren't [racist]" or were dedicated to the Movement (Veterans 2004).

Sexual relationships became a particular problem and created tension during the Freedom Summer of 1964. SNCC accepted or rejected female volunteers from the north in part based on their physical appearance (McAdam 1990). Some white women became involved with Black men who already had wives and partners. When James Forman divorced his wife Mildred, who was Black and an organizer, and quickly remarried a white woman named Constancia Romilly, it signaled "white women had no respect for relationships of black men and black women - which every black men knew" (Fleming 1998). Organizer Gloria Richardson Dandridge remembers spending much of her time addressing sexual relationships of other organizers. "Becoming a sexual relations counselor was another one of the tasks that was in my unwritten job description. Often this issue took up an inordinate amount of my time and taxed me the most" (Holsaert 2012: 29218). Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons developed a "sexual harassment policy [which] was converted to 'She hates men' by some of my male colleagues" (Holsaert 2012: 31). Others went so far as to ban relationships or forced out people seen as causing trouble (Fleming 1998, Veterans 2004).

Gender, Race and Internal Disputes

In the fall of 1964, Casey Hayden and Mary King, two white women on SNCC staff, anonymously wrote an position paper for the SNCC Waveland Conference called 'Women in the Movement.' The paper listed 11 instances of sexism, including "Although there are some women...who have been working as long as some of the men, the leadership group...is all men," and "Any woman in SNCC, no matter what her position or experience, has been asked to take

minutes in a meeting when she and other women are outnumbered by men." This list is not all inclusive as it "could continue as far as there are women in the movement" and notes the parallel privilege of whiteness (Kuumba 2001). A year later, in "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo," Hayden and King again reflected on their experiences in activism, pointed to the lack of dialogue about gender in the Movement, and raised questions about the operating division of labor. Notably, neither statement addressed sex and romantic relationships in the Movement. They sent the latter paper to forty female organizers in various peace and civil rights organizations around the country (King 1988, Greenberg 1998). Hayden has since written that she did not intend for these pieces to show "dissension within the ranks" but instead feminism emerging "because SNCC served as a model…to pattern their own movements" (Greenberg 1998: 145). In retrospect, historians have argued 'Women in the Movement' was a "reaction to growing Black nationalism and an attempt to return SNCC to the ideals of the beloved community" (Anderson-Bricker 1999: 53) and was written anonymously because the women could "sens[e] their own precariousness" (Evans 1980: 85).

The general reception within SNCC to the paper was not positive. There was disagreement between many white and Black women about their experience of sexism (Veterans 2004). Many Black women organizers did not feel marginalized in SNCC, in part "because many female Black staffers had more authority, respect and responsibility than their white counterparts" (Anderson-Bricker 1999: 55). Others believed white women "tried to dominate the office" (Fleming 1998) and that sexism was primarily a concern of white women (Breines 1996). For some Black women, though there was chauvinism in the group, it was not a priority in relation to race (Anderson-Bricker 1999, Giddings 2007). "[T]hey rejected an attack on black

nationalism couched in the language of gender" (Barber 2010: 105). When sexism did happen, women were expected to be strong, refuse to tolerate it, and fight back (Holsaert 2012: 481).

The initial position paper of 1964 is the backdrop to the infamous Stokely Carmichael quote concerning the position of women in SNCC. In *Freedom Song*, Mary King argues that the quote is usually taken out of context and recounts the exchange. On an evening during the conference, roughly 25 SNCC members were drinking alcohol on a pier after meeting. "Looking straight at me, [Carmichael] grinned broadly and shouted, 'What is the position of women in SNCC?' Answering himself, he responded, 'The position of women in SNCC is prone!' Stokely threw back his head and roared…with laughter. We all collapsed with hilarity. His ribald comment was uproarious and wild. It drew us all closer together; because even at that moment, he was poking fun at his own attitudes. Casey and I felt, and continue to feel, that Stokely was one of the most responsive men at the time that our anonymous paper appeared in 1964" (1988: 452). Accounts indicate Carmichael was jesting by referencing the complications around sex during the Summer of 1964 Freedom Rides and not genuinely giving his opinion on women's role in the Movement.

The Summer of 1964 was a turning point for SNCC. The organization became more hierarchical, centralized and urban. In 1966 SNCC transitioned to an all Black organization and became increasingly radical, including questioning non violence in the face of the failures of the national government (McAdam 1985, Evans 1980). While some women did achieve higher leadership levels such as Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, women's participation dropped (Kuumba 2001) and women who stayed involved became more "openly critical of men" (Giddings 2007). In 1968 Frances M. Beal started the Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA) as a caucus within

SNCC, which later became an independent organization renamed the Black Women's Alliance

(Anderson-Bricker 1999). Though not as memorialized as some other civil rights organizations,

SNCC influenced and shaped subsequent student movements. These include the Black Panther

Party and Students for a Democratic Society.

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Bobby Seale and Huey Newton founded The Black Panther Party, initially called the

Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, in Oakland, California in October, 1966. The emblem of a

black panther originated in Alabama as a symbol for the Lowndes County Freedom Organization

(LFCO), an alternative independent political party to the all white Democratic Party. Stokely

Carmichael of SNCC took up the image, and subsequently the early Black power movements

(Bloom and Martin 2016). The initial goal of the group was to defend the Black community

against police brutality by arming themselves with guns and surveilling police activity. Seale

and Newton created a ten point Party platform as follows:

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community.
2. We want full employment for our people
3. We want an end to the robbery by the White man of our Black community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter [of] human beings
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present day society.
6. We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of Black people.
8. We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities. As defined by the constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. (University of California Press. 2017)

Although military style self defense training remained at the core of the Black Panther Party until the group dissolved in 1982, political education and community programs such as health clinics and breakfast programs quickly became significant components of their organizing. Aesthetically, the Party uniform of black leather jackets, black sunglasses, and natural or afro hair styles reflected this militancy. By 1967, Eldridge Cleaver, a noted poet and ex prisoner, joined the Party leadership. According to historian Clayborne Carson, "Huey Newton…was the visionary of the Party. Bobby Seale, he had the personality. Eldridge Cleaver was the person who made the Party credible to Black intellectuals, to the white left intellectuals" (Nelson 2015). At its peak, the Party had chapters in 48 states and more than 2000 members (Brown 2018).

Through 1967, membership in the Black Panther Party was young and male. For the early organizers, the Party was "an organization that would involve the lower-class brothers" and "educate and politicize the male 'brothers on the block'" (Newton 2009: 101, Bloom and Martin 2016: 95). A recruitment call in the first edition of *The Black Panther*, the Party newspaper, stated "These Brothers are the cream of Black manhood. They are there for the protection and defense of our Black community. The Black community owes it to itself, to the future of our people, to get behind these brothers… BLACK MEN!!! It is your duty to your women and children, to your mothers and sisters, to investigate the program of the PARTY" (Newsprint Vault 2018). Men's position as the first line of defense was part of the restoration of Black manhood denied in slavery and under Jim Crow laws (Bukhari-Alston 1995).

Initially the Party separated women who joined into a subgroup of 'Pantherettes,' but by 1968 the label disappeared and women were incorporated into the 'Panthers' (Spencer 2008).

Women were drawn by images of strength and virtue, the "'in your face' macho style of Party leaders" sometimes alienated them (Josephs 2008: 410). Additionally, women in the Party tended to have more formal education than the men (Williams 2012: 40, Spencer 2008: 97). By 1970, women made up the majority in the Black Panther Party (Nelson 2015, Josephs 2008) and Newton was advocating unity with feminist and gay movements.

Gender in the Black Panther Party

Theoretically, there was gender equality in the Party and they referred to women as 'comrades' and 'soldiers' in the Party newspaper (Bloom and Martin 2016, Josephs 2008, McBean 2014). This attempt at equality is particularly notable for its time. Similar organizations such as the US Organization and the Nation of Islam with Farakkahan at the helm did not offer women the same status in their organizations. In his autobiography, Bobby Seal stated the Panther position as: "The way we see it, the sister is also a revolutionary, and she has to be able to defend herself, just like we do. She has to learn to shoot, just like we do. Because the pigs in the system don't care that she's a sister; they brutalize her just the same" (1996: 398). The Panthers believed both men and women were subject to the violence of the police and therefore they must be equal in their revolutionary position (Josephs 2008, Seale 1978: 178).

Some female Panthers say they did not feel excluded (Jennings 2001), such as Kathleen Neal Cleaver stating "someone would ask, 'What is the woman's role in the Black Panther Party?' I never liked that question. I'd give a short answer: 'It's the same as men' We are revolutionaries, I'd explain" (Cleaver 1999: 232). In 1969, six anonymous Panther women were interviewed for a pamphlet called "Panther Sisters on Women's Liberation." In the interview, the women stated that there was some chauvinism previously, however, "The sisters have to pick up

guns just like brothers." Because of her strength and leadership after the assassination of her

husband and targeting by police, both men and women often cited Erika Huggins as changing the

gender dynamic and how Panther men viewed Panther women (Spencer 2008). In addition, the

Party held up Vietnamese women fighting in the Vietnam War as role models. "[T]he

[Vietnamese] women in fact play the role of the other half—not the weaker half, not the stronger

half, but the other half of the Vietnamese men" (Bukhari-Alston 1969). It was Party policy for

men and women to carry out the daily activities and chores, such as cooking, answering phones,

cleaning, and babysitting (Nelson 2015).

   Other accounts show the inconsistency and complexity of gender in the Party. Though

seen as a problem, racism and capitalism were prioritized over sexism. The implementation of

gender policy was dependent on the Party chapter location (Bloom and Martin 2016: 97). Elaine

Brown, the only female to chair the Black Panther Party, states Brothers in multiple chapters

believed "[s]mart bitches' like us…needed to be silenced" (Brown 1993: 192). Likewise, both

Angela Davis and Assata Shakur similarly reference the Party's "maleness" (Davis 1974: 161), a

"macho cult" (Shakur 2001: 223). In her autobiography, Assata, Shakur states: "[A] lot of us

[women] adopted that kind of macho type style in order to survive in the Black Panther Party. It

was very difficult to say 'well listen brother, I think that…we should do this and this.' [I]n order

to be listened to, you had to just say, 'look mothafucka,' you know. You had to develop this

whole arrogant kind of macho style in order to be heard…We were just involved in those day to

day battles for respect in the Black Panther Party" (2001: 422). Even leaders like Fred Hampton,

who was known for advocating the equality of women in the party, "stated that washing dishes

and sweeping floors was 'women's work.'" (Williams 2012: 42).

After the outset, many women began to take on leadership roles as male leaders were arrested or murdered. Seale, Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver all faced serious charges by police. Cleaver and Newton separately fled to Cuba, with Cleaver later moving to Algeria, to avoid prosecution. Kathleen Cleaver was the first female on the Central Committee, and became a recognizable public face of the party (Spencer 2008). Later, after Newton's exile, Elaine Brown became the only female chairman of the Black Panther Party and was known for putting more women in leadership positions (Brown 1993: 362). At the local level, women were particularly important, yet often underestimated (Phillips 2014). "Whether I was in Philadelphia, the Bronx, or in Berkeley, California, I was under the authority of a female Panther who ran a tight and efficient operation" (Abu-Jamal 2004: 180). Some male members believed the Party was becoming "weak" and women were "eroding black manhood" (Brown 1993: 357)

Sex in the Black Panther Party

Sexual relationships between members of the Party was common. Being a Panther carried subcultural capital and "gave them this tremendous sex appeal" (Nelson 2015). The Party sometimes used attractive female Panthers to recruit new members (Bloom and Martin 2016: 96). In some cases, women were told it was their duty to have sex with Panther men (Lumsden 2009: 910). In his autobiography *A Lonely Rage*, Bobby Seale remembers the Party kicking a woman out of the group for not having sex with a member and states that he believes this pressure was wrong, "in effect, they didn't have a choice." (1978: 117). There are accounts of leaders like Fred Hampton, vocally condemning rape (Williams 2012: 43).

But in other cases, Party members treated sex as a prize. In her autobiography *Taste of Power*, Elaine Brown recounts a conversation when Bobby Seal asked Sister Marsha about the

role of women. "'A Sister has to learn to shoot as well as to cook, and be ready to back up the Brothers. A Sister's got to know the ten-point platform and program by heart.' 'And what else?' Bobby urged. 'A Sister has to give up the pussy when the Brother is on his job and hold it back when he's not. 'Cause Sisters got pussy power'" (1993: 189). Similarly, Eldridge Cleaver argued 'pussy power' could be "a reward for male political behavior" (Spencer 2008: 104). It is important to note when considering consent and sex that Eldridge Cleaver was convicted of rape before joining the Party. The Party recommended members read Cleaver's book *Soul on Ice*, in which he stated in the past he felt "[r]ape was an insurrectionary act …I started out by practicing on black girls in the ghetto…and when I considered myself smooth enough, I crossed the tracks and sought out white prey" (33). Later in the book he discusses his developing understanding of race and repudiates rape.

Party policy was anti monogamy, "to ward off petty jealousies and unnecessary quarrels that might in future ruin the overall goal and purpose behind the struggle for freedom" (Seale 1978: 187). For some this meant that men could have sex with women from outside the party and women could not (Alameen-Shavers 2017). But others say "women chose their partners as freely as the men, and many could and did say no" (Abu-Jamal 2004: 182). Without larger cultural shifts around gender and sexual relationships, non monogamy tends to benefit men more than women.

If women did not respond to men's sexual advances or acquiesce to non monogamy, some were accused of lacking commitment to the cause. Women might be "shut out" of organizing and information (Spencer 2008: 104), given "ridiculous orders" (Jennings 2001: 150), called "'counter-revolutionary'" (Seale 1996: 397) or "bourgeois" (Josephs 2008: 425). As

stated by Panther Regina Jennings, "it became a terrible strain to fight oppression in the streets and coordinate community programs during the day, then chase Panther brothers out of our beds at night" (Josephs 2008: 425). Though an official Party "Point of Attention" was "Do not take liberties with women," for Regina Jennings the Central Committee sided with her harasser, and "believed that [her] attitude to sexual abstinence was both foolish and counterrevolutionary" (Jennings 2001: 151).

Internal Disputes and Self-Criticism

The FBI's covert counter intelligence programs contributed to the organic internal disputes of the Party. COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) consists of undercover agents infiltrating activist groups, using unregulated levels of surveillance and strategized disruption to malign members and their causes (Churchill and Wall, 2001). Targets included the American Indian Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, and other Black nationalist, feminist, socialist, and anti war groups, however, the group of most interest to the FBI was the Black Panther Party.   Ultimately, the goal of COINTELPRO is to gather information, agitate and create dissent amongst participants, press for groups to commit to radical and illegal acts that result in arrest, and undermine the Movement.

Whatever the source of conflict, there was not a consistent form of recourse for internal disputes in the Black Panther Party. Panther Emory Douglas contends the Party had "a structure of accountability" with "'mechanism[s] in place' to 'deal with' situations" (Spencer 2008: 101). Similarly, Bobby Seal argues that the Party "wrote some explicit rules," though he concedes "[i]t was a struggle to stop this kind of thing" (1996: 402). In some cases, Panthers used physical violence as discipline (Williams 2012, Brown 1993). Elaine Brown ultimately left the Party

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when Huey Newton, reinstated as chairman after returning to the United States, approved the punishment of Panther school administrator Regina Davis. A male Panther physically assaulted Davis and broke her jaw as punishment for chiding him. Other times, the Panthers suspended or banished the member at fault from the Party (Seale 1996), such as in the case of a male Panther who raped a young female Panther (Cleaver 1999: 235) or when Party leadership found out that all of the men in the Milwaukee chapter were abusing women (Williams 2012: 43). Some Panthers such as Regina Jennings and Elaine Brown argue there was "no way to challenge" decisions (Jennings 2001: 150) and "our judicial system [was] made up mostly as we went along" (Brown 1993: 275).

The Black Panther Party often saw interpersonal problems as lying outside of their purview. Despite acknowledging the need to step in with policy a few times, Bobby Seal also talked about relationships between the men and women as "petty problems" (1996: 401). This was particularly an issue when leaders were chauvinist sympathizers or the aggressor (Alameen-Shavers 2017: 114). Eldridge Cleaver was known to beat his wife Kathleen (Spencer 2008: 100) and Huey Newton committed sexual assault (Nelson 2015) and hit Elaine Brown. When another lover beat Brown, Newton's response was "It was, arguably, a violation of party rules, but categorically not really party business, he finished. Anyway, I should never have been in the bed of such an 'ugly black motherfucker,' he concluded" (Brown 1993: 313). Others in the leadership told her it "was too personal a matter for a party decision" and "she 'had it coming'" (McBean 2014).

Some in the Party believed that women simply needed to stand up for themselves and refuse to allow other to treat them badly. Panther Brenda Harris believed "some women faced

the danger of being 'sexually exploited if she didn't have the wherewithal to stand up for herself'" (Williams 2012: 41). Joan Gray similarly stated "[i]f you were the type of woman that stood for and allowed a certain type of behavior to take place then that would happen to you…" (Williams 2012: 41). The Panthers placed the responsibility and impetus for change in the hands of women. Jackie Harper advised Panther women to "show men they 'meant business'… to command respect" (Josephs 2008: 422). Though Panther women "were not dainty, shrinking violets" (Abu-Jamal 2004: 180), some did withdraw from the group or defect to other groups because of these dynamics (Davis 1974, McBean 2014).

Whether viewed favorably or unfavorably, for its time, the Black Panther Party was liberal in its views of women and gave women space for agency and critique. The Party adapted their prefigurative politics to focus on self education and challenging traditional ways of thinking. Verbally if not always in practice, the Party recognized what is now referred to as intersectionality, balancing race with class, gender, and other issues addressed by the Party. Many accounts of Panther women referenced in this section are a result of their authors hoping "to alert young activist brothers and sisters to their history...perhaps past mistakes will not be future repeats" (Jennings 2001: 147).

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY (SDS) AND WEATHER UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION (WUO)

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was a campus-based, student activist movement that formed in 1960. Stemming from the Student League for Industrial Democracy, the group operated as a participatory democracy and was greatly influenced by the concurrent SNCC and later Black Panther Party (Flacks 2013: 1284). In 1962, SDS ratified the Port Huron Statement

as a kind of manifesto of SDS. Drafted by Tom Hayden, the document critiqued the government, racial and economic stratification, supported non violence, and general "rebelling against the experience of apathy" (Hayden 2005: 4).

The group grew rapidly from roughly 10,000 members in 1960 to 100,000 official members, and even more unofficial, in 1969 (Barber 2010, Cornell 2016). This was in part due to the implementation of the draft for the Vietnam war, changing sexual norms, and the rise of a robust youth culture around drugs and music. Jack Weinberg's famous statement "Don't trust anyone over 30" exemplified the cultural division (Galloway 1990). Over this period there was strain between earlier, older and newer, younger members. Though the Port Huron Statement created some unification of shared ideology, there continued to be tensions in the minutiae of Marxism and Socialism in the increasingly combative environment.

In 1968, the perceived ineffectual approach and ideological divide lead to SDS splitting into the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), who identified themselves as fighting for the oppressed and revolutionary action, and the Worker-Student Alliance (WSA) and Progressive Labor (PL), rooted in Maoism and focused on labor issues (Cornell 2016). The SDS-WSA branch continued with significantly fewer members as a national college based organization until the mid 1970s, carrying out non violent actions and protests. Much of the RYM dissolved. Those remaining, primarily leadership within SDS, became the Weather Underground Organization/ Weatherman (WUO), which carried out more violent and theatrical actions until the early 1980s (Glass 2013: 1394).

Gender was a continuous struggle in SDS and later WUO. The previously mentioned Casey Hayden and King sent "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo" to the women of SDS. One

month later a group of women, inspired by the article walked out of the SDS national convention. They formed a 'Women's Caucus,' though it resulted in "an extremely mild resolution" that confirmed women's participation and membership (Barber 2010: 106). The issue arose again at the national convention in 1967, but members incorporated it into a more general argument for equality and anti-imperialism, and therefore "placed the burden of dealing with sexism on women rather than on SDS as a whole" (Gilbert 2000: 60). The division was in part because much of SDS's activism was in opposition to the Vietnam War and draft of young men into service. In SDS member Susan Stern's experience "[w]omen were almost systematically excluded from anything but a secondary role…we did begin to force the male leadership to share the radical burden with us" (Stern 2007: 50). Though most first hand accounts I've read by both men and women seem to acknowledge gender problems to varying degrees, women involved in the early to mid sixties and in divisions mirroring the work of SNCC, such as Casey Hayden and Carol Glassman, have stated they felt respected and empowered as SDS members (Garvy 2000).

Although SDS recognized sexism was an issue, leadership discouraged women from joining the feminist movement or forming all women's working groups. SDS/WUO believed women's liberation would come after they overthrew capitalism (Higuchi 2013). Many members saw sexism as something caused by other men, an abstract category existing outside of the group. Bernadine Dohrn, the Inter-organizational Secretary of SDS and leading organizer of the WUO, did not see the problem as structural and believed women must change themselves, "ceasing to act like women" (Barber 2010: 137). SDS leadership considered the feminist movement "self-indulgent" and acted as "therapy" (Barber 2010: 140).

Organization and Leadership in SDS and The Weathermen

As with other New Left movements of its time, SDS/WUO had a gendered division of labor. Women of the group such as Jane Adams, Marge Piercy, and Betty Chewning contend women did most of the daily, invisible work such as making coffee, typing, cooking, and cleaning. The men monopolized the decision making processes, theorized, pontificated, and were "visible and respected" (Evans 1980: 177). SDS/WUO leader Mark Rudd has noted that "women were the troops and typists," while "[m]en were the theoreticians and orators" (Rudd 2010: 122). While some expanded the role of women to include "making love (or just 'making out')…[o]nly when it came to standing on the barricades and going to jail…were women considered equals" (Browder 2007: xxii).

Seemingly paradoxical, most leaders in SDS's fight for equality were students at some of the most prestigious and wealthy universities (Barber 2010). SDS/WUO elected their national leadership, which was almost entirely male (Garvy 2000). In meetings, men generally had a competitive and aggressive demeanor. Susan Stern noted "whoever talked loudest and fastest [in meetings] always won the argument" (Stern 2007: 43). Early leader and the author of the Port Huron Statement Tom Hayden has admitted it was "an organization with a lot of very strong male egos" and he in particular "threw his weight around [and]…was impervious to criticism" (Miller 1994: 271).

There were limits on women's ability to gain leadership or even participate in SDS meetings. Susan Stern noted that at meetings, male leaders wouldn't listen to women. "Oglesby would smile musingly, Klonsky would twiddle his hair or his fingers, Rudd would pace around the room banging on objects, other women who knew better [than to speak] would look

embarrassed" (Stern 2007: 43). One area where women could thrive a little more was the Economic Research and Action Projects (ERAP) of SDS in the early 1960s, though men were still in control at a national level (Barber 2010, Evans 1980, Cornell 2016). When Marilyn Buck gave speech at the SDS National Convention in 1967 "[m]en hooted and whistled…threw paper planes…and shouted such gems as, "I'll liberate you with my cock.'" (Gilbert 2010: 58). When another woman spoke at the SDS demonstration at Richard Nixon's inauguration, men catcalled 'Take it off!' 'Fuck her!' 'Take her off stage! Rape her in a back alley!' (Barber 2010: 10). Bill Ayers, SDS/WUO leader, states in his rather unreflective autobiography "Chicks in charge, I said mockingly. You've got to love it" (2009: 104).

The few women in leadership positions usually engaged in macho culture and did not challenge agendas of male leaders (Barber 2010, Berger 2005). These women also tended to be "part of a leading heterosexual couple…women aspiring to leadership felt some pressure to do so" (Gilbert 2010: 187). The most known female leader was Bernardine Dohrn, who was elected Inter-organizational Secretary of SDS and later lead the dissolution of RYM and start of WUO. J. Edgar Hoover gave her the moniker "La Passionaria of the Lunatic Left" and many of the autobiographies and historical accounts described her charisma and sex appeal (Rudd 2010, Ayers 2009, Stern 2007). Dohrn disparaged the feminist movement, advocated for militancy, and made the famous call to evict PL from SDS. Dohrn, thought by some to be "too beautiful to be taken seriously," amplified her allure by sometimes leading meetings with her shirt unbuttoned to her navel and wearing a button that said "CUNNILINGUS IS COOL, FELLATIO IS FUN" (Burrough 2016: 41).

The group's hyper masculinity and internal competition reflected the change from non violence to insurrectionary methods. SDS/WUO leaders engaged in a rhetoric of one up man ship. "You had to be more radical…and more willing to take risks to prove yourself" (Klatch 2004: 495). By 1969, SDS rallied to 'Bring the War Home,' encouraging members to obtain guns and take aggressive action. A common phrase for the group was "VIETNAMESE WOMEN CARRY GUNS!," and they began to push past rhetoric into armed struggle (Rudd 2010: 166). The tactical shift culminated in the Days of Rage action, organized by the Weathermen in October of 1969. To promote the event, SDS/WUO women carried out 'jailbreaks,' which were a form of theater where activists would run through a school, disrupt classes, and pass out pamphlets to students (Berger 2005: 101). Attendees expected thousands to converge, but only 200 showed up. Notably there was a separate women's action as part of the Days of Rage. The women's action, and the whole of the Days of Rage, failed to accomplish much. Fred Hampton, the leader of the local Black Panther Party, described SDS and the Days of Rage as "anarchistic, adventuristic, chauvinistic, individualist, masochistic, and Custeristic" (Rudd 2010: 173). When the WUO became autonomous, the group began carrying out bombings, typically calling in advance to avoid human collateral (Ellis 1996: 111).

Relationships and Sex

Sexual relationships in SDS/WUO were a focal point and could motivate participation (Stern 2007). In the Leviathan newspaper, activists referenced "the kind of 'organizing' practiced by Rudd and JJ: 'fucking a staff into existence.'" (as referenced in Barber 2010: 197). If women did not want to have sex, they were being prudish and were not truly revolutionary (Evans 1980, Klatch 2004). David Gilbert, SDS/WUO member and later Black Liberation Army

(BLA) collaborator, stated in his autobiography that "men were using 'free love' as a tool to make women sexually available rather than as an opening to let love and equality flourish" (Gilbert 2010: 60). Problems experienced by women in their relationships were then due to "their individual failings" (Gilbert 2010: 52).

Leaders of SDS/WUO, who regularly traveled across the US, benefited from changing sexual mores. Mark Rudd remembers "[i]nevitably, women would present themselves, or I would find them…I saw those one-night stands as perks of my minor stardom" (Rudd 2010: 122). Tensions could rise amongst women in competition for attention, wanting "to be close to power," leaders sometimes used this to their advantage, obtaining money, access to vehicles, and other resources (Rudd 2010: 166). Unlike Rudd, Ayers in hindsight remains oblivious to his privilege and power differentials. He stated that "every [relationship with a] woman, the question of when or whether we could sleep together lurked barely beneath the surface of my mind …Best of all, we would just give in, make love at least once, and sort it all out afterward" (Ayers 2009: 105). Susan Stern said of Ayers "There was a quality about him that I couldn't stand. It was almost as though he expected every woman in the world to want to fuck him…[I]t was common among SDS men" (Stern 2007: 76). In her review of Ayers's autobiography, Cathy Wilkerson disputes "the pressure for women to consent was enormous" and "Ayers's absolute lack of reflection since then, especially in the face of numerous attempts by women to explain…what it was like is mystifying" (Wilkerson 2001).

SDS/WUO's integration of the personal and political in a prefigurative politic resulted in sex acts becoming political acts. Activists equated sex with liberation and group sex could create "an army of lovers" (Ayers 2009: 142). Most accounts of the SDS/WUO orgies are as

emotionless and unpleasant (Rudd 2010, Burrough 2016). Despite homophobia, there was also

pressure for men to sleep with other men and women with other women (Gilbert 2010: 140).

This was not a part of the LGBTQ movement and centered more on struggling against

repression. Gay SDS/WUO members remained closeted (Hayden 2005, Rudd 2010).

In the summer of 1969, SDS/WUO codified sexual practices with a 'Smash Monogamy'

initiative. In his autobiography, David Gilbert explained the logic for the policy as twofold. It

both critiqued traditional nuclear family structures, seen as "a key institution of male supremacy"

and prevented couples from having stronger allegiances to one another than the larger group

(Gilbert 2010: 125). Notably, Dohrn and her partner Jeff Jones were spared, but other

monogamous couples were purposefully split. Leadership argued women in particular would

benefit from these policies and needed to "[l]eave your boyfriends, your children, your parents,

school—anything that comes between you and the revolution" (Stern 2007: 76), even if it was

against her wishes (Wilkerson 2010: 269).

The policy and pressure of these forms of relationships had many consequences. The

"indiscriminate sex" resulted in widespread sexually transmitted infections. "Gonorrhea, pelvic

inflammatory disease, crab lice, and a non specific genital infection we called 'Weather crud'

were epidemic among us." (Rudd 2010: 166). Compelling people in couples to have sex with

others resulted in questionable consent. In Stern's autobiography she describes Rudd pressuring

her friend to have sex, with her friend saying "no," "I don't want to," and "Please don't." Rudd

reportedly responded "Nothing comes before the collective…" (Stern 2007: 176). Other

leadership knew Terry Robins was physically abusive to his partner, but they said nothing.

During the changes through 1969, many people left WUO as a result of 'Smash Monogamy' and the interpersonal dynamics of WUO.

Problems, Criticism, and Self-Criticism

Taking influence from Mao's red book, SDS had criticism / self- criticism sessions as a form of accountability to one another (Miller 1994, Rudd 2010). Typically a group of people would meet and focus criticism on one of the group members. Criticism / self-criticism sessions could happen at any time, last up to 6 hours, and were often vicious (Berger 2005: 105). Functionally, they were a way of providing feedback, addressing individual issues, as well as emotionally toughening members. Cathy Wilkerson has pointed out that it is one of the few ways that women could act collectively to argue against men (Wilkerson 2010: 288). Sessions always emphasized how the individual was not as important as the whole. David Gilbert believes these were largely terrible, but he did have a positive, constructive session. "As firm as the women were about my intolerably cavalier attitudes, about the ways I undercut women who loved me, the session also offered a hopeful sense that I was worth struggling with, that there was a potential revolutionary there even if encased in and marred by thick layers of male chauvinism" (Gilbert 2010: 55). In another instance, Michael Novick, a gay SDS member, was "criticized by men for supposedly denying his desire to have sex with a lot of women" (Berger 2005: 105).

Other than the criticism sessions, there was little internal accountability. At some events, the group created its own "security forces" to avoid internal physical fights (Stern 2007: 65). Leadership limited knowledge and "the more prestigious work" to few and perceived weakness could result in limited access to the upper echelons (Wilkerson 2010: 317). SDS/WUO members

feared being cutoff and "placed a premium on having a special, privileged relationships with those in power" (Wilkerson 2010: 360). Criticism of leadership wasn't valued (Berger 2005: 290) and "leaders kept the conflict quiet" (Wilkerson 2010: 312). Because SDS/WUO members placed emphasis on physical actions, "No one was paying attention to the internal dynamics anymore" (Wilkerson 2010: 297).

SDS/WUO accused women who left for same sex organizing of being 'divisive' (Gilbert 2010: 59) and dismantled women's groups that tried to form within SDS/WUO (Berger 2005: 292). The men of SDS/WUO "demanded that we assert and re-assert constantly our loyalty to them, and not to the independent women's movement. Women within SDS had to denounce separatism, you know, every five minutes in every discussion of women's issues or they would not be allowed to continue" (Grele 1985).

The group's transition to more radical views was in tension with the growth of the Movement. Though Dohrn received the advice in Cuba to keep the group accessible to the larger population, Ayers and Rudd "browbeat Bernardine into conforming to the Bring the War Home line that had been developing all summer" (Rudd 2010: 167). The government did not use COINTELPRO as heavily against SDS/QUO as it was against the Black Panther Party, yet it did influence the group. Members began to mythologize themselves, such as Bill Ayers stating "I was already a rebel, and I would now become a freedom fighter" (Ayers 2009: 71). With reflection, Rudd points out in his autobiography that "I did not realize at the time that we had unwittingly reproduced conditions that all hermetically sealed cults use: isolation, sleep deprivation, demanding arbitrary acts of loyalty to the group, even sexual initiation as bonding" (Rudd 2010: 162).

While espousing radical views, SDS/WUO faced a lot of internal problems around gender, as well as race. Mark Rudd ends his autobiography at a meeting amongst activists 40 years later, in which he admits that women "did the lion's share of the grunt work" and that African-American students did not get enough credit (Rudd 2010: 319). At that meeting, Rusti Eisenberg, the only female on the Strike Coordinating Committee during the Columbia Occupation, stated "'As a woman, a graduate student, a person new to the Columbia campus, and a spokesperson for the dissenters, I was an unwelcome presence in the Strike Coordination Committee. At the time I was hurt and stunned by the machismo and disrespect of the young men in that group. When I think back, the notable exception, the person that I most remember for his sensitivity and thoughtfulness despite our political differences, was David Gilbert,'" who is incarcerated for the remainder of his life for his role in the infamous Brink's robbery of 1981 (Rudd 2010: 320). Ultimately the women of SDS/WUO were not in a better position than the women of preceding social movements.

PATTERNS ACROSS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Across SNCC, the Black Panther Party, and SDS/WUO patterns emerge around organization and interpersonal relationships. All three groups had policies of equality around gender, yet faced issues around relegating women to traditional roles, such as note taking and cleaning. In SNCC and the Black Panther Party, national leadership was primarily male but women held positions of power at local levels. Of the three, women in SDS/WUO seemed to have the most difficulty obtaining leadership roles.

It is difficult to compare practices around sex in the groups. The racial dynamics of the south in the 1960s greatly shaped sex in SNCC, though the importance of sex in the social

movement indicates how crucial interpersonal relationships are to a social movement. The Black Panther Party and SDS/WUO's policies around non monogamy parallel more closely with modern social movement practices. Women "fighting for the cause of equality and justice…were at the same time treated, within the ranks of the New Left itself, as inferiors, servants, and sexual objects, who were exploited and oppressed themselves" (Eisenstein 1984: 126). In addition the secrecy around COINTELPRO, cultural capital associated with militancy, social capital in the form of relationships with leadership, and selective inclusion and exclusion of relationships from the purview of the group are all still issues in social movements.

As indicated in the quote from Assata Shakur opening this chapter, those involved in these social movements, especially the Black Panther Party and SDS, have in retrospect critiqued the lack of accountability and frameworks around recourse. The knowledge and experiences of these activists are not always passed on to younger generations and it is easy for social movements to fail to learn from previous mistakes. Activists often replicated gender, as well as racial and class, dynamics. SNCC, the Panthers, and SDS/WUO have had a lasting influence on modern social movements, but organizers have yet to remedy the problems faced around interpersonal dynamics.

CHAPTER 4 ORGANIZING, SEX, AND RELATIONSHIPS

In contemporary social movements, participation in activism would seem to imply a particular morality of character. It stands to reason activists, especially those involved in feminist or queer activism, would have more cognizance of sexism and heterosexism and adjust their behaviors accordingly. Fellow activists are seen as virtuous in their dedication to the larger political struggle, seemingly incongruous with cultural ideas of sexists. Though activists' individual habitus might be rooted in established social inequalities, the rules of the field dictate challenging these propensities and creating more egalitarian social practices.

Despite the implied politic, the oppressions of mainstream culture are frequently perpetuated and egalitarian politics are not always reflected in social interactions. As stated by one female identified survivor of an abusive relationship, "[s]ocial power and political righteousness have a way of being able to obscure things" (Wrekk 2007). Activist culture arguably is "dominated with a 'White Male Privilege Hetero' climate" that prioritizes perceived authenticity, influence, effectiveness, and militancy (*Quarrel* 2013: 90). Or, as stated by 'Molly Tov,' in Social Detox, "Once men slap 'REVOLUTIONARY' on themselves, they are no longer a part of that problem, which they are" (2007).

Hypermasculine behaviors would seem to be in conflict with subcultural shifts against gender essentialization. Radical left subcultures have been ideologically critical of the male/female binary and conflation of sex assigned at birth and gender identity. There are exceptions such as TERFs, or trans exclusionary radical feminists. But on the whole, activists in the subculture have embraced more complex and nuanced identities, such as gender queer and gender non binary. One person I interviewed, who identified as gender queer, expressed some

concern over the potential exploitation of gender deconstruction to deny structural inequalities faced by women and gender non binary people, i.e. arguments against focusing on gender inequality because instead we should be trying to get rid of gender as a concept.

Yet, activists continue to struggle over issues around masculinity. Two portmanteaus used somewhat jokingly in the culture are "manarchy" and "broism" or "brocialism". These terms refer to the hyper masculine behavior and attitudes exhibited by some activists. The underlying activist culture can emphasize values of aggression, competition, militancy, purity, and self-righteousness. A group of anonymous anarcha-feminists in Philadelphia authored a questionnaire called "Are You a Manarchist?" that has been copied, distributed, and included in zines such as *Breaking the Manacles*. The questions are subdivided and include some "activism questions," such as #12 "Are you taking on the 'shit' or 'grunt' work in your organizing? (i.e.: Cooking, cleaning, set up, clean up, phone calls, email lists, taking notes, doing support work, sending mailings, providing childcare?)" and "sexual/romantic relationship questions," such as #27 ""If your girlfriend gets on your case for patriarchal behavior or wants to try to work on the issues of patriarchy in your relationship, do you break up with her or cheat on her and find another woman who will put up with your shit?" (5). When interviewed, many activist were familiar with the term manarchy. Specifically, one interviewee said that while the label was never used against them, they had called someone a manarchist.

"The ways that unexamined toxic masculinity… is just sort of a template that can adapt any mask. It can adopt the frat boy mask and it can adopt the black bloc mask, yet is the same fundamental core dynamic playing out and…I've witnessed a lot of people get really defensive just hearing this word. Which I think is significant. I think it shows that it is a live wire, its an open nerve that men folk do not feel interested in actually reducing their power, actually challenging the underlying power relations of patriarchy". Alexandra, 12:10

While the aesthetic might be particular to the subculture, the underlying dispositions around

gender and masculinity are the same as those in larger society.

FIGURE 1: FROM "A HISTORY OF PATRIARCHY"
COMIC, *THE SUPER HAPPY ANARCHO FUN PAGES
#3* ZINE

Image from The Super Happy Anarcho Fun Pages #3

As with many other subcultures, masculine traits and behaviors are associated with

cultural capital. The legitimization of these qualities as more authentically radical can compel

women to follow suit. In *The First 7-inch Was Better*, Nia King remembers seeing a femininely-

dressed girl at a show and wondering "whose girlfriend she was·. Didn't we all know the punk

scene was a boys' game and you had to out-dude the dudes to win?"

There are some men's social movement groups organized around addressing masculinity and gender problems, though some men have critiqued their emphasis on personal struggles of socialization and less on examinations of their contemporary praxis (*Ex Masculus* 2014, Men Against 1996, Rae 2008, Kooky). The lack of reflexivity arguably extends beyond gender dynamics. Nia King has critiqued the entire subculture as lacking self critique: "We organized on behalf of immigrant rights without knowing any immigrants or even having friends of color. We facilitated workshops about consent but had no fucking clue how to handle community members coming forward about sexual assault perpetrated by other punks. We shout about class war and think that eating out of dumpsters and shoplifting absolves us of class privilege. (It doesn't.) We were hypocrites who talked a good talk and didn't dig below the surface to the places that made us uncomfortable, where real change happens" (2012).

In this chapter, I discuss how sexism and patriarchy manifest in radical left subcultures. Though these dynamics are intertwined, I'm dividing this chapter into gender in "Organizing" and in "Sex." This approach parallels distinctions made in previous social movements, as discussed in Chapter 3. I believe treating the categories as discrete will provide clarity, as well as illuminate different tactics activists are using to address these problems. Through both of these sections, I show how social and cultural capital in the subculture contribute to continued problems. I conclude this chapter with a review of arguments around sexism in security culture and priorities in the movement.

GENDER IN ORGANIZING

Leadership

The groups constituting the subculture or 'community' have an internal arrangement reflecting the prevailing radical ideology and interpretation of agency into regular community practices. Groups are non hierarchical or horizontal, with no participants having greater authority or rank over others. As stated in our now defunct anarchist community space's information pamphlet: "there are no leaders and no hierarchy. All volunteers or people involved in what is happening at the space have equal access to decision-making power" (123 Community Space).

While groups theoretically operate outside of hierarchies, leaders inevitably emerge. Some within the community believe those in leadership positions are reflective of sexism, with most being cisgender male. As a zine distributed in the community contends "A structureless, 'leaderless' organization will often have a de-facto leader, usually a man, who get his way by force of will and experience" (*Said the Pot*). Without structure there is "no means of balancing those with certain privileges with those who are oppressed" (Beallor 2001).   The difficulties around horizontal organizing manifest in similar ways indicated by Jo Freeman more than 35 years ago in "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." People who have privilege in the rest of society mirror their position within radical groups.

In the innumerable meetings I attended over the years as an activist, no group named an official leader, nonetheless a few groups had an unofficial leader. When one mixed gender group came together for our weekly meeting, there was an important item on the agenda. The informal leader of the group, a male activist, was unable to be at the meeting and those in attendance, most of whom were female, postponed the topic until the next week, citing the need for more time to consider the issue. The following week, he again could not come to a meeting and again

the group tabled the agenda item. Though not recognized or made explicit, members of the group did not want to make a critical decision without the input of our leader.

One exception outside of gender specific women's groups was my leadership of Food Not Bombs. I did not intend to take charge of our various projects and did not hold an official position, but I was the leader in practice. The likely reason is the group centers on cooking food. Early on it became clear that I was the member with the most experience cooking, and more particularly, vegan cooking from whole food ingredients. Since women in the U.S. spend more than twice the amount of time preparing food as compared to men, my proficiency in a kitchen conforms to traditional gender roles (Bureau of Labor Statics 2013). When the group transitioned to cooking less and giving away more groceries, the unofficial leadership transitioned to a male who owned a vehicle.

Being seen as a leader can denote social capital. One interviewee defined social capital in the 'scene' as being gained from "different types of resources, whether they were intellectual or physical and the ability to…make things happen, like if you called a meeting would everybody come? If you wanted everybody to start working on this certain campaign would everybody do it?" 11:15 Lee Having charisma and social connections is equated with the ability to be effective and accomplish goals, to mobilize people.

Meetings and Consensus

While not hierarchical, groups still have an order or framework. Meeting attendees take on different roles. One person volunteers to moderate or facilitate the meeting, prioritizing the agenda items, reading them aloud, being conscientious of time, facilitating discussion, and managing the consensus process. Another person takes notes, typically typed and posted to an

online email group or forum. If the group is larger, there might be a 'vibes watcher,' to pay attention to the tensions and emotions within the group. In groups with regular membership, they are conscientious as to the distribution of duties, trading off taking on these roles from week to week.

Decision making requires consensus. Instead of majority rule, the group recognizes everyone's opinion and must be in agreement. Everyone must state whether they agree, disagree, or abstain from the decision. Although consensus is usually verbal, in the more feminist and queer leaning groups 'sparkle fingers,' or wiggling fingers pointing upward were used as a signal of agreement. Later, Occupy Wall Street meetings used 'sparkle fingers' or "feminist jazz hands" during meetings (Johnston 2015).

If someone disagrees they state why they disagree or ask any questions that might change or clarify their judgment. If multiple people have questions and comments, they go on 'stack,' or a queue determined by the order in which people have signaled a want to speak. Members with concerns then ask questions and discussion continues until all agree. Ideally consensus means there are no resentments, alliances, or alienation between individuals. No one should do or participate in something they do not agree with, thereby creating an environment of mutual appreciation and empowerment.

Yet the method can become arduous and power dynamics can emerge. Occasionally, there were meetings where we 'tabled,' or moved to the next week's agenda seemingly endless disagreements. The facilitator can determine which items make the final agenda and how much time is allocated for each. There can be pressure to answer in a certain way, or at least abstain

from decision making, if those with more social or cultural capital are in agreement. One of my

interviewees pointed to some of these issues when talking about organizing.

"I also got really excited about the idea of participating in collective processes and having everybody have kind of…equal decision making power… and I think I definitely began participating in collective processes and trying to kind of follow those ideals before holding a more nuanced understanding of how internalized oppression can play out in those groups… or for people, or for myself. How, as much as we can say… yeah everybody is coming to the table equally, without looking at…in what ways does each person hold power or lack power in the group dynamic or in a larger society too without really looking at what each person is bringing and how they are reacting. You know, I think it can be really hard to have a true equal say in the process and hard to really make those ideals happen in a way that everybody feels like they can fully participate. There is a lot of ways the different kinds of oppression show up." Grace 9:30

In the above quote, Grace calls attention to the replication of power in larger society. While

activist groups might try to mitigate these conditions, the dispositions are deep-seated.

On numerous occasions women and people of color have stated they were talked over,

not taken seriously, or ignored. The Thunder Collective's *What to Do When? 3*, a zine circulated

in the community, asserts "It's too often the case...that men talk of equality in voices so loud that

women can't be heard." In doing so, women and people of color are not heard and can be made

to feel uncomfortable and demoralized, particularly if expressing a dissenting opinion (Crass).

One activist observed that during the early stages of school occupations in 2009 "[m]en

constantly stood up on chairs and delivered grandiose monologues about the revolution. Women

kept getting talked over" (Exposito 2011). A few zine anthologies, such as *Breaking the*

Manacles include the essay "An Open Letter to Other Men in the Movement: Shut the Fuck Up,

or How to act better in meetings," which lists some common infractions of consensus, including

"Rephrases everything a woman says, as in, 'I think what Mary was trying to say is…'" and the

facilitator who "Somehow never sees the women with their hands up, and never encourages people who haven't spoken" (Spalding 10).

The makeup of groups can determine and be determined by these dynamics. Who joins a social group can depend on who is already involved, their methods for recruitment, social networks, and tactics. In the zine *Why She Doesn't Give A Fuck About Your Insurrection*, the anarcha-feminist author recounts the following conversation with a male activist: "Yeah, we've been trying to figure out why we're so alienating to women and people of color. But we keep trying to do it over beers, which is what created the problem in the first place. It's just that we never think to call girls outside our mostly-dude social circle to talk politics or anything" (*Why She* 2009).

Activists sometimes adjust the consensus process to insure all have an opportunity to be heard. Though most groups have some awareness of racial, gender, or sexual privilege in meeting spaces, some have an explicit 'step up, step back,' or less ableist 'take space, make space' policy. These are shorthand for encouraging those who do not usually speak or do not have privilege to 'step up' and voice their opinions. Those that are notably vocal in their opinions or who have privilege are to 'step back' and dedicate themselves to listening to others. For the policy to be effective activists who speak too much must be reflexive and acknowledge their past behaviors and privilege and activists who rarely speak must feel they will be heard and valued.

Though infrequent, at times organizers do not use consensus or circumvent the process. One or few activists make decisions for the group, justified as simplifying or hastening a process or maintaining security around sensitive information. The bypass leaves other, possibly

dissenting, opinions out of the discussion. This can be exclusionary toward women and people

of color. For one activist in the NYC community this occurred when a Take Back the Night

march, which she had co organized the previous year, was organized by men without her input or

knowledge. "The men mapped the route for us; they chose the room, the time and date without

our consensus...It was like being fed the food you cooked yourself, after being chewed by

someone else" (Exposito 2011).

Division of Labour

There are numerous responsibilities required for the day to day existence of activist

groups. Active members maintain emails, social media accounts, and blogs, plan benefits, make

posters, collect food, attend meetings, and create, copy, fold, and staple zines. Activists

multitask and combine activities, silk screening shirts during a potluck or folding zines during a

group meeting. In sharing these tasks, participants get to know one another more closely,

creating and strengthening social ties.

When things are usually done DIY, the amount of labor involved makes equality

important. Administrative issues are left to core members, such as checking the group's email,

scheduling when and where to hold meetings, publicizing group and meetings, procuring

resources and addressing problems that may arise. While this might counteract the

impermanence of participation, it also discourages neophyte's continued involvement. If

established activists do not communicate with new participants or explain to them the particular

tasks, then they will lack the ability and want to participate.

In many cases, the creation of a core and periphery in open groups often results in

unintended leaders and unofficial hierarchies. Activists are concerned with burnout, or

exhaustion and disengagement from activism. But frequently, much of the work falls on few

people. Dividing labor amongst current members and the entry of new participants are necessary

to alleviate those who are overwhelmed or considering leaving the community.

Many activists believe there are gender and sexual inequalities in the distribution of labor.

Though stereotype might assume women are visual dressing while men do the 'real' work, within

activism as well as other subcultures, the opposite is true. Men are seen as dominating public

spaces and images, such as in news coverage of Occupy Wall Street (McVeigh 2011). Some

roles and tasks bestow more cultural capital and are more fun or glamorous than others.

Collectively cooking together versus cleaning dishes; helping with a banner for a block party

versus going to a community board meeting; tabling zines at a benefit show versus copying and

stapling two hundred zines. In the zine *Transformative Justice and/as Harm*, AJ Withers states

"The bulk of community building falls on women and trans people. The most important part of

community organizing is building and maintaining relationships. This invisible and gendered

labour is incredibly devalued in radical organizing" (2014).

Despite the implementation of strategies within the meeting structure to address

inequality, there are rarely policies in place to hinder the over commitment of some activists or

ensure the equitable division of labor. Only when doing activism in explicitly feminist groups

did I find groups taking measures to address this inequality. When members know what is

happening in another's personal life, they might preemptively stop them from volunteering for

too many tasks and becoming overwhelmed. This approach is explicitly explored in the For the

Birds Collective zine, *So You Want to Start a Feminist Collective...*:

"we also began to pay careful attention to who volunteers for what and tried to recognize and label what had previously been invisible labor tasks such as checking email accounts, creating meeting agendas, facilitating meetings, taking meeting minutes, and volunteering to help with different aspects of events...[creating roles] ensures that members are recognized for the responsibilities they assume within the collective, and prevents resentment from building up in group members who are taking on more than their fair share of work"

Some members vocalized preference for specific types of work or had access to resources not available to other members, but the quantity of work was equitably distributed amongst them. In doing so, the collective was able to be productive and remain constant when some members left for personal reasons.

Direct Action

The topic of gender division in direct action arose in some zines and a few interviews around black bloc. Black bloc is a strategy used primarily by anarchists, whereby all participants wear all black clothing, hoodies, and cover much of their faces. Activists are difficult to distinguish from one another, making it more difficult for police to identify individuals. Black bloc also provides visual cohesion. The aesthetic can "indicate to others that they are prepared, if the situation calls for it, for militant action…and thus easily be able to avoid it if that's what they wish to do" (Graeber 2012). The use of violence itself isn't gendered; however, it is highly associated with masculinity.

These kinds of mass marches and street take overs create moments of "collective effervescence," whereby society's power that manifests in moments when gathering creates energy and excitement "[a]nd by expressing this excitement, they also reinforce it" (Durkheim 218: 1995). 'Riot porn,' the images and videos capturing a massive and/or intense actions,

evokes both the insurrection of a 'riot' and the erotic undertones of the excitement. Viewers can vicariously experience the energy and hope of the moment.

The type of militancy and level of violence used can quickly change the tone of a march to "macho and alienating" (*Why She 2009*). One woman of color activist found an anarchist Take Back The Night street take over "felt more like a football game than a feminist action" due to macho fueled haphazard violence (Exposito 2011). The march, intended to be empowering to women and address issues of sexual assault, was led by anarchist women. However, most of the 30 or so protesters were men "in black hoods and skirts--so as to feminize the protesters." Exposito is not anti violence, but argues "[t]hrowing newspaper boxes in the street feels good, fine. But if it's a bunch of rich white dudes doing it, then...you are precisely replicating the situation you claim to be fighting." At the same time, she is bothered by bystanders being more concerned with the monetary damage of the anarchists than rape.

GENDER IN SEX

Sexual Relationships

Like other activist communities and social movements, sexual and/or romantic relationships are widespread and have significant repercussions (Shepard 2005, Goodwin 1997). The combination of collective effervescence, closeness of libidinal ties, and sexual empowerment produce a prime environment for erotic interpersonal relationships. Noted by Ben Shepard in "The Use of Joyfulness as a Community Organizing Strategy," marches can be places to meet attractive people and 'cruise' for sexual partners (Shepard 439: 2005). In the radical community culture, this is potential is expounded by the stream of late night events, music shows, and dance parties.

Sexual norms in the subculture are often referenced as 'sex posi,' an abbreviation of sex positive, meaning sex is considered "a healthy and important part of being human" (Fuckin' (A) and Support New York 2012: 4). Empowerment regarding the body, sex, and sexuality is particularly salient. Pleasure seeking attitudes and anti shaming discourse are embraced, though in the case of 'uncommon' sex acts, the sexual double standard can still be an issue for some in the subculture. Zines, such as *Not Your Mother's Meatloaf: A Sex Education Comic Book,* delight in topics otherwise considered improper, containing stories and drawings of intimate sexual experiences. Sexual relationships and practices are woven into activism and everyday life.

Sexual orientations and practices in the community are diverse. Both monogamy and non monogamy are practiced, though the lack of clarity around norms can lead to tensions in individual relationships. Some deride traditional relationships as one element of the mainstream culture's "gender, marriage, the nuclear family...[and h]etero-monogamy" (Caytee 21). As such, being part of a monogamous relationship might influence an individuals' cultural capital. Additional reasons cited for disfavor include that it creates divisions or boundaries between individuals, limits individual sexual experience, and can evoke feelings of control and ownership of other individuals. Women or gender non binary people in relationships with cis gender men can find themselves defined by those relationships. In some cases, they only gain entry into groups through those relationships (*Said the Pot,* Clementine 2012).

In addition, one night stands, casual relationships, and variations of polyamory, as well as BDSM practices, are not uncommon. Advocates contend the ability and flexibility to define a relationship is empowering. There is little precedent for these relationships and the book *The*

Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities has become the community's informal authority for implementation. While these alternative sexual practices are a response to perceived faults in monogamy, they also function as a method of building social networks and bringing new people into the community.

Objectification and Macktivism

Female activists pinpoint their sexual objectification by cis gender males as a recurrent obstacle. Like previous studies of women in male dominated subcultures, women activists feel they must prove themselves as sufficiently radical to the community to gain respect, while simultaneously facing sexualization. Solidarity incentives, or signals of approval and encouragement from other members, are critical for continued participation. Some female identified activists say that they are only given this attention from male activists, holding effective leadership status, if they are "perceived as sexually available" (*Said the Pot*). Even when displaying proficiency, women can experience backlash in the process of proving themselves. Alex Wrekk, a well known activist, gives an account of one such instance when she helped an intoxicated male fix his bike tire.

"I watched him place a patch and attempt to pump the tube 3 times. So I offered my help. I was working on his tire when a bunch of guys started making fun of him for having a girl fix his bike. He responded about how it was hott to watch girls fix bikes. Within a few seconds they had surrounded me and were hooting and laughing and the guy I was trying to help was pretending to have a video camera and was talking about making porn with girls working on bikes as he went in for close-ups of me using the pump. It went from him being made fun of to me being objectified as some sort of transference of his shame" (2007).

Because a woman activist demonstrated of greater knowledge and skill than a male colleague in the presence of other men, he denigrated her to sexual object. Her competence challenged his

masculinity. Admiration, validation, appreciation of skills and proficiency can be dependent upon sexuality, or social capital.

There is a recognized pattern whereby activists use shared politics and subcultural capital to acquire sexual partners. The dynamic was common enough for the development of the colloquial portmanteau 'macktivist,' combining the verb 'mack,' or to make sexual advances, and activist. The term was recognized by nearly all interviewees, though might not be used in contemporary vernacular. Macktivists were usually cisgender, heterosexual male activists who used their activism as a means by which to benefit their sex lives. Sexual relationships are not in and of themselves thought to be negative, but in 'mac(k)tivism' erotic, not activist, goals are prioritized. One interviewee specified that the term denotes "shadiness," a term implying intentional obfuscation.
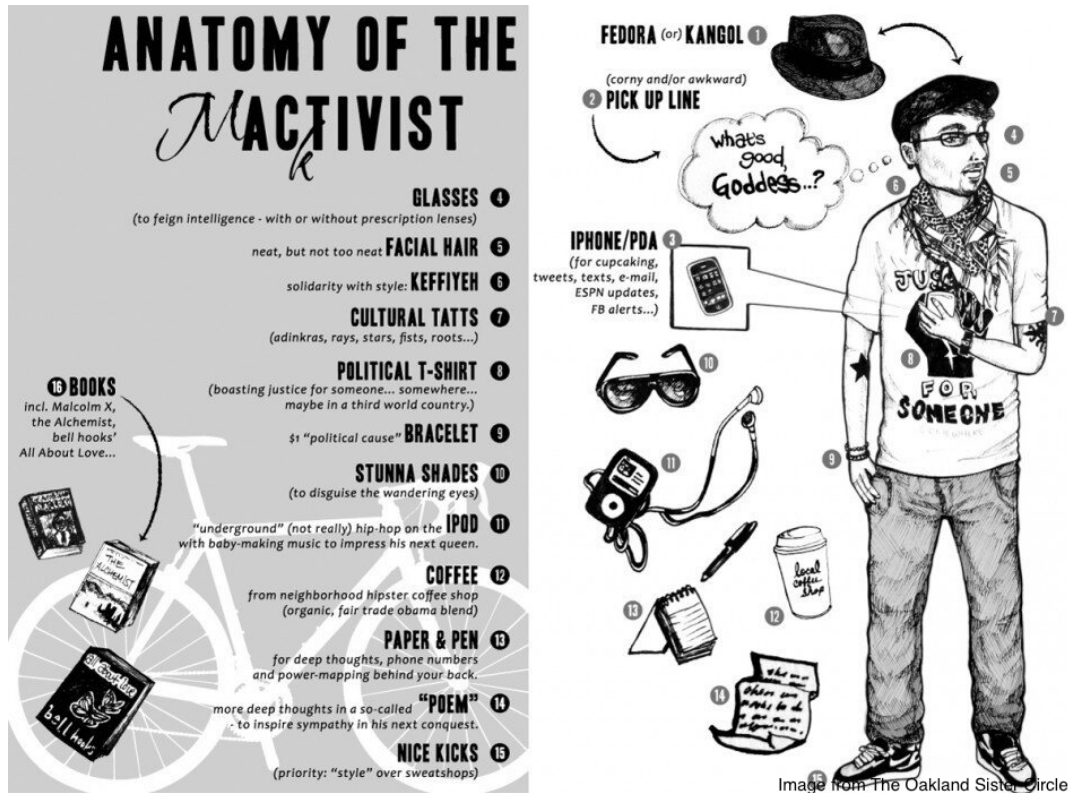
'Macktivists' sometimes self identify as feminists as a form of subcultural capital to acquire sexual partners, entailing emotional manipulation (*Vampire*). "There are men who use anti-sexist talk to pick up wimmin," raising the question if these male activists "care about wimmin or about fucking them" (Tov 2007).   The topic is the subject of comics and zines in the subculture. Humorously addressed by a woman of color activist in San Francisco, she created a list of the signs of mac(k)tivism to help avoid "all the men we dated in our early 20s. Okay, and mid-20s. Okay, maybe into the late 20s too. But we know better now" (Kristia 2007). The list included:

"When you first met at the trendy-subversive bar-club, it became clear through your conversation that 'socializing,' 'dating' and 'organizing' all fell under 'networking' in his vocabulary."

"Leave him be if he compares himself to world leaders when describing his upbringing. For example, "Well you know, like Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh, I grew up in big port cities. So I have a

similar experience with the diversity of those cities and the hustle." (Yes, a dude actually once said to me.)"

FIGURE 2: "ANATOMY OF A MACKTIVIST," THE OAKLAND SISTER'S CIRCLE

ANATOMY OF THE MACKTIVIST

GLASSES ④
(to feign intelligence - with or without prescription lenses)

neat, but not too neat FACIAL HAIR ⑤

solidarity with style: KEFFIYEH ⑥

CULTURAL TATTS ⑦
(adinkras, rays, stars, fists, roots...)

⑯ BOOKS
incl. Malcolm X,
the Alchemist,
bell hooks'
All About Love...

POLITICAL T-SHIRT ⑧
(boasting justice for someone... somewhere...
maybe in a third world country.)

$1 "political cause" BRACELET ⑨

STUNNA SHADES ⑩
(to disguise the wandering eyes)

"underground" (not really) hip-hop on the IPOD ⑪
with baby-making music to impress his next queen.

COFFEE ⑫
from neighborhood hipster coffee shop
(organic, fair trade obama blend)

PAPER & PEN ⑬
for deep thoughts, phone numbers
and power-mapping behind your back.

more deep thoughts in a so-called "POEM" ⑭
- to inspire sympathy in his next conquest.

NICE KICKS ⑮
(priority: "style" over sweatshops)

FEDORA (or) KANGOL ①

(corny and/or awkward)
② PICK UP LINE

what's good Goddess..?

IPHONE/PDA ③
(for cupcaking,
tweets, texts, e-mail,
ESPN updates,
FB alerts...)

JUST FOR SOMEONE

Image from The Oakland Sister Circle

As indicated in figure 2, macktivism is associated with a superficial sense of political struggle and particular and adapting cultural artifacts to the causes and issues of a moment that may denote cultural capital.

Sexual and/or romantic relationships can facilitate collaborations, be a means of recruitment, and a source of solidarity. They can also create community tensions, lead to withdraw, and result in feelings of isolation. Interpersonal relationships are inevitable and can both strengthen and weaken ties to a social movement.

Consent

Over the last 15 years, the topic of consent became increasingly popular in activist circles. Sexual norms have shifted from focusing on the act of saying "no" to saying "yes," as well as the influence of power differentials in the decision making process. Consent has been defined in various zines:

"consent is permission or allowance, often given verbally, to engage in any potentially triggering act, or an act that is otherwise 'intimate' or personal. this ranges from holding hands to having sex and everything in between" (Cheyenne)

"CONSENT means everyone involved wants and agrees to be present at each step of the way. You can change your mind at ANY TIME before or during sex. Consent means that ALL parties say YES! Just assuming someone wants to have sex is not nought-it's not safe." (Generation Five 2006)

"CONSENT IS…Giving your okay, verbally and unimpaired (IE: NOT high or drunk) with full awareness of your surroundings is consent. Forcing or coercing someone into sexual activity or engaging in a sexual act with someone who is high, drunk, passed out, or unable to give consent is rape." (*A D.I.Y. Guide*)

"Consent goes far beyond 'no means no.' True consent is based on the willingness to ask hard questions…and the courage to face possible rejection" (*Listen 2007:* 11).

Common themes in discussions include that it is a process that can change during an interaction, can only be given non verbally if previously discussed and agreed upon by those involved and can not be coerced. Verbal consent has been questioned by some as unrealistic, but others compare it to arguments about condoms, e.g. "It kills the mood" (*Said the Pot)*. Activists also emphasize that people of all genders can be assaulted or raped and must give consent. Cindy Crabb created a list of 83 questions around consent that is copied and reprinted in multiple zines and in her books (fig. 3).

From my zine sample, it is obvious there is some awareness of the topic within the subculture. Some activists believe these discussions are not talked about enough, though one

FIGURE 3: 'CONSENT,' *SUPPORT* ZINE

consent

One really important way to be supportive is to make sure that you, yourself, aren't doing things that may be abusive.

A few years ago, me and ~~andrea~~ put together this list of questions about consent. Not all of the questions have right or wrong answers. We put them together with the hopes that it would help people to think deeply, and to help open up conversations about consent.

I know it's a long list, but please read and think honestly about these question, one at a time.

1. How do you define consent?
2. Have you ever talked about consent with your partner(s) or friends
3. Do you know people, or have you been with people who define consent differently than you do?
4. Have you ever been unsure about whether or not the person you were being sexual with wanted to be doing what you were doing? Did you talk about it? Did you ignore it in hopes that it would change? Did you continue what you were doing because it was pleasurable to you and you didn't want to deal with what the other person was experiencing? Did you continue because you didn't want to second-guess the other person? Did you continue because you felt it was your duty? How do you feel about the choices you made?
5. Do you think it is the other person's responsibility to say something if they aren't into what you're doing?
6. How might someone express that what is happening is not ok?
7. Do you look only for verbal signs or are there other signs?
8. Do you think it is possible to misinterpret silence for consent?
9. Have you ever asked someone what kinds of signs you should look for if they have a hard time verbalizing when something feels wrong?
10. Do you only ask about these kinds of things if you are in a serious relationship or do you feel comfortable talking in casual situations too?
11. Do you think talking ruins the mood?
12. Do you think consent can be erotic?
13. Do you think about people's abuse histories?
14. Do you check in as things progress or do you assume the original consent means everything is ok?
15. If you achieve consent once, do you assume it's always ok after that?
16. If someone consents to one thing, do you assume everything else is ok or do you ask before touching in different ways or taking things to more intense levels?
17. Are you resentful of people who want or need to talk about being abuse? Why?
18. Are you usually attracted to people who fit the traditional standard of beauty as seen in the united states?
19. Do you pursue friendship with people because you want to be with them, and then give up on the friendship if that person isn't interested in you sexually?
20. Do you pursue someone sexually even after they have said they just want to be friends?
21. Do you assume that if someone is affectionate they are probably sexually interested in you?
22. Do you think about affection, sexuality and boundaries? Do you talk about these issues with people? If so, do you talk about them only when you want to be sexual with someone or do you talk about them because you think it is important and you genuinely want to know?

p. 2
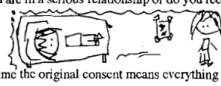
23. Are you clear about your own intentions?
24. Have you ever tried to talk someone into doing something they showed hesitancy about?
25. Do you think hesitancy is a form of flirting?
26. Are you aware that in some instances it is not?
27. Have you ever thought someone's actions were flirtatious when that wasn't actually the message they wanted to get across?
28. Do you think that if someone is promiscuous that makes it ok to objectify them, or talk about them in ways you normally wouldn't?
29. If someone is promiscuous, do you think it's less important to get consent?
30. Do you think that if someone dresses in a certain way it makes it ok to objectify them?
31. If someone dresses a certain way do you think it means that they want your sexual attention or approval?
32. Do you understand that there are many other reasons, that have nothing to do with you, that a person might want to dress or act in a way that you might find sex?
33. Do you think it's your responsibility or role to overcome another person's hesitancy by pressuring them or making light of it?
34. Have you ever tried asking someone what they're feeling? If so, did you listen to them and respect them?
35. Do you think sex is a game?
36. Do you ever try to get yourself into situations that give you an excuse for touching someone you think would say no if you asked? i.e., dancing, getting really drunk around them, falling asleep next to.
37. Do you make people feel "unfun" or "unliberated" if they don't want to try certain sexual things?
38. Do you think there are ways you act that might make someone feel that way even if it's not what you're trying to do?
39. Do you ever try and make bargains? i.e. "If you let me _____, I'll do _____ for you"?
40. Have you used jealousy as a means of control?
41. Have you made your partner(s) stop hanging out with certain friends, or limit their social interactions in general because of jealousy or insecurity?
42. Do you feel like being in a relationship with someone means that they have an obligation to have sex with you?
43. What if they want to abstain from sex for a week? A month? A year?
44. Do you whine or threaten if you're not having the amount of sex or the kind of sex that you want?
45. Do you think it's ok to initiate something sexual with someone who's sleeping?
46. What if the person is your partner?
47. Do you think it's important to talk with them about it when they're awake first?
48. Do you ever look at how you interact with people or how you treat people, positive or negative, and where that comes from/where you learned it?
49. Do you behave differently when you've been drinking?
50. What are positive aspects of drinking for you? What are negative aspects?
51. Have you been sexual with people when you were drunk or when they were drunk? Have you ever felt uncomfortable or embarrassed about it the next day? Has the person you were with ever acted weird to you afterward?
52. Do you seek consent the same way when you are drunk as when you're sober?
53. Do you think is important to talk the next day with the person you've been sexual with if there has been drinking involved? If not, is it because it's uncomfortable or because you think something might have happened that shouldn't have? Or is it because you think that's just the way things go?
54. Do you think people need to take things more lightly?
55. Do you think these questions are repressive and people who look critically at their sexual histories and their current behavior are uptight and should be more "liberated"?
56. Do you think liberation might be different for different people?

p. 3

person I interviewed believes "discussions of consent, rape, abuse, misogyny domestic violence problematic behaviors and unequal power exchange racism transphobia…For me, I find in the communities I'm a part of that those are topics of continual and constant conversation…I haven't been to a conversion or conference….probably for the better part of a decade, that didn't address some aspect of these issues at some point." Willow 20:05 Willow did not seem to think this increased attention was bad, but subcultural discussions about ignoring or not addressing these issues enough was disingenuous.

Activists emphasize the power dynamics influencing consent. As stated in the zine *No Safehouse: Patriarchy on the Left* "The overall structure of society conditions what our

individual choices can be in the first place" (Cohn and Mitchell 2015: 9). Cultural gender dynamics can mean female socialized people believe they shouldn't say no or find they can't say no. The introduction to the zine See No Speak No Hear No states "I can't always say 'no,' or 'stop, I feel uncomfortable,' or 'can we slow down,' or 'go away.' I can't get my brain to perform the seemingly simplest function, to communicate those words to my mouth." For people who have been assaulted, this can be especially complicated. They "might freeze up or zone out" and "it can be hard for people who have been assaulted to say no, because they may feel like it won't matter if they say no" (Cheyenne).

Within activist culture, there can also be issues with prefigurative politics being applied to sexual interactions. Sex positive culture can lead to activists feeling they are under pressure to have sex, or that it is a means by which to accrue social capital. In some parts of activist culture, someone might be made to feel they aren't "queer 'enough' or poly 'enough'" (Kirsty, Anna, Hannah and Tasha 2014: 7) and "prove their queerness, or feel unwelcome in queer spaces because they're not actively having sex or being sexual (Naught: 6). That "it's become taboo to want monogamy" and feel "pressure to live up to the poly babe ideal, to go to dance parties and house parties with my partner and be totally cool about them hooking up with other people" (Kirsty, Anna, Hannah and Tasha 2014: 30). There is a general feeling that one component of being a good feminist is enjoying sex (Traister 2015). For those who participate in BDSM, "consent is even less nuanced than it may be in other sexy situations. Every single thing happening between play partners should be verbally negotiated, and if something was not explicitly negotiated, that means that it's not okay to do" (Naught: 17).

PRIORITY OF ISSUES

Security Culture

As discussed in Chapter 3, the need for clandestine tactics developed as a result of the FBI's covert counter intelligence programs orchestrated from the 1950s through 1970s. COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) involves undercover agents infiltrating social movements and surveilling activities, with intent to obstruct actions, vilify activists, create confusion, and generally hinder social movements. In more recent cases, informants were employed or activists agreed to testify against others at the behest of the government.

Those outside of the community might be cynical as to the veracity of continued employment of COINTELPRO by the state, nevertheless it remains a threat. The Department of Homeland Security and National Security Agency have admitted to using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, to gather information about activist groups (Gibbs 2014, Obeidallah 2012). Activists take measures to ensure they keep information within the trusted group and not communicated to the state or its agents. The legality of action is certainly an important factor; however, the increased surveillance of the NSA and lack of transparency resulted in a hyper awareness of potential infiltration by the state.

The phrase 'security culture' refers to the need for secrecy within the community. Security culture is an abbreviation of the need for discretion within all aspects of radical activist culture. It dictates who should and should not have sensitive information and when and where they can discuss this information. Activists keep potentially illegal or proscribed activities within a limited group. The fear of repercussions from the state, by way of direct or indirect surveillance, guides these policies. This information can be about things that have happened in the past or will happen in the future, about an action or person.

Activists do not ask one another intrusive or personal questions. Security culture presumes members will volunteer any personal information they want known. For example, it is not uncommon for the more radical community members to use aliases. It would draw suspicion to ask someone using a conspicuous pseudonym for their legal name or ask questions about past and illegal activities.

The illicit nature of groups and parts of the network, and more specifically the anarchist factions within the community, effect their openness to new people. Because of security culture, activists' clandestine actions are, by nature, exclusionary. The actions of daily life build a slow and mutual trust between members. Radical activists are hesitant to trust those to whom they have no loyalty or existing social ties. The emotional investments required of activism make them susceptible to infiltration and manipulation. In collectives oriented toward disruptive or illegal actions, exclusivity is of considerable consequence. Distrust of outsiders, particularly government infiltrators, can lead to internal suspicion and uncertainty. While activists encourage new people to become involved, the aim is not mass appeal.

At times, they activists strategically used security culture to disregard other individuals and groups. In internal disputes, women and people of color have felt silenced under the guise of security culture. Who is included and excluded can depend on who you know, or your social capital, and whether or not you are trustworthy, or your cultural capital. When organizing around the school occupations and student actions, I found the secretiveness lead to multiple groups of seemingly arbitrary activists organizing for the same action without being aware of the existence of the other groups. In another circle of activists organizing a different New York City school

occupation "nobody saw it coming, because most people weren't invited. This wasn't new" (Exposito 2011).

When women and people of color criticize organizers for not involving them, the common, sweeping response of "security culture" places the objectors' commitment to social justice and authenticity as an activist into question. Criticizing security culture can lead to accusations being an agent of the state in agitating and opening the group to conflict. The debate can also shift to accuse the disempowered for putting the group at risk for the sake of peripheral issues. Evoking COINTELPRO is a way of simultaneously casting aspersions on an opponent while upholding one's own authenticity and shutting down the argument.

At the same time, it has been pointed out that, as the title of the original essay and later zine states, *Why Misogynists Make Great Informants*. In the popular piece, Courtney Desiree Morris argues "we need to come to terms with the connections between gender violence, male privilege, and the strategies that informants (and people who just act like them) use to destabilize radical movements" (2010). Morris uses the example of Brandon Darby, an informant who went undercover as an organizer with Common Ground in New Orleans. Despite his "domineering, aggressive style of organizing," and complaints from multiple women, he was never held accountable. Another strategy used by COINTELPRO that overlaps with misogyny is pressuring activists into "taking more drastic, direct actions" (Exposito 2011). Whether or not they are actually informants, the result for social movements is the same.

After the Revolution

*S*ome activists believe issues around gender are secondary to larger political goals. Two ways this is usually discussed are either that "personal problems" can be addressed after the

Image from On the Recent Occupations
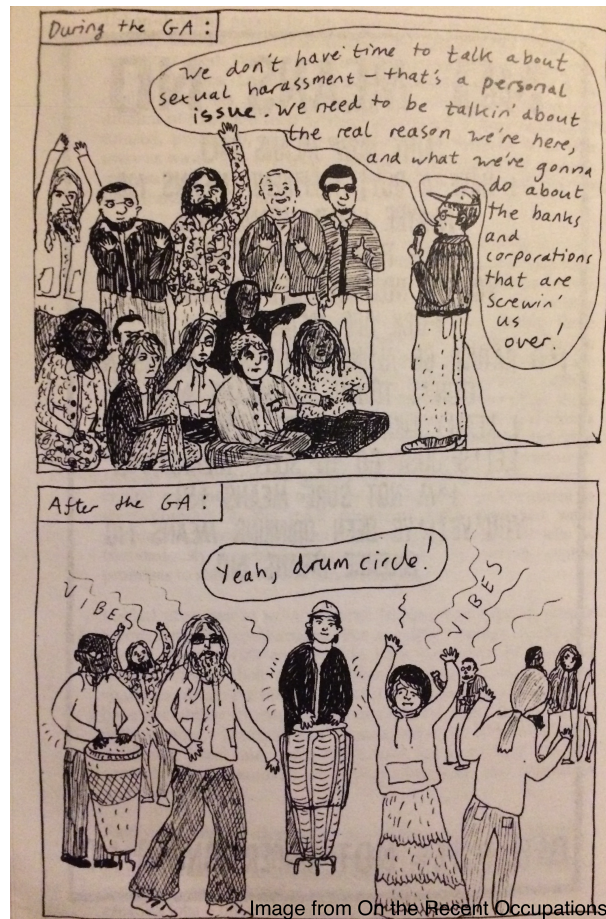
more serious issues of class and government are dealt with or that gender liberation will naturally

come with the overthrow of capitalism or the government (Kooky, King 2012, Morris 2010).

Locally, a common phrase used around these arguments was that "feminism distracts from the

totality" (*Why She* 2009). Though sometimes lamented, gender related issues and violence are

"ultimately less important to "the work" than the men of all races who reproduce gender violence

in our communities" (Morris 2010). Because these problems put the unity of a movement into

question, activists who focus on them are often seen as disruptive. As humorously indicated in

an image from the zine *On the Recent Occupations*, fun, subcultural practices promoting

solidarity, are more likely to be emphasized.

Overall, most zines cited three primary approaches for longterm social change. The first

is for activists to put their politics into action, to "start seeing ourselves as the problem" (Tov

2007), "support wimmin in their daily lives and speak out against sexism to other men" (Kooky),

"critically engage our identities while actively listening to women and trans folk" (*Ex Masculus*

2014: 4), and commit to "real change and practice, regardless of the established norms or our

own illusions" (Men Against 1996: 10). The second is to take issues seriously and do

preventative work, such as that being done around consent (Mitchell 2016, Rae 2008). The third

major theme in addressing gender related issues is to build inclusivity in social movements, that

currently "groups that start off majority cismale will remain majority cismale" (Mitchell 2016)

and "people with marginalized or complex identities are asked to leave a part of themselves at

the door" (King 2012).   But these are easier said than done.

The cultural shifts required for these changes require a framework of internal critique,

whereby behavior can be examined without being seen as divisive or eroding solidarity. Social

movements are not autonomous from other fields and inevitably reflect such inequalities. The

replication of hierarchies of power and marginalization of some activists indicate the complexity

of socially just social movements.

CHAPTER 5 TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Though sexism and related abuse and violence occur, as a community there is a reluctance to use the state or police as a source of justice. The government is argued to perpetuate violence and injustice, "systematically target and brutalize communities of color, radical and queer communities and immigrants," and is therefore unsafe (Erinyen Collective). And the privatization of prisons continues to marginalize already marginalized communities (Davis 2003). Unlike more moderate groups, for radical activists calling the police isn't considered an option. Liberation is seen as being tied to prison abolition, and therefore the dismantling of the criminal justice system. As stated by in an interview from the StoryTelling and Organizing Project reproduced in the *Miklat Miklat* zine, "The police are like, you know, the enemy…So there's the political level in which it's like you don't call the oppressor to help you out. You just don't. Then there's the level of our politics being like we need to like figure out ways to deal with this shit that aren't about calling in the source of violence, right?" (StoryTelling and Organizing Project).

Even if the police are engaged, they do not recognize the myriad of forms of abuse or the needs of the survivor. As pointed out by Generation Five, a group using transformative justice to address child abuse, those who engage with the criminal justice system "are rarely satisfied with the results in terms of the survivors' safety and healing or a sense of justice," are not protected from further harm by the abuser or the investigation and "leave individuals and families with partial solutions that open up trauma without actually transforming it" (Generation Five 2007: 12). Not only are police and courts seen as being inadequate in their dealings with domestic

violence and rape, but that relying on them may offer "an opportunity to break up our political work" (Mitchell 2016: 21).

Instead, activists subcultures are relying on solidarity and community to hold members accountable for their actions. Activists see bureaucratic and hierarchical structures as inept in addressing issues and aim for autonomy. To avoid governmental interference in daily life, activists are creating alternative forms of community justice. In doing so, activists are attempting to create cultural practices where all members of the community are accountable to one another.

Counter institutions have to be developed before they are needed within the subculture. The prefigurative politics of counter institutions contribute to the homology of activist culture and lifestyle. The commitment of activists to create an anti patriarchal, anti rape culture are indicated in their counter institutions developed around safety, sexual assault, and relationships dynamics. One transformative justice group calls their approach '[r]evolution through trial and error' (Colman 2009). Because calling the police and engaging with the criminal justice system are disparaged, an alternative must be in place for activists.

The creation of alternative systems requires considerable work; "[t]his cannot happen out of spontaneous activity; it must result out of a highly organized society based on democratic, decentralized structures" (Beallor 2001). As a DIY practice, there is large amount of labor falling on few individuals who already have other personal and activist commitments, with no guarantee of success. Cindy Crabb, well known writer of the *Doris* zine series, has stated:

"Sometimes I have mixed feelings about counter institutions because… it just takes up all our time and energy and money, and brings out the worst power dynamics, and ends in anger and despair, and it just seems like what is the point. But…I think all the very real counter-institutions

that were set up that I now take for granted, like rape-crisis centers, and food co-ops …
community gardens, free clinics, Community Supported Agriculture farms. It is so important
that we do this work. That we create functioning alternatives to way we're supposed to
live" (2011: 206).

Cindy argues the possibility of creating established alternative institutions, like those developed

by previous generations, are worth the labor. These counter institutions are particularly salient

when offering an alternative to the police, courts, and prison systems.

PREVENTATIVE: SAFER SPACES

Activist Safer Spaces

Though the term has become popular in dominant culture, 'safer spaces' practices have a

specific meaning in activist subcultures. They are largely associated with ideas of coddling

people in not allowing for dialogue; however, within activism, discussion is around challenging

oppressive structures and not stifling speech. Safer spaces are those where strategies are in place

to ensure physical spaces are 'safer' from sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of

ideological and physical violence. But more than the absence of these oppressions, a space must

be inclusive and accessible, such as having wheel chair access and seating areas (Potter 2018).

Once a space is designated 'safer,' it is theoretically safe for everyone the community to attend.

In the zine *A Stand Up Start Up*, the purpose of safer spaces are argued to be threefold:

On an individual level, a survivors' safety from immediate violence and the threat of further acts
of violence (sexual, economic, etc.) is central. For the community, safety comes from fostering
community norms and practices which challenge violence and support conditions for liberation.
Lastly, across communities and collectives, safety means mutual accountability, challenging
power dynamics within and between groups, guarding against backlash, and building strong
alliances so that we can collectively support and protect each other from interference and
targeting by the State." (Generation Five: 20)

Safer space policies then act at both a micro and macro level. It is argued to be a cultural practice addressing the immediate concern and contributing to the development of prefigurative politics.

Safer space policies emphasize the reliance on one another and importance of creating a safe 'community.' The is communicated in event publicity, such as Facebook and fliers, posters at the entry and on the walls of the space and lavatories, written in event programs or hand outs, and announcements during the event. Everyone in the community is argued to play a role in its support and maintenance, but there are specific point people dedicated to administering the policy, usually identifiable by way of matching shirts or arm bands and possibly sitting behind an information table. These policies also help to facilitate requests for specific individuals who are in the middle of or evading an accountability process.

If the safer space policy is violated, both the individual and the community are regarded as injured. Norms have developed around how to address the violation of space policies. The point people first listen to the account of the person harmed and immediately insure their safety, sometimes by asking the violator to leave the space. The harmed individual is asked what course of action they would like to have taken and the safety of the community is accessed. Three options for the harmed individual are offering to "keep an eye on the person," talking to the person about their behavior, or removing the person from the space for the evening (Potter 2018: 15). If action needs to be taken, there is a brief mediation with point people assigned to both parties. Because attendees are made aware of the policy and it is based in community understanding, force is rarely necessary in the removal of safer space violators.

Safer spaces can be maintained in many locations frequented by activists, with a few

notable exceptions. They are the primary method of preventing or addressing harm as it occurs.

Some organizers created NYCsaferspaces.com as a resource for other activists trying to

implement their own policy. Annual community-wide events, such as the NYC Anarchist Book

Fair, have established policies, included a written copy in the program, and have collaborated

with safer space groups for enforcement.   The following is the safer space policy I, as a member

of Support New York, assisted in implementing for the 5th Annual NYC Anarchist Book Fair:

"If you experience harassment, abuse, assault, or any other kind of violation while at the event,
or if someone who has engaged in such behavior is adversely affecting your participation, or for
any other reason you need support, please come to a volunteer. There are trained and
experienced advocates and support people available to address these issues.
This policy is instated in recognition and rejection of rape culture as the status quo. Rape culture
is that in which sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence are condoned, excused and
even encouraged. Rape culture is part of a broader culture of violence, wherein people are
socialized to inhabit different positions in hierarchical relationships, to commodify their fellow
human beings, and to relate to each other through violence and coercion. Rape culture is rooted
in broader systems of oppression - such as patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, homophobia,
and colonialism- and is not separable from them in how and why it is perpetuated, experienced,
and dealt with.
We strive to be survivor centric and survivor oriented. When a decision needs to be made to give
'benefit of the doubt' to a someone who has engaged in abusive behavior or support a survivor,
the preference will be to support the survivor.
If you are asked to leave the book fair in accordance with this policy, please do so immediately.
If you wish to discuss the reason for the decision, an appointment can be made to do so after the
event."

The policy is specific to the event, but couched in the ideological and political context of rape

culture and "systems of oppression." It also anticipates potential conflicts and is definitive in

categorically supporting survivors and those who are harmed. Other forms of framework have

been used at convergences and mass actions. For example, one person I interviewed had some

experience in participating in the adaptation of safer space responses to a protest setting. In

preparation for a convergence, a sexual assault response group was formed, along with a phone number and wiki page, to help immediately and effectively deal with any cases of assault. In addition there was a designated safer space where activists could seek assistance.

Complications & Limits

One of the biggest issues in safer spaces can be found in the name. Initially these were called 'safe spaces'. However, activists had to recognize that safety could not be guaranteed. Inequalities from dominant culture are inevitably present and despite efforts of activists can not be eliminated. Activists began to write about spaces as safe(r) to acknowledge continued risk inherent to both social interaction and radical activism. The change in terminology also leave space for further critique, discussion, acknowledgement of fault, and adjustments.

Large groups might have difficulty agreeing on a policy. Occupy Wall Street, for example, struggled to develop a safer space policy everyone would agree upon. Occupy was a complex group of both experienced and novice activists, with political beliefs that ranged from individualistic libertarianism to collective socialism. Eva, one of the activists I interviewed, played a role in the Occupy policy:

"that took 5 months to create a safer spaces policy…but we did go to a GA [General Assembly] and have everyone write down the way they wanted to see a policy and had…long talks with all these people about their concerns and then workshop-ed it with…the spokes council over and over and then… got thrown for a loop in the end because a deaf organizing group told us that it was too complicated to translate into sign language and…it was a whole journey. But we did get a policy passed which everyone… felt so great about…and we're like, 'No y'all, its only the beginning. Now we have to deal with next steps.' But we never got there because then Occupy had less location-centrality and organizing was different and we were burned out, so we tried. We did get that policy so thats a start" Eva 31:15

Eva had entered the Occupy movement with previous experience implementing safer space policies. But because Occupy was such a large movement, reaching agreement on the policy was

especially difficult and involved workshops, training, various group meetings, policy adjustments and consultations.

These policies also require clear communication and follow through with enforcement. Difficulties can arise when new members are unaware of previous dynamics, relationships, and individual's behaviors. One such instance was when a group bottom lined by a controversial abusive male activist tabled a feminist, people of color zine event. The activists tabling for the group were all women who were new to the scene and the organizers of the event were from punk and people of color areas of activism and were less familiar with the freegans and cycling groups. Neither were aware that the group was headed by a white cisgender male accused of abuse, evading accountability, and calling the police on a person of color. The particular male was not present and many of us assumed he was no longer with the group. But our assumption was incorrect and the organizing group wrote a statement about inviting the group, resulting in an email/web site based exchange between all of the groups involved.

While a number of different types of spaces can be made 'safer,' academic institutions have unique complications and limits. Activist events and protests sometimes take place on campuses even if those participating are not all students. Because school spaces are partially state funded and have a location in larger bureaucratic, government, and capitalistic power structures, institutional authority is defined by these structures. Upon entering a campus we are made aware of this by security guards, surveillance cameras, sign in policies, and identification cards. When a physically unsafe situation arises, most schools' guidelines involve immediately contacting security and the police. There is also a lack of organizational support on campuses. This work

requires dedicated people, circulating throughout the academic community, informing and

enforcing safer space policies.

Critiques

Many of those I interviewed believed policies are too oversimplified in their application.

To have signs stating 'No Sexism' or 'No Racism' themselves would not deal with the

underlying, complex issues. One interviewee compared the policies to rules at a public

swimming pool:

"I think it is a little simplistic to say, like, 'Don't be sexist' when we live in a culture that is
rooted in sexism or, like, 'Don't be racist' when our country was built on slavery. Its really really
tough to untangle that, and especially, you know, with a big sign thats basically like at a
swimming pool that's 'No Horseplay' and 'No Diving.'" 38:15 Mary

Critiques of such spaces often argue they become meaningless, as few activists would identify

their behaviors as sexist, racist, or homophobic, even if others might. Additional contentions

around the simplification of safer spaces include that it can lead to the replication of "so many of

the dynamics which are supposedly being addressed," instead of a larger purpose "to establish a

framework in which there can enable there to be productive dialogue" (Rachel 2016). Policies'

basis in forbiddance means problems and danger are not discussed, just moved from this space to

another.

Others are pessimistic about safer space policies because they function at the level of the

individual and deal with personal interactions. "Safety is an Illusion," an essay published in a

few different zines, argues safety "can't be mediated or rubber stamped at a community level"

and is contextual to individuals and their dynamics (Celeste 2014). In our interview, Mary later

told me about her worst experience with a safer space policy, whereby she and other organizers

had to spend much of their time communicating with and about two activists:

"we had someone come to us and say that someone that was on the roster of artists was an assaulter…I think we learned our lesson in that, we tried to sort of get the whole story and ask him about it and like, it was such a nightmare and we just told them both not to come because we didn't want any…we didn't want the drama and it seemed like we were just dealing with a really volatile situation that wasn't going to work out well for either of them…And I don't think that was the right answer either, but that was the best thing we could come up with…That was probably my worst experience with safer space policy… because you can't just abstain from that either, you can't just say like 'Its not my problem. Both of you guys take your drama elsewhere.' So I don't feel great about doing that but I also don't feel great about the accusations that flew around in our email chain and the drama between them consuming a lot of our meetings and it was counterproductive for us…I just think its so easy to get caught up in the minutia of a situation between two individuals or three individuals and not think about the larger implications when you are just repeatedly putting Band-Aids on stuff and the cuts are going to keep coming. "
Mary 40:13

Mary's experience is not unique. If processes are not clearly in place, then there is no chain of

communication and dealing with these issues can feel frustrating and pointless. When activists

feel they are caught in the details of a heated argument, cases of abuse and assault can be reduced

to 'drama.'

ACCOUNTABILITY

Before TransformativeJustice

Prior to the implementation of transformative justice models, community justice meant

activists were ousted from the community after causing harm. Activists tend to be transient and

when asked to leave, they could simply move to another city and become a part of a new

community. "If we bought everyone who ever fucked up a one way bus ticket to Nebraska, the

scene would get real small real fast. And it wouldn't be very fun for the folks in

Omaha" (*Thoughts About Community* 2008: 3). In kicking someone out of a community, the

person who caused harm is 'demonized' and might continue their behavior in their new location (Erinyen Collective).

The other option was overlooking or denying the behavior. Sometimes the result was the survivor leaving; "there's no way to even start talking, no space to start addressing these "personal issues", and so we leave" (Colman 2009). Another possibility was women writing zines about their experiences. "[I]f you were sexually assaulted, you just wrote a zine about it detailing what an asshole the person was and telling everyone to stop being friends with them and push them out of the community. Usually one or two people in every town took it seriously…" ("Thinking Through…"). The most enduring of these is the zine *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*, written by two women in 2003 about a specific activist in Boston. The zine includes email and online conversational exchanges between the parties.

If the survivor wanted to stay involved and believed they were not being taken seriously, some survivors began retaliating against sexual assault. In *Doris #21*, Cindy Crabb talks about girl gangs in the early 1990s:

"The girl gangs redefined rape, and suddenly everything counted. All the shit that happened to me counted, they made it real. My stepbrothers hands counted, the record store owner that used to get me to suck his dick, the time Paul fucked me from behind in my mothers kitchen, all the times I slept with that one boyfriend because he said if I didn't he would find someone else. All the comments on the streets, the 'accidental' gropes at the shows. Kill them all. It's retribution time. Can you imagine the power in saying that?" (Crabb 2018)

These attacks were around the rise of Riot Grrrl music and a new wave of feminist empowerment. Overall, the approach was not available to everyone harmed, was inconsistent, and didn't result in major changes in activist / anarchist subcultures. By the early 2000s, zines

about assault like the *Doris* series and *Support,* set in motion larger cultural changes around consent and abuse (*Accounting for Ourselves* 2013).

Restorative and Transformative Justice

Before transformative, restorative justice was the focus of community justice projects. Restorative justice focused on restoring relationships as opposed to punitive action. "Restorative justice is the umbrella term for programs that seek to involve victims, offenders and community members in addressing the harms caused by crime. It is defined by both a set of values (e.g. empowerment, healing and openness) and a set of practices (e.g. face-to-face interaction, open dialogue, participatory involvement…)" (Woolford and Ratner 2010: 6). Emphasis is placed on the needs of the survivor; "[t]he goal of a restorative justice process will probably be more along the lines of enabling all people involved in a situation to coexist with security and respect within the same community, and most importantly, allowing the survivor to heal and move on with their life in whichever way they want to, within a community that they feel supported, respected and safe in" ("Restorative Justice…": 13).

Restorative justice is based on current practices in some indigenous communities; however they are not universally used and discussion of them tends to erase internal cultural differences (Withers 2014). The documentary *Hollow Water*, about an indigenous Ojibway community in Canada dealing with child sexual abuse, is commonly recommended amongst those who do this work. In the last few years, the terminology has been employed by traditional, conservative social institutions like public schools, and "is often deployed in an ancillary system - maintaining role within the broader system of criminal justice" (Woolford and Ratner 2010: 6).

Transformative Justice is very similar to restorative justice as a community justice approach. But while maintaining a survivor centered focus, also stresses the importance of transformation of the person who caused harm and the larger social inequities contributing to abusive situations. Transformative justice also "[a]ccepts that a person can be both someone who was harmed and has harmed" (Femme Left). In practice, restorative and transformative justice are not that different, but the language around 'restoring' an abusive relationship versus 'transforming' an abusive relationship appeals to activist prefigurative politics and practices aimed at countering larger social oppressions. Generation Five, a group dedicated to addressing the impact of child sexual assault within five generations, lists the goals of transformative justice as follows:

- Safety, healing, and agency for survivors
- Accountability and transformation for people who harm
- Community action, healing, and accountability
- Transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate violence - systems of oppression and exploitation, domination, and state violence (Generation Five 2007)

In application, transformative justice often takes the form of accountability processes. Accountability processes are flexible in format and can begin at the behest of a survivor, social movement group, the community, or the person who caused harm. For the individual, the goal is to hold the person who caused harm responsible for their actions, for them to acknowledge and accept that responsibility, and to commit to future changes in behavior. As a community process, those involved include partners, friends, and fellow activists. Transformative justice organizations like Generation Five, INCITE!, and CARA (Communities Against Rape and Abuse) created early guides that have greatly influenced transformative justice in the activist subculture.

Transformative justice models are being used to address harm after it has been committed. In the subculture, the perpetrator's transformation is most commonly referred to as them "working on their shit" or "dealing with their shit." These processes are almost exclusively mobilized around sexual assault, relationship-based physical assault and emotional abuse. Other forms of harm might be dealt with collectively in other ways, such as intervention formats for alcohol and drug use. But activists are only "held accountable" around romantic or sexual forms of trauma.

All individuals harm one another and the abuser can be redeemed. "They believe in helping each other figure shit out, that we all fuck up sometimes and we all have the capacity to fuck up majorly, especially having been raised in this sick and twisted environment they call civilization. That the only way stuff is really going to get any different is to call each other on shit and then learn how to do it better the next time around" (Erinyen Collective). The prefigurative politics of radical left social movements requires the community to work together to help those who "want support and are interested in changing themselves and/or situation" (*Thoughts About Community* 2008).

One of the largest direct influences within the radical left activist subculture was Philly Stands Up / Philly's Pissed. The groups developed out of conversations around a number of rapes at a punk festival in 2004. Philly's Pissed (PP) was a women's group organizing around survivor support. Philly Stands Up (PSU) included men and underwent a major change in their first year when an original member was 'called out' for sexual assault. At a meeting of roughly 30 activists, nearly all defended the person accused of assault. Only two people attended the

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next meeting. As a result, what was "[f]ormerly a vast amalgamation of straight and closeted

men, PSU…became a tight-knit posse consisting of out queer and gender-nonconforming

members. For the first time, the group was not all white" (Kelly 2012: 46). PSU and PP's

dynamic changed over time, eventually settling on PSU "dealing with perpetrators" and PP with

survivors (Kelly 2012: 47). PP dissolved in 2008 and PSU became inactive in 2012. Due in part

to the early zines and guides from PSU and PP, nearly everyone I interviewed cited the group as

an early inspiration.

Around the same time, Support New York (SNY) formed out of the New York City punk/

anarchist subculture. The collective formed "support the survivors of…[sexual violence], to

educate ourselves and others about the effects of sexual and intimate partner violence, and to

figure out how we can respond without resorting to police and prisons that further perpetuate

oppression and abuse" (Support New York). Early on, the group dealt with survivors,

perpetuators (a term used by the collective), and carried out processes. Over time with

experience gained, SNY developed a process framework, delineated roles in a process, and

created a curriculum. SNY ended actively taking on processes in early 2016 and posted their

curriculum online in 2018.

THREE COMPONENTS

The Survivor

Though numerous forms of sexism, racism and other inequalities exist, accountability

processes are almost exclusively organized around sexual assault or relationship abuse. In my

interviews, readings, and personal experience, I have only heard of one process initiating around

race. As of September 2018 that process is still at the organizing phase. The subculture includes

a variety of gender identities and is generally oriented against gender essentialism, so it is

recognized that "[a]ssault and abuse can be committed by anyone against anyone, across gender

lines," though male identified people might be less willing to identify abuse (*Accounting for*

Ourselves 2013: 5). However, it is also acknowledged that the overarching pattern is cisgender

males harming women, gender non binary, or trans people (*Accounting for Ourselves* 2013,

Betrayal 2012, Withers 2014). In his zine about being sexually assaulted, A. J. Withers, a

transgender activist, spoke about the complexity of gender and being a survivor:

"I have been sexually assaulted a few times in the radical scene in Toronto and each one of those
times, regardless of how I identify, were very gendered. Whether or not they were related to my
being trans, I know that they were also about my being identified in whole or in part by the
person assaulting me, as a woman. However, just because my experience is one of assault when
my claim on masculinity was erased or devalued, this does not mean this is the case for all trans
men/genderqueer folks. Some trans people are sexually assaulted entirely because they are trans.
Additionally, my talking about how part of the reason that I was assaulted was, to some extent,
about an imposed 'womanness' on me does not make it okay to simply include me in the
category 'women' when you are talking about sexual violence. I'm not one and to call me
otherwise is transphobic." (Withers 2014: 14)

The use of the term 'survivor' to label the person who has been harmed is moderately

disputed. 'Survivor,' as opposed to 'victim,' is part of a reclaiming narrative arising out of

feminist movements in the 1980s (Sehgal 2016). In choosing the identity of a survivor, someone

is placing emphasis on the strength of having lived through assault instead of the weakness of

victimhood. 'Survivor' "denotes ability to cope and move on; to integrate the traumatic event

into the context of their lives and to accept it, rather than avoiding or 'burying' the

incident" (Cheyenne 5). But the change of primary terminology can force those who have been

assaulted into feeling as though they cannot be fragile or heal on their own timeline and must

wear a veneer of fortitude. Within the subculture, I have not found any linguistic alternative.

'Survivor' was used, albeit sometimes critically, by everyone I interviewed even if they themselves rejected label when self identifying.

Before a process can be entered, the survivor identifies or 'calls out' the abuse. The definition of abuse is broadened within the subculture and redefined as "the mistreatment of someone that causes harm" (Wrekk 2007) or instances "where people's boundaries are violated" (Crabb 2009). Along with physical abuse, this can include forms of sexual abuse or the "utilization of sex as a weapon" including the "assaulting of 'sexual parts,'…FORCED participation or watching pornography, ignoring safe words" (Unowho). Within the subculture, many admit the defining rape is "difficult" (The Down There Health Collective: 11) or "messy, because the experience itself is messy" (Cohn and Mitchell 2015).

Generally, rape is considered as "[u]nwanted sexual contact of any kind as defined by the survivor" (Dealing with Our Shit Collective: 5), though that contains "an infinite amount of situations," including cultural pressures around non monogamy or polyamory and sex positivity (Soph: 5). An number of activists have talked out the need for new / more language to use around these situations:

"Maybe we need a hundred new words for when our friends or acquaintances or partners assault or rape us. One word to describe 'I let you because I was half asleep and too tired to do anything else.' One that's 'I was sick of arguing about it.' One for 'It's fucked up and scary the way you talk to me.' One for 'I told you I didn't want to do that.' One for 'Why didn't you notice when I wasn't present anymore.' One for 'We had an agreement you'd use protection.' One for 'You said if I didn't do it, you'd leave me. What choice did I have?' Maybe we need a hundred new words to talk about rape and sexual assault and sexual manipulation: words that speak clearly about the seriousness of what is being done to our bodies. Or maybe our friends and acquaintances and partners need to have the courage to hear 'You raped me' or 'That was assault.'" (Crabb 2016: 49)

Because of activists' alternative sexual practices, unique issues around consent emanate. Abuse might then be when a dominant in an BDSM fails to follow safe words, ignores other forms of

bodily communication, or fails to provide adequate aftercare or when a polyamory agreement about safer sex practices is violated.

Unlike the criminal justice system, transformative justice also recognizes emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is defined as patterns of behavior that project "power in order to demean or cause harm," (Unowho) or coerce "to get someone to do something against their will or better judgment" (Wrekk 2007). Emotional abuse is recognized outside of the activist subculture, but not as something serious or actionable by the criminal justice system.

Within activism, identifying forms of abuse is particularly difficult both because it manifests differently in the context of activism and it means acknowledging abuse by a person thought to be politically ethical. One theme is the survivor of abuse being used to advance the political work of the abuser, dedicating "pieces of [themselves]...to someone else's cause" (Wrekk 2007). In one well known case, a survivor talks about her ex husband "using [her] own politics against [her]," manipulating her into changing sexual and consumption practices to please his politics. She was made to feel she was not radical enough. Other forms of emotional abuse include verbal abuse, gaslighting, isolation, pressure to do more risky activism, threatening to harm themselves, and destroying possessions (Cohn and Mitchell 2015, Regarding ********, *Thoughts on Possible* 2013). In "Why Misogynists Make Great Informants," Courtney Desieree Morris speaks about their experiences with abusive men:

"There were men like this in various organizations I worked with. The one who called his girlfriend a bitch in front of a group of youth of color during a summer encuentro we were hosting. The one who sexually harassed a queer Chicana couple during a trip to México, trying to pressure them into a threesome. The guys who said they would complete a task, didn't do it, brushed off their compañeras' demands for accountability, let those women take over the task, and when it was finished took all the credit for someone else's hard work. The graduate student

who hit his partner—and everyone knew he'd done it, but whenever anyone asked, people would just look ashamed and embarrassed and mumble, "It's complicated."" (2010)

Name calling, sexual pressure, not completing work and taking credit for other's work, and physical violence are all forms of abuse that are present in activism. Emotional abuse is acknowledged to be a significant problem in the subculture that "deserves far more attention than it currently receives" (Cohn and Mitchell 2015: 12).

There are arguments that emotional abuse is innately mutual within a relationship. In using the same terminology and the same processes, various forms of abuse are equated and conflated. One of my interviewees, Willow, was critical "that people feel…they need to defend how much they were hurt and harmed by someone and I think, like, alternatives would be to… actually be attentive to unhealthy power exchanges and help our friends sort things out without such hyperbolic language" around survivorship 10:40. Willow was also concerned that within a very youth and party oriented atmosphere of the subculture, few people's behavior could hold up to scrutiny.

Others argue questioning the validity of emotional abuse is another form of victim blaming and minimizing of the experience of survivors ("Safety is an…"). Some activists challenge "hierarchies of trauma," that quantify some forms as worse than others, while others critique the equating of various forms of abuse (Bayer 6). There are a range of disagreements around the relative importance of emotional abuse. Some believe the community must acknowledge emotional abuse as legitimate trauma, others reason different forms of abuse need to be confronted in different ways by activists (Cohn and Mitchell 2015).

Unlike state justice, accountability processes center on the needs of the survivor. Organizers believe that survivors "should dictate what the accountability process looks like and how it works, to avoid re-victimization and restore agency & autonomy to the survivor" (Brown 2013). Typically, the survivor cites wanting to stop the perpetrator from continuing their behavior and harming others as their reason for participating. Though the survivor is not always a part of a process and isn't always the one to request a process. While less frequent, occasionally a social movement group or the perpetrator themselves will request a process.

When using the transformative justice model there is no burden of proof required to identify abuse. The binary of victim and assailant is broken down, as one zine is in part titled "We are all survivors. We are all perpetrators." Singular truth is questioned and instead the experience of those involved is validated. "No one should ever be forced to defend what he or she feels, least of all someone who has survived a violation of his or her boundaries. Regardless of 'what really happened,' a person's experience is his or hers alone" ("We are all…" 2005: 39*)*. Having been socialized into state influenced culture this can be a difficult adjustment. However, some activists draw parallels to the more traditional topic of class inequality. "When you hear about striking workers, you don't ask for proof of the boss's wrongs - you instead ask how to best support the workers" (*And What about Tomorrow?* 2009).

But some of my interviewees faced difficulty when actually carrying out processes at the behest of survivors. For Lee, as a processes progressed, they learned that the abuse / incident was integrated into the couple's regular sexual practices. The "initial story was pretty grotesque"; the survivor went to sleep and told their partner they weren't sure if they wanted to have sex and woke up with the partner "fucking them". "And then you find out like 2 or 3

months later that that was kind of a blanket consent thing in their relationship and…wake up sex was actually not an off-the-table thing, and its like 'Oh wait, thats a totally different context'" 13:30. In this case the survivor didn't lie, but right and wrong dichotomy was drawn trough a grey area.

Jasmine had a similar experience where she felt that the accountability group she was a part of was "not thoughtful in terms of correctly assessing what had happened…ok, you believe survivors…and you give their account…priority, check, and so that just lead to some assumptions. Therefore we shouldn't ask at all what [the perpetrator's] experience of these things is because somehow that would be creating an opening up to misconstrue or cast aspersions…we really acted as the state, we acted as cops…and this is in no way denying real harm was caused and there was responsibility to be taken" 16:25. It is dogmatic to only consider one party's viewpoint and question the other. Because the process lacked nuance, it is easy for the survivor/perpetrator division to itself limit the possibility of transformation.

The Perpetrator

The person who has caused harm is usually called the 'perpetrator,' though this term is controversial. Philly Stands Up argued that they "settled into using 'perpetrator' to commonly refer to the person opposite the survivor in a situation around sexual assault. We use this term because we feel that it represents recognition that someone did something, not is something. It gives the opportunity for change while recognizing that their actions have hurt someone" (Philly Stands Up). As PSU was one of the most influential groups doing this work, other activist transformative justice groups followed suit. Terms like 'abuser' imply that not just the actions, but the person themselves is bad and can therefore not change. Similarly, "attacker/assaulter

implies that the perpetrator is physically stronger and that the sexual assault was planned. it also

implies violence, which is not always present, though it certainly can be. for that reason, i

choose to use the word perpetrator - intentional or not, they engaged in an act that was traumatic

to another" (Cheyenne 5).

Though most groups use the term, it is highly criticized. Specifically it is thought to have

"a legal sound, and [can]… recreate some form of the justice system" (The A Team 2014).

Particularly when shortened to 'perp' the word replicates carceral terminology. Activists who

dislike the label also argue though not intended, it still labels the person and can become a master

status within the activist subculture. Perhaps not as harsh as more damning labels like 'rapist,'

perpetrator is still a difficult identity for someone to accept when entering process. One

interviewee, James, was involved with a transformative collective group that used alternative

language to perpetrator:

"we didn't want to say abuser because part of the nature of our work was about…building trust
with the abuser and calling them the 'abuser' is not going to do that. Also it was kind of about
demystifying the nature of who is abuser in terms of…it is not actually an archetype of an abuser
like you have in your head…its not a stranger lurking. Its oftentimes an otherwise very nice
person…it was easier to use language that didn't seem to be a categorical fundamental
assessment of who they were as a person. Some one who had committed abuse, but maybe is not
necessarily an 'abuser' and that shit is like, trust/semantics shit to coddle the person that we want
because the ultimate goal is to get them to not harm anyone else. Perpetrator sounds like the
cops…some people in the collective would during meetings would still say 'perp' as shorthand
because we all secretly watched [Law and Order] SVU, which was like a shameful catharsis for
everyone in the collective, about A. just seeing Ice-T beat up rapists every week and the…fantasy
of a police apparatus that actually cares about survivors is something that appealed to all of us in
some weird way…"

Others in the subculture consider sensitivity to the word part of "strategies towards

accountability which seek to accommodate a perpetrators defenses" (*Betrayal* 2012: 11). Even

though I personally agree with much of the critique against the term 'perpetrator,' I am using it in this research because it is the most common nomenclature in the subculture.

Alternative options used by groups and in zines are 'abuser' (INCITE! 2005), 'assaulter' (Withers 2014), 'aggressor' (CARA), 'person who caused harm' (Creative Interventions), and 'perpetuator' of violence (Support New York). Abuser, assaulter, and person who caused harm are rather straightforward having been used before and in conjunction with perpetrator. Perpetuator was a term argued for by Support New York as a way of indicating the perpetuation of violence and patriarchy and forming accountability around disrupting the perpetuation of these cycles and "larger systems of oppression" (Support New York). The zine *Thoughts on Possible Community Responses to Intimate Violence (Redux)* eschews language altogether and uses a triangle symbol "for the survivor/accuser/person who was harmed" and a four-pointed star symbol "for the abuser/accused/one who's the most apparent problem" (7).

Approaching someone to tell them they have been "called out" for their behavior is complicated. Within the subculture there are arguments around the idea of "call out" versus "call in" culture. Call out culture is defined as "a culture of toxic confrontation and shaming people for oppressive behavior that is more about the performance of righteousness than the actual pursuit of justice" (Cheng Thom 2016), but even those who have critiqued it argue "sometimes the only way we can address harmful behaviours is by publicly naming them, in particular when there is a power imbalance between the people involved and speaking privately cannot rectify the situation" (Ahmad 2017). Whereas 'call in' implies "calling in those who make mistakes and enact harm…discuss their transgressions with us and collaboratively identify strategies to avoid

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perpetrating similar behavior" (Rachel 2016: 3). Either way, initial reactions can be quite

volatile. In an interview with Transformative Justice, EU, Anna Vo talks about the difficulty:

"So that is the initial challenge and I am still trying to find a nice way to say "this person feels
that you're a perpetrator". No matter how its communicated, there is usually a pretty aggressive
reaction. So, with them, while this is happening I try to explain it in other terms, in analogies
that they can relate to. If I know something about their lives I equate it to a situation where they
may feel like a victim, like if they are riding a bike and a car driver cuts them off. I know this
sounds trivial and simplistic, but sometimes it has to be an external example that doesn't threaten
people." (Vo 2011)

The survivor or an organization can call someone out. In our interview, James, who had

been involved in an accountability group over a long period of time, found that early on most

were about "sexual abuse and emotional abuse in relationships. But towards the middle and end,

the people started getting called out by partners and they'd simultaneously be getting called out

by collectives that they were part of" 15:25.

First reactions often include denial and justification. People I interviewed that had been

present when a perpetrator was called out said that the person "freaked out," was "shocked,"

used "denial and rhetoric," and said the survivor was "crazy." In the essay "I Want to Get

Better," a person who was called out said "When I got called out it didn't really sink in. They

were wrong! It was their fault! If they had said or done things differently this would never have

happened! This was a patten on behavior I couldn't see in myself. I didn't behave like that, I

was a feminist. An ally. An anarchist" (Rose 2015: 15). One interviewee who had a lot of

experience playing the role of initial contact stated, in their experience:

"It's this process of gently feeling out, trying to make sure you don't spook them, because
they're like these very skittish horses…and also doing this interesting gender dance, because
like, wanting to be taken seriously which means performing masculinity, but wanting to do that
in a way that isn't brutally inauthentic to who I feel like I am, and also doesn't reinforce
patriarchy. Which is actually a really difficult dance…" 42:30

As perpetrators tend to be cisgender men, they might find other cisgender men and the projection of masculinity to be both more relatable as well as more legitimate. Oftentimes, the person doing the initial contact will first have a friend of the perpetrator who is sympathetic to the process present, so that they feel comfortable and have support that will not exacerbate angers and frustrations

One goal of transformative justice is to keep both the survivor and perpetrator in the community. Everyone involved must believe that the perpetrator has the capacity to self reflect and change their behavior in the future. The ability to both adequately acknowledge behavior patterns and have hope for future change can be complicated. In the aforementioned essay "I Want to Get Better," the perpetrator talks about his need for transformation:

"One area I disagreed with my mediator…about was when he said, in reference to my actions and behaviors: 'This is part of who you are.' Well, no. though I accept what I think he was getting at, which is that I should not hide from what happened, and the process of self betterment and accountability is an ongoing process, why do these identities have to be a part of who I am? Why can't they be a part of who I was? Without the opportunity for re-authoring identity provided by the accountability process and our community as a whole then there is little incentive to engage in accountability. If we brand every one with no hope of rehabilitation or restoration, then we lose all hope of real justice and just re-create the system we seek to dissolve." (Rose 2014: 14)

The person called out must believe they can transform. If not, the only reason for a perpetrator to participate in a process would be to maintain community position.

The process of transformation is is rooted in the idea that everyone is potentially a perpetrator because "even the best of us can fuck up" (Naught and Rachel: 22). Guides like *What to Do When You've Been Called Out: A Brief Guide*, *Taking the First Step: Suggestions to People Called Out for Abusive Behavior*, *What to Do When Someone Tells You that You Violated*

Their Boundaries, Made Them Feel Uncomfortable, or Committed Assault, and *We Are All*

Survivors, We Are All Perpetrators explain both that anyone has the potential to commit abusive

actions and the importance of addressing such behaviors. These generally include things like

"Take responsibility for your actions" and "Seek help" ("We are all…" 2005). The most popular

of these is *Taking the First Step*, which has been reprinted in other zines and lists 10 suggestions

to people called out. These are as follows:

1. Be Honest, Stay Honest, Get Honest
2. Respect Survivor Autonomy
3. Learn To Listen
4. Practice Patience
5. Never, Ever, Blame The Victim
6. Speak For Yourself
7. Don't Engage In Silence Behavior
8. Don't Hide Behind Your Friends
9. Respond To The Wishes of The Survivor and The Wishes Of The Community
10. Take Responsibility. Stop Abuse and Rape Before It Starts.

The phrase most commonly used is that a perpetrator needs to "work on their shit" or "deal

with their shit." This generally means that they need to change behaviors, but is otherwise

vague. For any actual transformation, the perpetrator must "both a) actually want support and b)

are interested in changing themselves and/or their situation" (*Thoughts on Possible 2013:* 6).

For some activists who have experience with processes, it is only seen as worth the effort if the

perpetrator was willing to change: "When I started this work, I would spend hours in session

with one individual, waiting for something to register. Since then, I have developed a skill over

time to let stubborn creatures be, and pursue change where it seems more welcome. " (Vo 2014:

55). Some critics believe that perpetrators are being asked to "'work on' his existence as a male,

his performance of masculinity…to adjust his role as a man," which merely supports a

patriarchal culture, precludes any true transformation, and fails to challenge power dynamics in the subculture ("Notes on Survivor…": 18).

The Community

In addition to being accountable to the survivor, the perpetuator is held accountable to the community. Acts of abuse to an individual are seen as harmful to the community as a whole. The perpetrator must take responsibility and solidarity must be restored before they are brought back into activist projects. "Being accountable to your actions and your community means owning your mistakes and working hard to restore trust. This trust goes beyond partners or potential dates. It exists among friends, housemates, comrades, and folks with whom you do organizing work and activism" (Crabb 2009). The underlying idea is that the community as a whole is committed to prefigurative politics and holding one another accountable.

The community is the primary reason perpetrators agree to go along with a process. In my interviews the size of the city the activists are in changes the motivations of perpetrators. In moderate to small sized cities, there is no ability to change communities within the geographic area. Being threatened with being not allowed at certain events or being ostracized by certain people effectively removes you from the community. Subcultural and social capital carries more weight and if those with more capital do not want a process to happen, then it doesn't. Lee was involved in activism in a college town:

"They almost always became like, popularity contests. Who was going to determine the narrative it was going to get? Who was going to determine this historical narrative…almost became a fight for history. Whereas somebody would get called out, but then over time whispers behind the scene of what actually happened, what actually was going on would dramatically shift how people felt about it and how people felt they needed to or not need to be committed to accountability processes. So if somebody was getting called out, and they didn't have a lot of social capital, and the people with the most social capital thought that they needed to finish that

accountability process, they would. If somebody got called out and the people with the most social capital thought it was a joke, then it was treated like a joke" 9:13

In Lee's experience, cultural and social capital were the defining factors of whether or not a process occurred and was supported by the community.

In larger cities, such as New York, there are various overlapping subcultures for a perpetrator to join and evade accountability. Subcultural and social capital was a factor, but power was more diffuse simply because there were so many people in so many different scenes. One particularly well known and powerful activist was called out and refused an accountability process. But he couldn't go to a number of events and spaces, fliers were handed out about him, websites and blog posts were created and ten years later his name is still equated with perpetrator by a significant portion of the activist community.

Fellow activists in their respective social networks make up support teams for both the survivor and the perpetrator. For the perpetrator, the support is general moral support but does not condone or justify their actions. They might also help them to confront previous behaviors and aid them in fulfilling the requests of the survivor. "Emotional support is as necessary as anything else anarchists are doing. We cannot accomplish anything unless we are stable, and this requires the compassion and support of others" (Lilith). These support teams can then take charge of communication, so that the survivor will not need to be in contact with the person who abused them.

The survivor decides how much to inform the community about the perpetrator and the process. Typically, information is not made widely known unless a perpetrator is unwilling to be held accountable. Otherwise it is usually targeted to specific individuals and groups. It can be

difficult for individuals and the community as a whole to support the survivor, as it is predicated on information about the abusing being public. If a survivor does not want their name or information known, it can be difficult to amass any support. For example, when I was an active participant, there was a well known, controversial response to an assault. While the perpetrator was named, the survivor was not. About a week later I received an email from a friend saying they were disappointed I had not reached out and offered help. I did not know they were the survivor or know the full extent of the fall out. The survivor not being known might also mean that while those 'in the know' want to tell others, they are unable because the survivor has requested that the information not be transmitted.

Rumors around processes are common. Gossip has very gendered, negative connotations, but the informal transmission of knowledge can be very useful for activists, especially when warning about individuals' behaviors: "'that guy is really creepy, you shouldn't hang out with him' to 'my friend had a bad experience with that person…' to 'watch out he is really sexist behind closed doors' to 'have you heard that ___ sexually assaulted someone, this is what people are doing about it…'" (Withers 2014: 51). But this can become complicated. One person I interviewed had an experience whereby they tried to warn a friend about someone who lived in the same town:

"I had made a statement to someone in the town where he was living, like 'This person has a problem with consent, just a heads up'. I had never spoken to him directly about it because I had not been authorized by this person who had been harmed by him to do so. I don't like to be…I don't like to shit talk…but I didn't want this person to be able to just show up in a town…and it was a subtle person-to-person heads up…I ended up getting a letter from this man, who I had used to be very close friends with years before, basically indignantly demanding that I retract my sentiment…I didn't know what to do because by this point it was a couple of years later maybe and…[the survivor and I] weren't even in touch anymore. And I wasn't going to track her down and call her and be like "Hey, by the way, this person who sexually assaulted you years ago

wrote me a letter and can I tell him that you felt…No! I'm not going to do that. No way, so I ignored the letter. And it sucks because I can put myself in his shoes and be like, how would I feel if some friend comes to me and is like "Hey, someone just told me you have a problem with consent. Whats that about…"…I would feel horrified and I would feel angry. I'd feel terrible. I mean, I would probably approach it a little bit differently…like god, who do I need to make amends to ?" 1:00:00

Gossip can of course also be used to spread untrue or negative information about either party and can lose accuracy in its transmission. Gossip about survivors being 'crazy' is quite common, as are minimizations and exaggerations of the abuse by the perpetrator. Gossip favoring the activist with more social and cultural capital is likely to be believed and spread further.

Depending on the clarity of information, how communicated, and the perpetuator and survivor, this can result in the community feeling as though they must take a side. People do not want to hear that their friends, partners, and fellow activists are perpetrators and try to dismiss as allegations or shield them from accountability (Otto: 18). In the case of one men's collective, when one of their members was accused of assault they responded by saying "'A good guy like him would never do a thing like that' or 'Whats a guy to do when a woman is lying naked in his bed?'" (Dang: 9). But denial means doing nothing, which inherently is in support of the perpetrator. In doing so, "You're sending a message that you value a sense of normalcy over their safety" (*Accounting for Ourselves* 2013).

In some cases the distinction between the perpetrator and the survivor is drawn into question. Typically, the perpetrator claims 'mutual abuse,' or that they themselves were the victims in the relationship. Though some in the subculture believe mutual abuse does happen, it is also a form of the perpetrator counter organizing against the survivor. It can become highly politicized and put a strain on others' relationships in the movement. Transformative justice

organizations argue "when a survivor (the individual with less power within that relationship) strikes back in any manner it is always self-defense NOT abuse" (Unowho). Yet to deny either party's understanding of the incident as community mandate signals a significant shift of power. For example, in my interview with Alexandra there was a situation where sections of the community itself had a different understanding of a situation:

"One person calls out another for sexual assault, a single incident. Its understood by some people that in the opposite direction there was a longterm pattern of emotional abuse. And…I think had we had the ability or maybe the courage to name that more clearly…then maybe something slightly different could have come out of it? But it was tough because the person who was being called out didn't want to do that tit-for-tat. You know, 'I'm using the A word because you're using the A word." 8:25

After all of their experiences, Alexandra believes "this idea of like, you always believe the survivor…makes sense as a survivor support principle, but not as a community accountability principle." As a policy, valuing one person's perspective and experience over another's complicates the process of mediation.

Though some argue that people are not on trial, others believe the community does act as a jury. "[N]o one need be on trial, because there is no sentence/verdict involved, and this is purposely outside of a court of law…each member of the community (i.e. the jury) will decide for themselves if they want to act on the punitive process or ignore it" (Vo 2011: 2). In a few interviews, activists referenced the scene in judicial terminology. The direct comparisons belie the creation of a new or alternative process and instead point to its re-creation.

The community might also blame the survivor for internal divisions resulting from an accountability process. In some cases, survivors "are blamed for tearing the community apart and ultimately for undermining 'the struggle'" (*Betrayal* 2012: 9). Preexisting internal divisions,

personal and ideological, can be exacerbated and fought through an accountability process. Speaking out can diminish the survivor's activist credibility and cultural capital.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS

Requests

Once the survivor has labeled abuse they then determine how they feel the abuser can be accountable to them as well as the community, which varies greatly depending upon the situation and relationship. Accountability requests of the survivor depend on the circumstances. It was common with Philly Stands Up "for a survivor to create a list of 'demands' for the perpetrator to meet. If a survivor is interested in creating a list of demands, we encourage them to envision what would make them feel safe and more in control of their lives again, and what would make them feel that the person who assaulted them is being held accountable for their actions" (Colman 2009).

Probably the most common request is for the perpetrator to not attend an event or go to a particular space or to coordinate so that they do not attend the same event at the same time. Survivors rarely want to share the same space with someone who has caused them harm. This request is particularly controversial. Banning individuals before entering or while in a process is viewed as a punishment. Sometimes this can be a sticking point for perpetrators; "they resent missing out on [events], or resent sacrifices in general that they hadn't thought of in beginning the mediation process" (Vo 2011: 2). The perpetrator might be asked not to attend an event and not know who has accused them. There have been a few contentious situations around zine festivals and book fairs, where the perpetrator called for transparency but the survivor requested anonymity. In smaller scenes, this can be more difficult because there are fewer events so it can

be a more encompassing social sanction. In addition, a couple of people I interviewed were involved in an process whereby the perpetrator was asked by the survivor to leave shared living situations.

For survivors, requests can be difficult to make. Similar to issues around consent, there can be pressure to not make requests about events and spaces even if you would like to. Survivors can also not change their mind once a decision is made (Withers 2014). If the survivor did not anticipate the perpetrator being in a space, they might still have to share a space or personally ask them to leave. In *Transformative Justice and/as Harm*, A.J. Withers talks about an experience whereby he was giving a performance and someone who abused him attended.

"I remember saying that I couldn't do it [perform] in front of him. I just kept being asked if I wanted him to leave. At one point I said that I didn't want to be the one to have to say that - that it was always me and I didn't want to be singled out…Eventually I said 'yes.'…From the group's perspective, however, if there was a 'bad guy' that evening, it was me. I had several people tell me that they had come across town or cancelled other plans to come and see me perform. It felt like people thought I was over reacting or being over sensitive or diva-ish. Rather than people checking in on me and being tender with me, I was blamed for ruining their night" (Withers 2014: 31).

 In some cases, the people organizing or other community members believe that the survivor should just master their feelings and get over it. The default to no policy and no request is that survivors do not attend events and quit going to certain spaces.

Coordinating schedules of events can be very time consuming and labor intensive for support groups. Both venues as well as mediators sometimes enter into these calls. In our interview, Lee described feeling frustrated with the phone calls and communication around requests not to attend events or spaces.

"The phone chain situation that would happen! Like, ok, who is going to be the point person… there are support people on either side. Then are those direct support people also going to be the

one who fields calls? So the survivor wants to go to this …radical poetry reading and wants to know if the perpetrator is going to be there so then they talk to their point person, who then talks to the the phone person, who then talks to the perpetuator's phone person, who then asks the perpetuator if they're going to be there. And sometimes, by the time it would all work through the events half way over." Lee 1:11:25

Between 3 and 5 phone calls might be needed to make the request, to which the perpetrator would respond with another 3 to 5 phone calls. If there was disagreement, or the venue was brought into the mediation process, communications could become more complicated.

Other than mediation and not sharing spaces, requests might include returning objects, entering therapy, writing a letter of apology / accountability, informing new partners, paying for resulting medical bills and seeking support for alcoholism or drug use. Of these, entering therapy is probably the most difficult to fulfill. Finding an affordable therapist who sympathizes with radical left politics is rare. For some survivors, if requests are specific and quickly addressed, a process might not need to occur.

Separation

The survivor and perpetrator's processes are usually separate from one another. Transformative justice groups like Support New York didn't always treat them as individual processes, but found over time, processes were more successful when they were separated. Separating the processes also makes it so that communication doesn't have to happen as frequently and can be carried out through their support teams. SNY developed a format whereby there are designated liaisons between the support groups and the mediating team "to transmit general impressions of how the process is going and inform the accountability team of any feedback from the survivor including their suggestions on content or readings." (Support New York 7).

Inevitably, there is overlap around more concrete requests. Both processes might depend

on the survivor or perpetrator moving or returning goods. Around more general requests to

'work on their shit,' the survivor and the perpetrator often have different timelines for changes to

occur and can result in setbacks for survivors. Groups who carry out transformative justice try to

dampen hope of survivors that perpetrators will follow all demands in order to lessen this effect.

Otherwise, the survivor's process is independent. Various zines have been written as

guides through this process, listing steps for the survivor, possible pitfalls, and tips for support

teams. A "Survivor's Rights & Responsibilities" checklist is typically given to the survivor.

This list includes a right to "feel angry, hurt, sad, loving, or forgiving of my perpetrator(s)",

"speak about my abuse", "confront perpetrators and those who have participated in violations

and abuses," "love and be loved". Responsibilities include "take care of myself," "reflect on the

ways abuse has affected me," "form healthy relationships," "survive my history, circumstances,

and violations" (Lara 2011: 138).

Preparation

Before a process begins, there is some need for preparation. If a preexisting

accountability group is not carrying out the process, then the group of people who will needs to

be decided. The group must develop a strategy for approaching the perpetrator and a plan for

accountability. The Chrysalis Collective listed eight steps to a process in their zine *Beautiful,*

Difficult, Powerful: Ending Sexual Assault Through Transformative Justice:

> step 1. gathering: form a survivor support team
> step 2. expanding: form an accountability team
> step 3. communicating: defining the relationship between teams
> step 4. storing and developing: create a transformative justice plan
> step 5. summoning: prepare for the first approach

step 6. building: the first meeting
step 7. transforming: meetings with the accountability team
step 8. evaluating: lessons learned

Some groups try to reach out to friends and family of the perpetrator before approaching them, so that they will have support in the process from the beginning (Quarrel 10). The time required for this preparation can mean the perpetrator is prematurely informed about the confrontation and can begin counter organizing against the survivor or leave town. A few of those I interviewed had an experience where the perpetrator found out an accountability process was being organized and quickly moved out of the area, which in and of itself is not an oddity in the subculture.

Processes that are more organically created within a scene are usually less formal. Formation of groups might not be as distinct. For example there might be only one person meeting with both the survivor and perpetrator directly, or the survivor's team are the mediators. Another possibility is a perpetrator engaging with an outside source, such as a group for men who have abused partners or Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Mediators

Sometimes the mediators of a process are members of an accountability group, like Support NY, Philly Stands Up, or Femme Left. For those without experience or who are not a part of an accountability group, zines like *A Stand Up Start Up* and *Thoughts On Possible Community Responses to Intimate Violence (Redux)* are usually used as a reference and guide. Mediation can be carried out by one or a handful of people; however, Support NY found three people who can distribute the work amongst them was best. In one interview, a member explained:

"Usually we had three facilitators for an accountability process because one-on-one got too intimate and was almost always fucked up and weird, two-to-one seemed to really fall into a good cop/bad cop thing pretty fast…and three seemed to be the magic number where different stuff irritates different people, so…a different person might be the hard-ass at any given meeting"

Because the perpetrator, survivor, mediators, and everyone involved is a part of the activist community, interpersonal issues can arise within a group. For example, one person I interviewed considered being a facilitator in a process whereby their lover was the survivor:

"I look back and I'm like what the fuck was I thinking! This is a man who had sexually assaulted my lover in a way that ruined my relationship. And I'm going to mediate that? No! I hated this man…I was furious, I was so hurt and upset. There was no way that I could have in a constructive way…but I felt like that was what I had to do, that there was a feminist imperative to put my own feelings aside so that I could do the right thing." 1:04:00

Their relationship with their lover still dissolved when the dynamic changed from being sexual and romantic to being survivor support. Two people I interviewed also talked about someone who had volunteered to be part of a process later being called out themselves for abuse.

People might play various roles in a process because it is DIY. As such, it requires responsibility on the part of mediators. In one of the processes Jasmine was involved in, the mediators had been chosen by the survivor and seemed to drop out of the process. The survivor requested the perpetrator cover some costs associated the the abuse. The perpetrator "has the money and none of the people responsible for the process are responding to him with what to do about that. He's like 'I don't think I'm supposed to contact [the survivor]" 37:00. As a result, that perpetrator has "been x'ed from a bunch of spaces. And people have a whole bunch of judgements about him based on that information" that he did not complete the process 36:00

Inconsistency is understandable because the work being carried out is very emotionally taxing and is often taken on by survivors. In our interview, Lilly expressed concern that the

labor might be wasted on some perpetrators. "Its a lot to ask…you know I think the people

drawn to the work tend to be survivors themselves…and its kind of vicious to ask a bunch of

survivors to put the time into trying to transform people who weren't really willing yet." 20:40.

In retrospect, Alexandra noted that they were probably not jovial company while doing this

work; "I was at the library and I realized I was feeling really haggard and grim and….I looked at

the stack of books I had and I had 6 books on rape and sexual assault and 1 fantasy novel!"

1:17:00

Activists involved in a transformative justice group create emotional bonds with one

another to mitigate the emotional exhaustion of working with perpetrators as well as deal with

healing from personal experiences of assault. When I asked Grace why she became involved in

accountability processes, she said

"it felt both like something i was interested in changing, and also kind of a way to start to…be just like around other people who may have had similar or slightly different experiences but just people who were talking about what it meant to be a survivor of sexual assault, rape, or abuse. To kind of like, find some community through that and I don't think I would have said this at the time, but I think I was looking for some ways to heal a little bit through helping other people and trying to create some change somewhere…as a way to kind of deal with and get through this situation in which I felt very powerless" Grace 17:15

James contextualized the importance of forming a collective as a young activist in the subculture

as being a crucial part of his self development, a source of emotional support, and enabling him

to understand and process his own experience of assault:

"I think we were all just confused, and young, and partying really hard. Some of us more than others…I really do no know if I would have…survived that time in my life in one piece if I hadn't had that weekly [meeting]…I don't think any of us realized at the time the kind of support we were giving each other, but…being in that collective was so instrumental to my survival in a fucked up world…We learned a lot about supporting other people via trying to get together with support survivors, then we did that for each other. I had a revelation in that time that something that happened to me was sexual assault, but I had never categorized it that way or characterized it

as that and it really fucked me up, and I remember just crying in that kitchen to my friends who I trusted so much, just week after week and I don't know how I would have gotten through that period if it wasn't for the kind of bond that we had" 41:00

Internal emotional bonds can also lead to the end of transformative justice collectives. In the second edition of the zine *Thoughts on Possible Community Responses to Intimate Violence*, the organizing group added the addendum:

"Two of the participants in the group that created this pamphlet got into a fight with each other (they were housemates), and the group was unable to even speak about the conflict. Years later, none of us are friends with each other anymore. There are no experts. This is hard for everyone. Find your own, better, way(s)." (3)

Meetings

If regularly meeting, the mediators and the perpetrator usually meet once every two or so weeks, with the entire process ideally staying under a year long. From their experience, Support New York had a policy to limit number of processes they conducted "according to member availability and capacity" and to hold meetings in public spaces (Support New York). They also determined they could only carry out processes with people who were in the geographic area or could travel as needed.

There have been various reading lists and approaches in circulation, but in the summer of 2018, Support New York finalized and made its curriculum for carrying out processes publicly available. The curriculum integrates "somatics and journaling" into a reading list to diversify their approach (Support New York 2018: 6). The framework is intended to be flexible for those who might have different needs and focuses within a process. There are 20 sessions or topics for meetings that use a combination of academic articles and zines, as well as practices and

assignments for the perpetrator. For example, the following is an abridged version of Session 2

of Part 1:

> **Session 2**
> Talk about the reading and the perpetuator's written response. This reading is
> useful in that it sidesteps the common initial reaction of claiming being 'falsely
> accused,' since the writer talks about being accountable to the community despite
> finding out that his call- out was due to a miscommunication. At this point in the
> process, we generally try to balance challenging the participant while still
> focusing on trust-building and maintaining faith that the participant will grow
> throughout the process.
> **ACTIVITY**
> • Pages 1-7 of Section 4 F (TakingAccountability) of the Creative Interventions
> Toolkit
> Begin to discuss what the initial steps in this process will be…If the survivor has
> made requests or demands, discuss any that would need to be addressed
> immediately (i.e. safety concerns, issues of sharing space, what communication
> will look like)…
> **ASSIGNMENT**
> *Reflect on any connections between survivor requests (or community requests,
> whether expressed or perceived) and the idea presented in the Toolkit section
> utilized in the activity above of accountability as a process and a staircase. This
> could mean journaling, drawing, or just making lists. What does accountability
> mean to you in this context? What emotions come up when thinking through this?*

The assigned readings, writings, and practices carried out speak to gender dynamics at a macro

and micro level. Accountability groups read about and discuss sexist behaviors, particularly in

the context of what the abuser has done and their own histories with abuse and violence.

If there is not clear plan or outline of topics and conversation, a process can easily fall

apart. Organizer Vanessa Vendetta wrote an essay for the *Ex Masculus* zine about a friend who

went into a process seemingly interested. She hoped "the perpetrator [would]…take advantage

of the opportunity…but time passed and i heard over and over again from the members i knew

intimately of how the group "never talked about anything"" (39). Similarly, in our interview,

Lee remembered a situation where the team working with the perpetrator was not following

through on transformative justice practices.

"…the support person and I were having a conversation, like 'Oh, how are talks with that person going?' and he was just like 'I don't know what we are supposed to be talking about. We just go over there and chill.' 'Oh… I think you should be talking about patriarchy and dominance, or I don't know…what do you think?' and he was like 'I don't know how to talk about this stuff with this person. I don't know him that well.' Like, oh god, this is a failure. Ok." 21:15

If the mediators have no experience with these topics or mediation and are unclear as to the purpose of their mediation, it is impossible to create any kind of transformation.

Meetings with a team often lead to the abuser writing a letter to the survivor or community "that acknowledges the harm they caused, outlines what they've learned in the process, and names what steps they will take to change their behaviors in the future" (Support New York). If the letter is requested by the survivor, it might be written to them specifically. If not, it is sometimes still used by a mediation team to access progress. The letter is usually written over time and goes through many drafts and its completion can mark the end of a process. The following is an excerpt of an accountability letter that was emailed to a community at the request of the survivor and with the consent of the perpetuator:

My ex- partner had to constantly worry about what she might say or do that would provoke me to threaten her own, my own, or both of our physical safety - especially anything critical of me as I often acted out when I felt negatively about myself. It coerced her with the burden of having to satisfy my feelings.
Physical abuse was present from early on in our relationship, but I escalated to much more violent behavior in the last two years of our relationship…being increasingly abusive as the relationship went on.
I would consistently:
- break things around her, including punching through the window of our room
- grab her violently
- scream at her
- smother her
I also:
- hit her
- shoved and tripped her
- pushed her down stairs

The duration of completed processes vary. Of those I interviewed, accountability processes stretched anywhere from 1 month to two years. In one case, the process lasted over a year because it developed into a more longterm mentor / mentee relationship between the facilitator and the perpetrator. Those who talked about longer processes also mentioned people's schedules, moving, and changing relationship situations. There is no single definition or determining factor of a process being finished and in many cases, processes were dropped or faded away.

CHAPTER 6 DEVELOPMENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

"I don't see this as a war against dudes. If I did, your house would be on fire."
Anonymous, *Why She Doesn't Give a Fuck About Your Insurrection*

As a format, accountability processes have now been practiced in activist subculture for

at least 15 years. Indicated by the number of zines written about the topic, transformative justice

has become the preferred approach to dealing with interpersonal problems around sex and abuse.

Because of overlapping participation with other subcultures and institutions, versions of activist

accountability models have been used in labor unions and at music festivals. Yet they are

controversial for seemingly contradictory characteristics; for being simultaneously draconian and

lackadaisical, inconsistent and normative, hyper feminist and patriarchal, over zealous and

impersonal, too radical and replicating state or colonial structures.

Activist communities are embracing this approach to justice and solidarity. When

Support New York lead a discussion at a punk festival in a city where there were no structures of

community justice, one male identified person volunteered that he had left an activist community

because of an act that he now recognized as a mistake. He would have liked to have these

models in place to atone for his act and remain in the community. Even during the early stages

of implementation, some activists readily adopted these policies. Years ago, a direct action

turned violent and a female of color was injured. One of the perpetrators of the violence

immediately sent an email out to an activist list acknowledging his role in the violence,

apologizing, and offering to be held accountable.

But there are contingents who believe accountability processes are too extremist,

recreating police and judicial structures. Some individualist and insurrectionary sects within

anarchism have issue with processes as a form of regulation. A couple of people I interviewed felt there was no room for internal critique of processes. As a prefigurative practice, processes have crystalized into mandate, and therefore recreated power structures and could not be a "liberating practice" ("Questioning Rape" 2014: 30).

Others voice frustrations at the limitations of the work and resistance of fellow community members. While the models place the survivor at center, some believe "we often put most emphasis on helping men stay in activist circles [rather] than supporting women through their recoveries, which might involve the need to have the man purged from the political group" (Nopper 2013). The safety of women is said to be sacrificed, and abuse addressed only because "she might not continue doing 'good work' for the organization" if it goes ignored (Nopper 2013). It is also argued that in some cases, the removal of a person is necessary. "Can you really say it's petty when someone can't come to a 'street party' (i.e. militant action) because the asshole who used to beat the shit out of them will be there? Maybe it would be radical if we got to the root of the problem and just banned that person for life, regardless of 'accountability'" (*Why She* 2009).

Though transformative justice is becoming more widely used, it has not stopped the stream of female and queer identified activists leaving the community. When consistent female involvement came up in conversation between myself and a white, cisgender male leader, he expressed concern and wished they wouldn't all leave, but he could not pinpoint their reason for leaving. "What's more paralyzing to our work than when women and/or queer folks leave our movements because they have been repeatedly lied to, humiliated, physically/verbally/

emotionally/sexually abused?...Nothing slows down movement building like a misogynist" (Morris 2010).

In the following chapter, I will discuss the results of these processes using the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu. First, I consider the power dynamics and weight of social capital in carrying out of processes. How the community views the survivor, perpetrator, and process itself are all greatly influenced by social capital. Then, I examine how cultural capital is tied to subcultural norms around violence and the state. The authenticity of an activist is tethered to their willingness to carry out and be targeted by violence from the state. Violence from fellow activists is more disputed. I continue looking at the culture of the social movement, how practices are rooted in a DIY ethic, and how this ethic shapes the effectiveness of practices. Finally, I will review the implications of these thematics for the sustainability of social movements.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND POWER

Who is Believed

Social capital derives from a position of knowledge or access to power through social connections. Social capital can determine whether the survivor or perpetrator is believed, who receives support or defense from the community, and whether or not the accountability process happens. As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, the majority of pioneering anti rape men's group Philly Stands Up supported one of their male members against accusations of sexual assault because he was their friend and fellow organizer.

As in other subcultures, women, queer, and gender non binary people tend to have less cultural capital gain a lot of their status from their partner, or social capital (Cohn and Mitchell

2015: 13). In my interview with Jasmine, she talked about a process she was involved in

whereby the perpetrator was a transgender woman who ended up being forced out of a

community.

"I think she is a really valuable person to organizing and revolutionary activity. And because of the way that this has played out in the larger social aspect, I think she essentially had to absent herself from that. And I really think it is the movement's loss. And the fact of her being absent doesn't mean that there aren't a lot of more objectively harmful and less accountable people in the movement…who just had enough social cache because of their different identities or just scene politics that they didn't have to get forced out." 24:30

Jasmine's friend lacked social capital and was for all intents and purposes, ostracized from the

activist community. Other activists, who had committed more egregious abuses continued in

activism, while someone who had tried to participate in an accountability process was no longer

able to be a part of the community. Jasmine noted in our interview, that for a transgender person

to be removed from a community or have community support withdrawn during transition can be

especially isolating. Lee also had a situation whereby social capital became a determining factor

in a process.

"Even the situation where I 'called someone out,' it was like, I invited her over to have tea at my house with one friend to support me and just to be like, 'Hey, this thing happened between us. It actually really sucked for me and I want you to know that. Can you, like, read some things, and I just want you to know it happened.' And there were no demands, it was not even a formal process. It was just like a, 'Hey, letting you know." And it erupted into probably the messiest one. And things like that you don't expect…And she was dating the person in town who has THE MOST social capital and I did not…he and I had been friends for ten years! And I did not expect him to be so defensive and to just throw so much weight behind the situation. But he did. And it got really ugly." 41:20

In Lee's situation, the person they called out responded by calling out Lee as an abuser. Lee

initially tried to have a relatively small, not as publicized process, but it eventually became

extremely public. Though Lee had a longterm friendship with the new partner, the nature of the

relationship between Lee's ex and their new partner conferred status on Lee's ex. Because the new partner had so much social capital, the label of 'perpetrator' stuck to Lee despite initially identifying as a person who was harmed.

Survivor Centered

Centering a process on the survivor can result in placing additional strain on the survivor, linking their transformation to the perpetrators', and ultimately harming the healing of the survivor. The label of perpetrator is rooted in the hope for change, but someone can never be anything other than a survivor; there is no transition out of the role. To be a survivor is a static identity. Some argue that thinking of themselves as survivors is not healthy or healing, that an identity rooted in an experience of rape or abuse "is not emotionally healthy…Personally, I don't find it helpful to think of myself as a victim or survivor" ("Half a dozen" 2014: 36).

Processes also put the burden on a survivor to call out the abuse and pressure them to play a role in the process. Implied is the responsibility of the survivor to stop future abuse by identifying it and starting a process. In "Beyond Revenge and Reconciliation: Demolishing the Straw Men," author A(legal) pointed out that we do not hold the same burden when dealing with authoritarian, criminal justice institution. "We need to be watchful of falling foul of the missionary complex: we have no duty to 'save' or 'transform' individuals, particularly if we feel little affiliation with them. We don't think it's worth our while trying to 'convert' cops or judges, so why would we think differently about serial abusers?" Depending on the organization and support groups, the survivor might also be expected to organize a process. In the case of an anonymous survivor who was not working with a pre established group, "[t]here was an unspoken expectation that I would convene the group. Convening the group in particular put an

enormous amount of pressure on me, not completely realized by myself until later" ("Confronting Rape"). The survivor can be put in a position of being responsible for the transformation and behaviors of the perpetrator.

The automatic belief of survivors leads to the parties being essentialized into a binary of survivors being good or right and perpetrators being at fault and causing harm. This can erase harm and oppressions carried out by the survivor, including racism, transphobia, sexism, and ableism. For the survivor, blanket support might be comforting and affirm a feeling of community belonging, but it does not leave room for self critique and behavioral change, nor does it create equitable relationships within the community. In recreating a binary of 'good' and 'bad,' the purpose of transformation is easily lost.

In the zine *Miklat Miklat*, an anonymous person wrote about their experience of being called out in "Healing from Accusations of Abuse." The writer is a trans person who had a background in feminist politics and believed "'the survivor was always right,'" so "accepted the mantle of perpetrator."

"I did all the things one is supposed to do to "be accountable". This made no difference in how others treated me – in fact it made the conditions of my life, and the treatment I experienced from people, much worse. This leads me to feel that many people who call for "community accountability" don't actually believe that perpetrators can be healed, and that healing isn't actually their goal….There is also a disturbing hypocrisy when people who claim to advocate for restorative justice, ostracize and brand you forever. These same people who would fervently agitate for the rights of prisoners, and send books to accused murderers, saw no problem ostracizing someone they'd known for years…Soon hundreds of people who'd never met me were standing up protesting my inclusion in films, insinuating that they'd also been abused by me, and insisting that spreading this rumor was necessary for "community safety". Over the last 10 years I have worked through a lot of my depression and anger… This was my worst nightmare. I had built a supportive trans community for myself and I basically lost all of it. My phone stopped ringing. People now made flyers for events saying "No Abusers Allowed" – this meant me."

When processes become the norm, activists who might not believe in them or not believe that their perpetrator can change still must use accountability as the form to address interpersonal problems and abuse. And for the perpetrator, while the term 'perpetrator' is used to disconnect the act of abuse from the individual, the label can become a master status within activism despite any actions taken after being labeled.

Refusing to Participate and Indifference

In some cases the abuser refuses to enter an accountability process. Initially abusers tend to be defensive, in denial, minimize the abuse, or blame the survivor. Sometimes they say that if they don't know the accountability people, then they are not in the same community and therefore can not be held accountable by them. The primary reason for participating is a social contract, personal investment in maintaining participation and status in a community. But that isn't always enough.

The want of the abuser to remain in the community and the community's support of the survivor are large determinants as to if the abuser is willing to be held accountable. Ideally, the process would be viewed as beneficial to all of the parties involved. But as our current political climate has proven, accepting responsibility can confirm and associate someone with misconduct. In our interview, Alexandra pointed out there is no incentive to admitting fault:

"[H]ow do we..respond to others in a way that give them an incentive to identify with [the parts of themselves that tend towards liberation and transformation]…Not saying that we have to like, pat people on the head and give them a cookie for, like, doing what should be the basic, bare minimum humanity of treating people with respect and decency and taking responsibility for their actions. But, on a collective level, how do we set up social norms that reward behaving responsibly and taking accountability? Because if what happens, when people say "Yes I fucked up. And I'm going to acknowledge that publicly." If they continue to be ostracized and looked at as dirt, then that incentivizes people being like, "Nope, I didn't do it. Not true." It doesn't incentivize taking responsibility" 39:50

As discussed in Chapter 5, the only incentive to participate in a process is to continue

participating in community activities. But if someone has enough social capital, then they might

be able to continuing participating, even without being held accountable. And participating in a

process could be seen as admitting fault.

Even when perpetrators agree to participate, they are not always dedicated to the process.

Whether or not they are truly 'working on their shit' shapes the ability of mediators to work with

them. In their curriculum, Support New York cautions against continuing to invest effort and

time in a process framework if the perpetrator is "not participating in a productive way. There is

often some resistance in the initial few meetings, however, if this is not overcome towards the

middle of the process (i.e. if very few goals can be met or the same issues keep happening), it

may be worth referring to another kind of program or asking for more support from the

perpetuator's community members or friends" (Support New York 2016: 9).

Perpetrators might also become more focused on themselves and rewrite their personal

biography through a lens of self victimization. In "With or Without You: The Tactic of Pressure

to Prioritise Consent and Build a More Radical Counter Culture" in the *Ex Masculus* zine,

Vanessa Vendetta discusses learning that one of their friends raped another one of their friends.

Vanessa believed accountability would work because he seemed to be self aware; however, the

process ended unsuccessfully.

"he was able to understand (to some extent), from the survivor talking to him about it right after
it happened, that his actions had constituted rape and had deeply hurt the survivor. and although
he recognised that he had not had an understanding of what he had been doing at the time, he did
not deny it and was engaging with people he was close with about what he had done, openly and
honestly. he realised that his understanding of consent was absolute shit, and seemed interested
in gaining more knowledge and skills…but in time it became clear that he was not following
through with any part of it to the satisfaction of the survivor…he has spent a lot of time since the

rape talking about and focusing on how depressed he is, and how upset he is with himself, and how difficult all of this has been for him, and all the things that he wants which would make him feel better, and this is an example of self-victimisation. and helplessness" (40).

Though said to be survivor centered, it could be argued the perpetrator is at the center of a process. They can dictate when they meet, how frequently, and have the attention of a group of people. In focusing in on the perpetrator's individual behaviors, critiques at a macro level can be lost and the process might encourage narcissism.

Processes can become particularly contentious around survivor requests for someone not to attend an event or being banned from a space for evading accountability. Designated safer spaces will usually not allow an individual who is refusing to be held accountable to attend. In addition, the survivor or mediators might contact event organizers to let them know that a person is evading accountability. There is sometimes confusion around the idea of banning and communication. In our interview, Sofia talked about an instance where a fellow activist who was in a leadership position asked their group if they wanted to ban people. With no context, the group said of course they didn't want to ban anyone, everyone should be allowed to attend.

"When I was involved in this activist group when I was young…I must have been 19…I hadn't heard the term [safer space]…I was asked by somebody if I wanted to ban people from this event we were having, with no context, just asked if I wanted to ban people. And of course I was 19 at the time…so I said "No! Why would we ban people?"…but somebody came and explained the situation and I was completely appalled. I'm thinking, no of course. There you go, there is a reason to ban people, but without the context it was a little confusing to me. So I was completely supportive of safer spaces and people's safety is paramount. I always think back to that time. It was such a learning experience." 40:10

After some emails, the group she was in was informed that those who would be banned were perpetrators who were either refusing accountability or it was requested by the survivor they not attend and a safer space policy was enacted.

In some cases, when the organizers are unwilling or unable to set a policy, the survivor and supporters try to approach the person and ask them to leave, which can become confrontational. In the zine *What Do We Do When? #3*, an anonymous author describes such a situation. "You made some stupid argument about your rights to be there in the space while others sat outside in tears, others left the party" (3).

Revenge and Power

When a survivor calls someone out they might be trying to regain power lost from the person who caused harm. But the question of wielding community power is complex, and the language of accountability circumvents discussion of revenge and retribution. In "Safety is an Illusion," one of the most known critiques of accountability, Augustia Celeste argues we must de-essentialize the categories of survivor and be more direct with our attempts at justice in the subculture. "If someone hurts you and you want to hurt them back, then do it but don't pretend it's about mutual healing. Call power exchange for what it is. It's OK to want power back and it's OK to take it, but never do anything to someone else that you couldn't stomach having someone do to you if the tables were turned" (2014). For interviewee Mary, a process they became involved in seemed to be more about revenge and less about accountability. She believed "for someone who has just survived a sexual assault or something [revenge] is understandable as a fresh reaction, but that doesn't translate well into recovery for either party."

The power differential is particularly complicated around 'counter organizing'.   Counter organizing is considered a malicious actions taken against the survivor. Typically, counter organizing involves the person accused of abuse actively organizing against the survivor, such as claiming they are crazy, that the relationship was mutually abusive, or that they themselves were

the victims in the relationship. Transformative justice organizations argue "when a survivor (the individual with less power within that relationship) strikes back in any manner it is always self-defense NOT abuse" (Unowho).

Pubic Call Outs

If a perpetrator refuses to be held accountable or the process isn't successful they might be publicly 'called out' for their behavior. As previously mentioned, this is difficult if the survivor wishes to stay anonymous or if making the perpetrator public innately indicates the survivor. Within the subculture there are two traditional forms of calling out. The first is an open letter or statement to a community. These are emailed to individuals and groups or printed and distributed at events. More recently, call out letters have been posted on websites like Indymedia, Facebook, and organization websites.

The second form is in zines. One of the first and most noted zines to do this is *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*. It became a model for using zines, perhaps the most prevalent form of communication within anarchist cultures, to 'call out' an abuser to the community. It was written about one particular activist in a community who abused a number of women but would not acknowledge his actions. A survivor, along with a few supporters, put together the zine as a way of informing other activists about their experiences and interactions with him, both during and after the particular abusive situation.

One of the most well known examples of a call out using both public statements and zines centered around a radical collective. A husband and wife cofounded a publishing collective and later had a contentious divorce in which the business became sole property of the husband. The woman called him out publicly for abusive and manipulative behavior. One or two

accountability processes were attempted but failed and activists tried to have the publishing collective develop a safer space policy and hold the man accountable. She wrote about her experience of the marriage in zines, he countered with a zine critiquing processes as ableist. In a number of public statements and correspondences, the collective has denied, acknowledged, and admitted fault. Some collective members have left and a number of authors have discontinued to publish with the collective.

Because all of these interactions are rooted in prefigurative politics, there are tensions around making such information publicly known. Some continue to believe in a more traditional separation of romantic and sexual relationships from public life, though the division is belied in the sex positive cultural practices in radical activist lifestyle. In addition, there is still some "belief that groups who face systematic oppression (such as queers and people of color) shouldn't 'air the dirty laundry' of intra-community violence, since it could be used to further demonize them" (*Accounting for Ourselves* 2013). In interviews, two people explicitly discussed regretting writing public statements, primarily due to resulting social backlash from fellow activists and ineffectiveness at addressing the contemporary or future harm.

"I felt so overwhelmed and didn't know what to do. And I think releasing the open letter was the…dumbest move, that I could have... Maybe not, in hindsight, the WORST thing that happened because it started this open letter war, which I could have…now looking back, I'm like 'Well, of course they would just release one back.' But for some reason I felt like that wouldn't happen? I don't know what I was thinking." Lee 46:00

"I think that I let my anger try to decide the right course of action. I don't think that was the right choice. And, you know, shortly after that wrote an open letter to the community and sent it around with you know…I aired my grievances against this person and I think that…years later it hasn't changed anything." Mary 53:52

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND VIOLENCE

With increasing use of accountability processes, some activists have said they fear being called out. The implication is their fear is limiting their sexual relationships, their sense of community solidarity, and possibly their involvement in activism altogether. There are occasional articles such as "Why I've Started to Fear My Fellow Social Justice Activists," that argue "after witnessing countless people be ruthlessly torn apart in community for their mistakes and missteps, I started to fear my own comrades" (Lee 2017). Similarly, after having a couple of negative experiences with processes, Jasmine is very wary of how activists use transformative justice and the implications particularly for those who might rely on community as an alternative family.

"I don't think its generally good for movements, for people to be fucking petrified of making mistakes…feeling if you slip up once, you might lose all your social support, and just be a super isolated queer, without any of the people you just a minute ago had called community or family." 42:30

Another person I interviewed had written a popular zine critical of accountability processes. They told me that they had received an email from a reader who had a friend that committed suicide after being called out.

Some argue they should not be scared of being called out and see it as a chance to consider and be reflexive about their prefigurative politics. The zine *We Are All Survivors, We Are All Perpetrators…* states "The goal of the process is to have the abuser understand being 'called out' is not a punishment, but is a gift. It is an opportunity to grow. Embrace that. Assault is cowardly. Owing up to it is brave" (2005). But, even though prefigurative politics

requires some reflexivity, self criticism and self transformation as still not entirely welcomed or viewed positively.

Others argue this fear is the counterpart to fear experienced by women. "Maybe, for the first time in your life, you are feeling what it is like to walk into a room, and not automatically know if you're safe, not know who your friends are…I don't have time to feel sorry for you, no way, no time, not when a woman in America is raped every 2 minutes…I don't have time to nurse your wounded ego, or shed a tear for the dying patriarchy" (Anxiety 2004). Similarly, one person I interviewed argued that while women might wield a lot of power in accountability processes, perhaps it was the swing of the pendulum and the change in power dynamics could be a step towards more socially just interpersonal relationships.

Cultural Norms and Violence

Much of the culture around the radical left subculture involves late night parties and events where alcohol and other substances are present. As mentioned in Chapter 4, it is also a sex positive subculture where casual sexual relationships are common. The result is consent is not always established or clear.

While there are workshops around consent, they rarely breach the issue of substance use. This is in part due to larger cultural norms around the use of alcohol. "Humor and conversation norms reinforce the notion that extreme drunkenness is normal and funny, and that people are less responsible for their actions while drunk then while sober. Weekend after weekend, we create highly sexualized spaces with strong pressure to get intoxicated, resulting in groups of people too drunk or high to give or receive solid consent" (*Accounting for Ourselves 2013*). Spaces designated safer might have informal and piecemeal enforcement, with little preparation

or strategy for prevention. On a few occasions friends and myself escorted a woman home or

verbally checked with people who seemed like their ability to give consent was in question.

Another cultural norm around processes is non violence. The subculture is by no means

anti violence in their strategies of action, yet when it comes to interpersonal problems, violence

as retaliation is greatly discouraged. There are some situations outside of a process whereby the

survivor has wanted physical retaliation and violent action against the abuser, such as beating

them up. "Is it more honest, more direct, more real, to enact a visceral physical response – even

revenge – or to engage in a lengthy pseudo-judicial "process"? ("Notes on Survivor Autonomy"

18).

There have been a few notable incidents whereby the survivor, along with their

supporters, carried out physical harm to her abuser. As noted in the historical zine *Hammer in

Our Hamlets*, "Beginning in 2010, some feminists threw out the accountability approach,

swinging the hammer in the opposite direction; they turned to vigilante revenge" (20).

Following are sections from anonymous communiques, reprinted in zines, from groups who have

taken this tactic. I have removed the names, however, they are included in the original

communiques and zine copies.

"This particular individual, whose vocabulary consisted of anti-patriarchal jargon, had
committed sexual violence before, and participated in survivor-defined accountability processes.
Since he continued to transgress boundaries, raping and sexually assaulting women in Boston
and Santa Cruz, we decided to confront him. We met him at his home and verbally confronted
him. He refused to take responsibility and his words were manipulative and insulting. When he
refused to shut up, we shut him up. The intent was to inflict pain, albeit it would only be a small
portion of the amount of pain his victims have felt…Attempts by some self-identified "male
allies" to take control of the action by confronting **** themselves, pressuring women for
inclusion and calling a public meeting without our permission undermined our practice of self-
organization. Rather than demonstrating their support these men made it clear that they were
unwilling to allow us to act on our own behalf without their involvement. The type of action we

took as a group of female-bodied comrades aligns clearly with anti-hierarchical politics and goals of self-determination. If our male-bodied 'comrades' want to be considered as comrades, we'd like to see them behave that way…This action sets a precedent, the beginning of a new kind of accountability process, one that leaves the perpetrator in pain and articulates our call for the dismantling of male supremacy in radical political communities and beyond. We know that **** is not the only guilty one. We know there are more of you out there... " Communique, Anonymous

"***** awoke, at three a.m. in his…cabin, to a cacophony of voices. Thirteen figures, mostly masked, surrounded him. The women he had raped threw a cup of menstrual blood on his head. She directed what followed, secure, in the power of the group, to face her rapist without fear. It was a poetry slam of rape and resistance. We spoke in turn about our anger, then our pain, then our hope for his healing. When he protested that rape was not a violent act, she punched him in the face. We chose not to do this in the daylight because we wanted him to fear. We did this so he would know what it was like to be naked in the dark and vulnerable. We also acted because we will not tolerate rape as a community" Pangaea and Opal, "An Internal Action by the Vaginal Liberation Front"

"At the very least, the perpetrator should feel something, some lasting mark of his behavior, something he will remember every time he has sex - that is, if he ever has sex again. So we decided to make sure this is an assault that ***** never fucking forgets. We rolled in with a baseball bat. We pulled his books off his shelves: he admitted it, not a single one mentioned consent. We made him say it: "I am a rapist." We left him crying in the dark on his bed: he will never feel safe there again. This is a precedent. This is the beginning of a new kind of accountability process, one that leaves the perpetrator in pain – though this is still only a tiny fraction of the pain that he has caused. We know that ***** is not the only guilty one. We know there are more of you out there. We are not sorry, and we will not stop: from now on, we will respond to sexual violence with violence." Communique, "We'll Show You Crazy Bitches II"

These three incidents were all female and gender non binary people seeing physical retribution against someone who sexually assaulted them or their friend. The publicness of these were used as a simultaneous call out against the named individuals, as well as a critique of processes and demand for the political legitimacy of violence. It is an act that creates solidarity amongst the participants, is direct and contradicts views of women and gender non binary people as non violent.

The last of these three communiques, "We'll Show You Crazy Bitches II," happened locally while I was participating in the activist subculture. This incident became so well known, that during my interviews, one activist from the Midwest talked about the story "where like, someone got their perpetrator and beat him with a baseball bat and everybody was excited about it." Though people at a distance might have been excited, the women, queer, and gender non binary people involved faced considerable backlash from some in the community and were themselves threatened with physical violence. The most known participants were doxxed, or private information about them like their addresses were made public, on an anarchist email list that was undoubtedly followed by police.

Though most transformative justice organizations advise against physical violence, ultimately the survivor determines what will happen. "If they want street justice to be done to the assaulter, that is their choice also. Just be supportive, and don't make assumptions" (*Said the Pot*). Some argue that while women can carry out retributive violence, men can not because they must "interrupt the cycle of male violence" (supporting a survivor of sexual assault). Others argue it should only be an option when it is in retaliation for acts of physical violence ("Half a Dozen" 2014: 38). In four interviews, when the issue of violence arose, the person I was interviewing stated they were concerned about the act backfiring and resulting in further harm to the survivor.

COINTELPRO, Policing, and the State

Those who do not support these policies often tie the work to that of the police state as a way of delegitimizing it. 'Fema-nazis' are then 'policing' the community, 'banning' people without reason or end. Particularly within some anarchist contingents, any form of regulation of

behavior is argued to be counter revolutionary. When the topic of accountability as 'policing'

arose in interviews, there were varied responses.

"Well, I mean it is [community policing]. You're saying you have an ascribed expectation around how people comport themselves in intimate sexual and interpersonal relationships. And if people do not keep within those behavioral expectations then there will be consequences. Definitionally speaking, that is exactly what you are doing. And the way you are leveraging power is maybe different than how the state does it, but you are leveraging power though reputation, through access to community spaces, through social currency. I mean, I think those parallels are made because they are adept." Willow

"That's fucking dumb is what I think about that…I think it is so transparent why that is dumb. Also not practical. If people are going to live together, even if we are going to establish a beautiful new world in our hearts or whatever here on earth, there still are going to be grievances that need to be resolved in some way. And the revolution is not just everyone gets to do what they want. Thats not what my anarchy looks like." James 33:05

"I can see that perspective…an accountability process…is a collective response to community harm, and an individual harm most particularly, and what collective response to harm wouldn't be called policing?… it needs to be more nuanced. I mean, we're not taking people to the cops, so we are definitely avoiding the system most of the time, so its not working with the police, thank goodness. But I can also see how, there is a streak of individualist liberty, especially in the more sort of libertarian leaning anarchists, without the social part so much, that people shouldn't tell you what to do and you know what is right for yourself…then people of any kind saying what to do are going to seem like police. And I think there is a weak, but a philosophical point that they have there. It sort of doesn't include the fact that we are interdependent." Carl 53:35

"The things that were policed, it wasn't just sexuality, though. It was all sorts of things that were being policed. So I also don't want people to…when I hear accountability processes are people policing each other, sometimes that makes me laugh. Because I'm thinking, "Well, Jesus Christ! These small scenes police each other on everything! On the clothing they wear, on the word choices they use, on the books that they read…We're not just policing one another's sexuality, we are policing each other's everything. And I don't always think thats a bad thing…but I think it is a bad thing a lot of the time. I go back and forth within myself about whether humans wanting to conform to one another is inherently bad or wrong. Sometimes it is actually always fucked up to demand other people be like you, but then we get to something like gender pronouns and I'm like, 'Wait! I do want everyone to do that.'" Lee 54:00

As indicated in these quotes, there were a range of opinions as to the veracity of the comparison

to police and judgement of the practice. The balance of individual liberties and collective

bonhomie are placed in opposition. In addition, the application of 'policing' to sexual

relationships, social interactions, or overall culture arise in discussion.

Though police and state justice institutions are usually seen as negative, the underlying

concepts are deeply rooted in our understandings of justice. When first introduced to the idea of

transformative justice, it was difficult to conceive of a process that did not operate as "innocent

until proven guilty," considered requests or demands outside of a form of punishment, or that did

not require a conviction. As pointed out by the author of *Accounting for Ourselves*, even "anti-

state militants" make arguments such as "Whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty,

man? Don't I get a fair trial? Can't I defend myself? Listen to my character witnesses!"

COINTELPRO, the aforementioned counter intelligence government program from the

1950s - 1970s used to infiltrate and disrupt political organizations, is frequently cited as re

emerging in community justice models. Those involved are argued to be dividing the scene from

the inside, possibly as tools of the government. These references put into question the radicalism

of community justice and imply some amount of 'snitching.' In our interview, Eva discussed

how COINTELPRO was used to delegitimize accountability processes:

"It just had an immediate connotation of snitching, and of being an informant, and being shady
and, you know, trying to destroy things. Like that was a way you dismissed people, like "Maybe
they're an informant, this is all COINTELPRO." COINTELPRO just was like, shorthand for
'This person is not legit. The things they're saying are not true. We can dismiss them by saying
they are part of the government and they're doing this to undermine our legit activism'…Not to
say there weren't informants everywhere, there were…actually government informants were
generally engaging in violent behavior and creating these kind of situations where people had to
deal with the violence. It wasn't people calling out violence, it was the violent abusers were also
government informants…or they were just able to exploit the tensions that were always there."
59

Many self identified women and queer people argue they are not policing, but that their freedoms are already being infringed upon. There is an "unfortunate contradiction of living a life unrestrained by others rules or impositions and yet not wanting to deal with other's being imposed upon because it means your own attempts to achieve some kind of freedom are interrupted" (Thunder Collective). When considering behaviors of large groups of people, inevitably limits and rules are necessary. For women and queer people safety structures can be liberating "in terms of throwing off the yoke of complete socio-political manipulation and fighting for our collective freedom from the oppressions and expectations of gender and sex" (*Why She* 2009).

At the same time relying on community justice as opposed to the police can be used as against the survivor. There are a few well known activists who have been 'called out' but were not held accountable attempted to sue their respective survivors. There are no official records or proof of abuse in the eyes of the government. The *Quarrel* zine specifically states "we want to keep QUARREL members safe from police enforcement because some of our targets have pursued legal action against us and/or survivors. Snitches get stitches. xoxo" (*Quarrel* 6). Thus far, the most public of these was thrown out. There are have also been a few cases whereby male identified activists who were called out for abusive behavior were not held accountable for their sexist actions, but eventually were removed from the community when they used state force (the police) against fellow activists.

PRACTICE AND EFFECTIVENESS

DIY Labour

The DIY nature of processes implies both that the community is capable of doing this

work and has a political and moral imperative to do so. Information about processes is

communicated in interactions and through zines, though this is not always consistent or efficient.

Emphasis is placed on doing the work, gaining first hand experience, and sharing those

experiences and skills to help others. In our interview, Eva expressed some frustration when a

well known academic was consulted about interpersonal and gendered violence in the Occupy

Wall Street movement.

"Transformation involves everyone. Everyone has the capacity to do this work…and has the skillset even if you are not a professional…I think its important that people are always deferential to degrees, deferential to certain experiences…I had a very disappointing 'kill your heroes' moment with Judith Butler when I first interacted with her outside of just reading her work or seeing her speak about her work…and like, still major respect for her, but in this case people are asking for her authoritative opinion on something she just doesn't know about, which was how to deal with violence at Occupy. And her answer was not good…somebody asked her a question in the end about safer spaces and community agreements and all that. And she was like 'Yeah, its hard' and then she had this idea that she put out where…you have certain people who are the greeters but they are kind of on the outside checking people out, sussing them out. But it became this whole, like, 'Who are these people that we are investing authority in to determine who gets to come and stay? That's a terrible idea, you're just building up the same manipulative, abusive structures that are always there…and then I was also like, actually Judith Butler why do you have an opinion on this?" 1:36:00 Eva

 Even within the Occupy group, there was an emphasis on expert opinion. Eva was frustrated

because she had first hand experience with safer space policies before Occupy, yet more weight

was given to Judith Butler's words, despite the well-known academic having no direct

experience or specializing in this specific work. Butler's answer to the question also did not

seem radical in its politics or seem to be well thought out, when these are issues people like Eva

have considered at length.

Some of the other activists I interviewed believed qualifications are needed to do

mediation work and they experienced difficulty when seeking out professional help with

processes.

"I also wonder about…how realistic it is to assume that just because a culture is really fiercely DIY and wants to do everything for itself, how effective its going to be at doing that. There are professional people who have written books and do trainings on restorative justice processes and things and I don't think a lot of the people that did these accountability processes were experienced in that. I think they were motivated for personal reasons without really having qualifications. And I don't think thats always a bad thing, but I think in situations where there is something as serious as rape, or, you know beating someone up, it seems like…people study for years to be therapists and to do interventions and to do non violent work. You know, I don't think that going to shows and caring about it a whole lot is enough to qualify you to really like, solve such a big social problem." Mary 25:15

Mary believes these issues are too large to be handled by inexperienced people. Though she

does believe experts are needed, she specifies that these should be experts in these specific areas

and in mental health fields. Difficulty finding experts was especially an issue around mental

health and outside assistance. Finding affordable therapists or counselors with akin politics is

very difficult. Radical politics around anti hierarchical organizing, gender identities, defining

abuse and power dynamics do not necessarily align with traditional mental health professions. In

addition, not all activists have health care coverage and even if they do, might not be able to

afford copays.

The DIY format of zines are not consistent in their coverage of accountability processes.

Different zines make different arguments, make some steps seem quite easy that in practice are

difficult, and might work in a given context or city but not in another. In our interview, Lilly

cited writing a zine making accountability processes seem too simple and straightforward as her

greatest regret.

"I feel like in a way, I regret…less the processes and more writing I did about accountability. Like, I regret making it seem like this was something that was possible as a way to hold people accountable and, like, heal our communities. I feel like I contributed through my writing to this idealization of how it could work when really, to have it work effectively, it just needs so much more cohesiveness in the community and so much more dedication and skills of the people involved and, yeah, so I regret that. I regret making it seem like it was more possible than I think it really has panned out to be by lay people. I mean, I really think it takes a lot of special skills and training to be able to engage in that kind of psychological work with people." 17:07

In a number of interviews, interviewees stated that they felt in retrospect that the

processes they carried out were clumsy or messy. In some cases this was due to disorganization,

not anticipating reactions, the emotional turmoil around these issues, or lack of long term

panning.

"I facilitated one and it was a disaster…Tensions were very high. Everybody was very upset. Emotions in the room were super strong and I think that clouded things." Mary 15:45

"I look back and I'm just thinking 'What a shit show some of these were!'" Lee 45:30

"Collectively, I think we were doing the best that we could in impossible circumstances where we are all so deskilled and existing in a context of so much trauma to begin with, and so much taboo and tension around sex and all these different things mashing up together. It's a wonder that we were able to do anything." Alexandra 7:30

As a DIY practice, mediators involved had to balance their time with other obligations in

life, including jobs and school. This work is being carried out by young people with active

social lives and can be emotionally exhausting. Only one interviewee cited their personal drug

or alcohol use as a factor in the work.

"I think I was doing too much at a point and I couldn't have been doing a good job at any of it because I was so fucked up. There was a time when I was definitely at the bar every night until after it closed just doing coke off the bar with the guy that owned the place. Sleep until 4 or 5 PM, working just some bull shit…jobs and barely getting by as a human and I was also facilitating three simultaneous accountability processes. And thats ludicrous. And I think it was that, like, when you can't help yourself, you just try to help other people to put…as a way to not deal with your own shit. Kind of a standard psychological…looking back on moments like that,

I don't think I did a bad job on any of those processes, but I was just really going on autopilot and thats the kind of work that needs really deep engagement." James 37:00

Others discussed having trouble sleeping, frustrating communication, and impossible scheduling. In the "What Does It Feel Like When Change Finally Comes," which was a chapter in the book version of *The Revolution Starts at Home*, RJ Maccani discussed his experience trying to facilitate an accountability group.

"It would take over a year before the circle itself came to fruition: Mr. X dragged his feet in many ways, and the rest of us were juggling multiple commitments while trying to push this process forward. Over a year to pull Danielle and me, one of the two women who had initially come forward, Mr. X, and five other people who had some relationship to Mr. X (either current or former friends, or concerned community members) into the same room at the same time." (Jashnani, Maccani, and Greig 2011: 222)

In this latter case, the process was a circle format that had one long meeting, developed a list of requests out of the conversations, and some in the circle committed to aiding and following up with the perpetrator about the requests. But in a subculture where the population isn't stable, more than a year of preparatory work for the assault or abuse to be addressed is an extremely long time.

Traditional gendered divisions of labour are reflected in the requisite work for transformative justice. Though some groups maintain their own safer spaces, there are collectives to help implement and carry out these policies. The members of these collectives are primarily female or queer identified. The work includes making signs and any other markers of the space, having meetings to discuss strategy, creating a list of people who have been asked not to attend and possible problems that might arise, staying sober and remaining vigilant for the evening, and the actual enforcement of the policy.

These divisions are also found in transformative justice work with abusers and survivors. There are a few men's groups involved in specific cases, but most of the work is carried out by female or queer identified people. This can include the creation of a reading curriculum, hours of meeting with the perpetuator weekly, hours of meeting with the collective or larger group doing this work to check in, being available at all times for phone calls, in some cases having to stop everything to go to an event and help deal with a problem, the emotional burden of working with an abuser, as well as holding workshops to guide others to become involved. It is widely recognized "the vast majority of the folks who have to deal with the shit are women" (*Why She* 2009). This division has been frustrating and activists have vocalized a need for more male allies. "Many women and queers are now expected to work doubly hard, providing emotional care and sexual/romantic labor both in political spaces and in the personal spaces that inevitably still exist" (Mitchell 2016: 15).

Bureaucracy

Much of the critique of accountability is the mediation adding unnecessary bureaucracy and removing direct confrontation. In the aforementioned "Safety is an Illusion," Augustia Celeste argues activists "have set up a model where all parties are encouraged to simply negotiate how they never have to see each other again or share space" (2014). In taking up the time of organizers, the *Hammer in Our Hamlets* feminist zine argues "if our political milieu is disrupted every time two people aren't getting along, we are no longer putting our political work first. We degenerate into a friend circle, a sex club, or a support group. These types of groupings are not necessarily better or worse than a political project, but they are simply not the same thing" (16). There are arguments that smaller mediation processes might work to "avoid

escalating the conflict and consuming the energy of a group that probably has other priorities" ((A)legal), though other activists remain more pessimistic.

Defining Success

Some feminist activist also question the effectiveness of transformative justice in addressing gender violence. There is no set criteria for success and it can be defined differently by participants in a process. If a process is 'working on their shit,' what does it mean they must do and at what point are they done? If the purpose it to prevent future acts does success mean they have prevented further harm? If it is survivor centered does the survivor need to define success? Parallel to discussions of prisons, the purpose of accountability as deterrence, rehabilitation, or societal protection is not entirely clear. In addition, the question has arisen as to if perpetrators should be held to a lower standard as comrades who share the revolutionary politics of the community or higher standard for problematic behaviors despite their political awareness.

Going through a process does not guarantee actual behavioral change or political transformation. Some fear perpetrators, who are often accused of manipulation, are able to take the language of accountability and produce seemingly desired results for the mediation team. In *Transformative Justice and/as Harm*, A.J. Withers spoke of "concerns…that individuals who have caused harm are preforming accountability/responsibility rather than doing it" (2014: 36). New subcultural practices can open a new space by which to carry out manipulative and harmful behavior. A few zines spoke of perpetrators using accountability processes to wield power or continue interactions with the survivor (Withers 2014, *The Broken Teapot*). Whether or not the perpetrators are changing their behaviors after processes is ambiguous.

If a process is survivor centered, it would seem logical that success would be survivor determined. Overall, survivors seem to believe processes were successful if requests were specific, concrete, and immediately addressed. Ruby was the only survivor I spoke with who unequivocally said their process was a success. Though she was unsure if the perpetrator changed, her request that he leave their shared living situation was quickly met. But for some survivors, even if the perpetuator carries out all requests, they might feel the person has not changed or transformed.

When I asked people involved in processes as facilitators or mediators about their successes, the results were mixed.

"Seventy to eighty percent I think would be successful. If success is, it depends on how you gage success. If success is the survivor forgave the perpetuator, then like ten percent were successful. If success is that the survivor had the space to do the healing that they needed and the perpetuator ostensibly, at least as far as I've heard, has not continued their pattern of abuse, then the number is much higher. I mean, as far as I know, only…one or two people that completed processes abused further." James 35:25

"I think that…most of the processes had a lot of successes within them…I really couldn't say how many survivors in the processes…felt that the processes themselves were successful…Its a real challenge to measure and I don't know…with these processes there's no kind of standard follow up…a number we had I think ended in frustration a lot on the part of the survivor if they didn't fell like their requests were met or due to a number of things, like the process just kind of petered out and took a long time and didn't rap up in a particular way that felt really successful…" Grace 28:35

"Of those, I think one was very successful. The other three I think had moments of success, but I would say on the whole…if success is the survivor feels like their demands have been met and they've been given the space to heal from the situation, if the perpetuator has also made a lot of reflexive movements within themselves and will go on to no longer cause harm, or at least the same kinds of harm, and if the community itself either remains intact or is also healed from the situation…that success I would say happened one of the four times…All three of those are sufficient and are necessary for success…I would say the other three had elements of that, but there would be a key one missing" Lee 35:30

These quotes indicate that a dichotomous success/failure categorization does not fit the lived experience of processes. There is particular difficulty when considering a survivor-centered process not having a survivor-centered conclusion.

COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

No Community

Accountability rests on the idea of community. The community is what is ultimately holding the person accountable and processes are rooted in activist culture. The prefigurative politic of accountability integrates personal and political, public and private. This is critiqued by some activists because the activist community is not a true community, prefigurative politics is insular and does not contribute to the building of a mass movement, and the use of process argot can distance personal experience by using political language (Cohn and Mitchell 2015, Celeste 2014).

The models is based off of work that has happened in indigenous communities. Activists involved in transformative justice often cite the documentary *Hollow Water*, which is about a small indigenous community in Canada that had to deal with an epidemic of child sexual abuse. But as pointed out in a couple of my interviews, our communities are not the same.

"We talk about community accountability…we don't really have communities in the same way…we were inspired by [*Hollow Water*]…well, they're in an isolated community and everybody is related or knows each other, so you have different types of social pressures there. We don't live in those. We see perpetrators leave one community and go to another one…I think that is a failing of community accountability, 'cause we don't really have communities. But the harm continues, so what do you do about it? Especially for people who are resistant." Carl 50

The activist subculture does not constitute a full, developed community. Firstly, there are no longterm development over generations. Few activists in the subculture are over the age of

40, and there are no elders to provide stability, support, or advise. After attending an event about accountability with younger activists, I became particularly aware of the lack of elders or transmission of information across generations. I listened to them grapple with issues that myself and others had experienced around accountability. There are zines, but they are not uniformly distributed and there is no centralized location to hold this information. In our interview, Carl pointed out that elders do exist but are removed from the subculture or community.

"I think they are legitimately elders, but I don't think we have the culture to access them as elders. I mean, a lot of young, liberated anarchist, 'don't tell me what to do' types and they're not going to listen to anybody. And if anybody sounds authoritative, thats not 'cool,' its not the anarchist way." 1:14:30

In the last year, when I attended a talk about transformative justice at an anarchist space, everyone in attendance was young and relatively new to activism. When mentioning activists who founded particular groups 5 to 10 years ago, almost none of the names were recognized by those in attendance. Some resources about transformative justice, in the forms of zines and websites, were known, but many of the resources that we had collected and organized were not passed down to the new generation.

There are also few familial ties within community. Along with older generations, there are very few children. When activists have children, they often lack support from others (Rae 2008). Rarely are familial relationships effected by activist community dynamics, jobs are not limited to ones connected to the other activists, and it is easy to interact with people from outside of the community on a daily basis. While being kicked out of the community is serious, it does not necessarily mean the same thing as it would in traditional, stable communities.

There are cultural commonalities to hold together and constitute a subculture; but built into that subculture is transience. Punk and youth cultures often involve moving and travel for work or education, if their band is on tour, or simply the want of a change in environment. In every interview carried out for this research, activists moving and leaving was discussed as a significant issue. Lee estimated that roughly one third of their community was stable, another third there for roughly four to five years, and the final third were impermanent. Social institutions can become anchors of a community, but those also change; community space landlords fail to renew leases, radical bookstores and venues close, collective living spaces disband.

Broken Community

Despite differing opinions about the existence of community, in interviews and zines many spoke about processes polarizing activists and the splitting or breaking of community as a result. In zines and interviews, this was talked about as a demoralizing experience. "In reflecting on this time I am also overwhelmed with sadness, at a community that I saw come together in some amazing resistance, only to be torn apart, lately by acts of sexual assault and manipulative behavior" (David 108). In the historical zine *Hammer in Our Hamlets*, the author advised readers that while this should not discourage survivors to come forward, realistically, "If your group or milieu is dealing with an instance of gendered violence, your group is probably going to fall apart, people will get hurt, and some (mostly likely the survivor and their supporters) will be isolated" (21). It is perhaps pessimistic, but also realistic to anticipate a community rupture when there is an incident of assault and abuse.

As a specific example, in our interview, Alexandra discussed an accountability process that resulted in a community split and was a factor in them leaving that community.

"It fit the standard template. A man and a woman who had been dating for a while…they break up and after that the woman calls out the man for… a single incident of sexual assault. And despite so many of us in that immediate community having participated in many, many other processes, despite us having authored texts about it, done workshops about it, attended conferences about it…we had so much collective experience to go on. It was like, this oncoming train, we couldn't get out of the way… Some people…recognized what seemed pretty clearly like patterns of emotional abuse going in the opposite direction. Some people looked at the kinds of power dynamics that were a lot more complicated than man inflicts on woman. Some people looked at the way that the accusation and the outflow from it were being used to consolidate social power within networks…everyone's relationships were so thick and everyone's trauma histories so complex, that when people started fighting about it, it became a proxy war. People were fighting out conflicts a decade old on the terrain of this one accountability situation, where unresolved tensions around gender dynamics, people who felt like they hadn't got support in the ways they wanted to be supported when they had a process going on, people who just hated one person or the other person for whatever shit, valid or not… and then all the ways these political differences also mapped on…people who were more into insurrectionary anarchism, "Beat the fucker up!," and you know, other people who…understood feminism in a certain way being like "We have to believe what a survivor says, no matter what. Even if it literally doesn't match our experience at all." And just…a fucking nightmare. A community-wide melt down…ultimately, what ended up happening was, the person who had been called out had been completely socially isolated…and would mostly spend his time at work or with [his new partner]…and ultimately when some group of people felt like he wasn't doing whatever they wanted him to do…busted the windows out of his vehicle and wrote "Get the fuck out" or something in paint on the vehicle. And this is outside the home of this single mom…it got really nasty, so he…left and has never been back…the survivor in this situation, when she found out she was, like, horrified. Everything about it was a total disaster"

In Alexandra's example, the situation was particularly frustrating because many members of the community were aware of potential problems and pitfalls of accountability processes, yet the breaking up of the community could not be mitigated. The layers of social and cultural capital of those in the community fighting along a multitude of rifts resulted in no clear process or way to address harm. The automatic belief and support of the survivor by those who do this work was also difficult, when their experience belied their political stance.

Shifting Activism

Experiences with accountability processes lead some activists to shift their forms or types

of activism. For those I interviewed who maintained faith in accountability or are involved in

work around consent, accountability processes often shaped or became the focus of their

activism.

"I think [processes] became my activism…I still went to demos or whatever but I wasn't as
deeply…it took so much emotional energy and it seemed like important enough work to
dedicate…like, this is what my role is in the movement…in a grander sense. That felt like my
contribution." James 34:10

"I did start to see this framing a lot of the work I did for a while and I also think you are most
useful when you have your particular role…and in this case I really saw… "Oh, this is a skillset I
can bring to things"…don't want to just show up places…I was, like, what can I do that's
useful?" Eva 1:29:00

For others, involvement with accountability processes resulted in alterations of their

activism or 'community.' Perhaps due in part to the makeup of those involved in processes and

wariness after being involved in activism with cisgender men, People of Color and/or Queer

LGBTQ activist subcultures was one of the cited shifts. In *The First 7-Inch Was Better*, Nia

King ends her zine by talking about her transition of communities:

"I no longer have the desire to be accepted by people who hide behind their "radical" lifestyle
politics and aren't able to work with people who don't eat out of dumpsters and can't afford get
arrested to make a point, to make real change happen. I've got something better now, a
community of queer activists and activists of color whose priorities are more like mine, who
accept me for who I am."

Leaving Social Movements

Typically this isolation and lack of support have lead to young women leaving the activist

community entirely. This cycle is written into the common biography of the subculture, a norm

taken as such. "In many anarchist punk scenes... you will find only younger women, despite

diversity in the ages of men. Why? Because young women often enter a scene (often only invited in the first place by a boyfriend), end up being identified primarily as sexual objects, eventually get frustrated with the boy's club, and leave" (*Said the Pot*). Female identified activists "have remained silent...have slipped away from our organizations and movements because they couldn't take it anymore, and... have been pushed out for shouting out about oppression and abuse" (INCITE! 2005).

Despite the disruption of larger activist goals, the discontent and absence of experienced female identified and queer activists are generally not seen as a problem to be addressed. "What's more paralyzing to our work than when women and/or queer folks leave our movements because they have been repeatedly lied to, humiliated, physically/verbally/emotionally/sexually abused?...Nothing slows down movement building like a misogynist" (Morris). While arguably for the sake of community "[w]e need it to be the exception, not the rule, that the woman leaves the scene when a hetero couple breaks up" (*Why She* 2009*).

The topic of community and transformative justice has been an extremely divisive and controversial topic within the activist community. "The question of what to do about it is one that comes up frequently and causes divisions within radical communities almost every time" (*Said the Pot*). As with the required work, opinions concerning the importance of transformative justice and safer spaces are divided along gender. This became apparent in a series of online posts concerning safer spaces at shows. The following excerpt from the initial webzine post made by Lauren Denitzio, the feminist lead singer of the Worriers and former For the Birds member, about safer spaces:

What I think of when I imagine a scene without sexism is a scene where we consciously make an effort to create a safer space for everyone, no matter who they are. So while we might not be saying "you can't be in a band or go to this show because you're a girl", there are plenty of other things that go on that I consider to be sexist…you know what makes me feel unsafe? When you're the only guy in the pit who doesn't get the message to not fly full force into someone half your size or strength. When you take your shirt off at a show. When you ask me if I'm "IN the band or WITH the band" after a male bandmate says the four of us are all IN the band. When you tell me I play guitar well for a girl. When you say that all the guys want to fuck the girl in that band. When you make a rape joke. When you use the word bitch or call someone a slut. The list doesn't end there. (2011)

This post resulted in a backlash and horde of online comments, reblogs, and responses. While too many to systematically address, many of the comments focused blame for sexism on the character of the female subculturalist.

The myriad of experiences with and responses to accountability processes in radical left subcultures have resulted in internal tensions and then end of some movements. While the context has changed, the dynamics around sexual assault and abuse are very similar to those experienced in earlier New Left movements. Tamara Nopper's statement that "Many times I was told by people that they were 'surprised' to find out that I had 'put up with that shit' because unlike 'weak women,' I was a 'strong' and 'political' woman" could be a direct quote from the autobiography of a Panther or Weatherman. It is obvious that there are issues to be addressed in the subculture, yet it is not clear that accountability processes are addressing these problems.

CONCLUSION

My research found that cultural experimentations in social justice are attempting to address issues of inequality pervasive in dominant culture. The prefigurative politics in activism must address concerns around the criminal justice system and issues around gender inequality, rape, and assault. Activists are developing alternative structures in an attempt to create a more conscientious and ethical culture outside of dominant institutions.

Despite efforts to meet the needs of women, transgender, and gender non binary people, the use of transformative justice and materialization of accountability processes seem to be unsuccessful. There may be individual instances of success, but when put into practice, on the whole, the format is ineffective and possibly destructive. Though not intentional, accountability processes do not satisfactorily address problems in the subculture and simultaneously recreate some of the critiques of the criminal justice system.

Gender-related problems are well established in the history of the New Left, and continue into contemporary movements. Though acknowledged to various extents, groups like SDS and the Black Panther Party either failed to address problems or were at best inconsistent in their approach. In marginalizing gender issues in organizing, leadership, division of labor, and sexual relationships, the women themselves were marginalized. The onus to correct problems was and continues to be placed on those who experience sexism and not the community as a whole.

Gender-related problems are longstanding, but in the last 15 years, activists have tried to create a DIY system to focus on sexual assault. The pathways used in current social movements have been erratically applied and inconsistent in their end results. Terminology developed Bourdieu, namely social capital, cultural capital, and practice facilitate an examination of power

dynamics within a culture. Changing prefigurative politics have questioned how we define and understand abuse, particularly in relationship to an activist sense of 'community.' If, as many activists would argue, the personal is political, then relationships and practices are expected to be ethical and rooted in radical values.

While disagreements in detailed transformative justice and safer space policy are to be expected, the struggle over the basic recognition of gender inequality and its importance within radical left subcultures has been surprising. For some activists, gender inequality is a part of the base upon which leftist activism and independence from the state is built. The outcome of these processes are significant for both as a consideration of prefigurative politics, as well as the continuation and longevity of social movements.

ANALYTIC AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Prefigurative Politics in a Subculture

There is an innate ontological struggle in attempting to build a new, socially just society and cultural practices within a pre existing unjust society. No participants come from 'revolutionary heaven' and are socialized in dominant culture's sexism, racism, classism, and other biases. It can be difficult to critically reflect on interactions, assumptions and deep structure.

Activists applying frameworks predicated on the existence of a 'community' to a subculture face inherent difficulties. By self identifying as a community, activists imply a wholistic lifeworld, beyond the stylistic choices of leisure. Accountability processes rely on the coherence of a community culture that has established norms that can be violated and and must be addressed. In addition, processes also depend on a community act as a cohesive unit in

response to the violation and holding the perpetrator accountable. Though, I have argued their solidarity is not community based, it is a solitary that can damaged or destroyed within activists' interactions and relationships with one another.

Since these politicized dynamics take place within interpersonal relationships, social and cultural capital influence every aspect of accountability processes. As in dominant culture, power in the subculture effects if the perpetrator or survivor is supported by other activists, if the perpetrator is held accountable, the ability of either to employ or resist labels, the ability to resist attempts to curtail or sanction behaviors, and how easily they are seen as having atoned for their actions.

Criminal Justice Alternatives and Contradictions

The criminal justice system, consisting of police, courts, and prisons, is one of the most heavily critiqued dominant institutions. Though there have been efforts to avoid replication, the dichotomy of survivor and perpetrator is entrenched in our understanding of justice as shaped by the criminal justice system. There are many difficulties in creating a new, alternative social institution that addresses justice, accountability, and transformation without racism, classism, or biases. Further, to develop a framework that successfully breaks down dichotomies of good and evil, while not retraumatizing the survivor, critically examining interactions, behaviors, and their cultural contexts is seemingly impossible.

Seemingly contradictory, the language of transformation does not lend itself towards transformation and maintains a dichotomy. The survivor can never not be a survivor and does not have much space for critical reflection of their behaviors. The perpetrator can still be referenced as a 'perp' and might still be labeled despite trying to complete an inconsistently

organized process or successfully completing a process. Though accountability is survivor-centered, the survivor does not determine their success or end.

Ultimately, the purpose of accountability as transformation is also questioned. In limiting justice to transformation, activists are not allowed the motivation of punishment and retribution. The denial of anger, frustration, and use of violence is especially interested for a group that articulates these feelings in relation to the government and dominant culture. Some pointed out prisoners are given the benefit of the doubt that fellow activists are not. Others have argued survivors and supporters should be able to carry out physical violence against abusers if the survivor wishes. The subculture is not anti violence in their tactics and ideology, yet strongly discourage retributive violence. There is a lack of clarity as to whether or not fellow activists should be held to lower or higher standards than the general population

Feminist Politic in Mixed Gender Movements

The application of political beliefs to gendered interpersonal interactions is ambiguous and inimical. Continued gendered divisions in leadership, meeting dynamics, division of labor, and security culture reflect the enduring regard for masculine traits. The use of terminology like "manarchy," "broism," or "brocialism" acknowledges these problems. Yet there is no pathway to address gendered (or racial or class) dynamics. Unless in conjunction with sexual assault, it is left to the individual to confront sexism in interpersonal interactions.

The development safer spaces and elaboration of consent are attempting to develop realistic norms to practice in the subculture. The cultural complexities of sexual practices extend beyond a yes/no binary and there are shifts towards positive consent. The subculture is sex positive and involves a number of late night parties and events were drugs and alcohol might be

present. Yet there isn't as much reflexivity about being sex positive and the possible effect of

drug and alcohol use on consent. There is recognition of a widening definition of abuse and

subcultural specificity of types of abuse. Women, transgender, and gender non binary people,

and more specifically fellow survivors, carry out the bureaucratic mediation work that requires

immense time and energy, which can lead to additional stress and burnout.

POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

I found two sources that argued addressing the gender dynamics might come from

autonomous organizing or limiting personal and sexual relationships with cisgender male

activists. In this way, the expression "the personal is political" is being put into question by

some feminists with a call to demarcate the personal and political. These arguments are two-

fold: in the political realm, the focus can remain on the political project at hand and in the

personal realm, survivors can privately address issues without justification or legitimation from a

larger 'community.' As stated in the zine *No Safe Houses*, "[b]y telling women repeatedly that

they have to make their claims "political," they end up using political language to describe

deeply personal events" (18).

While some of these arguments are persuasive in their simplicity, I do not believe it is

realistic to delimit the personal and political. Politically, we recognize they are intertwined.

Issues like intersectionality, bodily autonomy, and sexual and physical assault are heavily

politicized in the subculture, as well as dominant culture. As to limiting personal relationships, a

significant part of participating in activism is the emotional draw of friends and lovers. It can not

be forgotten that much of activism is a fun, social experience. Even when considering the

problems of accountability processes, their most compelling strength is activists' development of social ties around emotional support.

Considering a resolution or treatment for the issues facing the subculture is difficult. In my research three large problems around accountability became apparent: 1) the use of community-based strategies in a amorphous subculture, 2) the complexity of developing flexible alternatives to social institutions, and 3) practicing gender equity, especially in the inevitable sexual relationships. And all of these difficulties are occurring in a subculture with an unstable and mobile population who are continuously engaged in dominant institutions and cultural practices.

The first of these problems is seemingly contradictory. The social movement subculture is both not a community and a community that can be broken or split. In claiming status of a community, the subculture is conflating the prefigurative want of a new society with the political practices of daily life. While there might be social interdependence, activists are not dependent upon one another for their income, housing, or childcare. They do not have strong or longstanding familial bonds. Though it would not create the same web of relationships found in a traditional community, more cross generational involvement in the subculture would encourage the development of some stability. Specifically 'elders' might aid in intergenerational transference of information and skills. But, as discussed in Chapter 1, social movements are processes and by their nature lack the stability required in a community.

Additionally, integrating non radical, sympathetic organizations and groups would aid in limiting the use of DIY where there are those with more experience and qualification. The emotional and temporal requirements of processes are not sustainable as a DIY, volunteer

process. Not only would pre existing social institutions loosen the burden on individual activists, but would also limit the creation or recreation of unnecessary bureaucracy and policy. These two possibilities might be combined if, as in the case of one activist I interviewed, more older and ex activists who have become mental health and social work professionals continue their involvement.

The last of these three large issues is difficult to address. Simply asking people to not be sexist will not address the problem. Because our gendered interactions are based in larger cultural contexts, liberal shifts in young Americans' defining of gender and understanding of intersectionality suggest potential for long term change. As the subculture is in some ways at the forefront of these changes, experiments in the development of preventative norms and bystander intervention offer some promise.

Overall, these presuppositions might alleviate problems, but will not solve them. As a cultural group, there should be strategies in place to attend to various forms of intra group conflict, mitigating the influence of social and cultural capital. Though the subculture is critical of power dynamics, it would be particularly difficult to place checks and balances on abstract and emotional social and cultural power.

We do not have a cultural basis that encourages constructive critique. Activists have language of reflexivity and privilege, yet have difficulty accepting criticism. That is not to suggest a return to the criticism / self- criticism sessions of Students for a Democratic Society. But the ability to admit fault and commit to future change is not in our cultural repertoire. The dominant culture, specifically in the political and entertainment spheres and the #MeToo movement, has proven individuals benefit from denial of fault. In the case of transformative

justice, even if transformation does occur, it is not recognized. For a more socially just social movement, we need a politic that allows for productive criticism.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The interpersonal dynamics within activism can determine who participates, political goals, and the sustainability of social movement groups. Within the subculture, the topic is important enough for activists to hold workshops and trainings, write zines, create curriculum, spend hours of personal time, form groups and end communities. For all of the labor and energy put into these processes by activists, questions arise as to how they are actually carried out, their effectiveness at addressing sexual assault, and how they are shaping activist subcultures. Though a focus of some activists, these issues can be sidelined both by activists and academics who do not see these problems as important as compared to the stated goals of activist groups.

Activists are 'canaries in the coal mine' for dominant, larger culture, addressing issues and developing cultural norms that are indicative of larger, dominant cultural shifts. Contemporary discussions of the #MeToo movement include many of the questions activists have been grappling with for the last 15 years: the lack of justice via the criminal justice system, the variations of subtle and cultural power dynamics around issues of gender and sexual assault, when to 'call out' an abuser or rapist and backlash against the survivor, the importance of gender in balance with intersectionality and not limiting survivorship to cis female-specific experiences. 'Accountability' and 'transformative justice' are becoming more common in popular lexicon around sexual assault and interpersonal violence.

If activists' aim is solidarity, activists can not condone injustice and the marginalized can not continue to be marginalized. If the goal is defined as creating activist communities focused

on taking care of one another, we need to further research about those who leave social movements and the gendered work of activism. If others in the community do not agree and see sexism as peripheral to the political goal, then it is doubtful that other forms of community justice could address these problems.

THE FUTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

Though the activist subcultures started using the language of accountability 15 years ago, it continues to be a popular topic. In the spring of 2019, the event "Building Accountable Communities" at Barnard College was over capacity, the waitlist filled, and people were asked to view the event via livestream. In the fall of 2018, activist group Decolonize This Place and Free University - NYC held an event called "Cultures of Accountability / Culturas de Responsabilidad." In the summer of 2019, Brooklyn anarchist space The Base held an event hosted by Anarchist Black Cross called "Towards a Culture of Transformative Justice." It is undeniable that this topic remains important to various branches of radical left activist subcultures.

When I attended the latter event, I was surprised to find that over a period of 6 to 7 years, the various resources we had pooled had been lost to the new generation of activists. The younger activists at the event had not seen the zines I was reference and didn't have the practical trial and error knowledge from the previous generations attempts at prefigurative politics. The loss of a few online archives means much of the written information is now scattered and more difficult to find.

As noted in a number New Left activists autobiographies used as source material for Chapter 3, there is a real worry that social movements will fail to learn from previous

movements' mistakes. There are significant problems in radical leftist social movements around sexual assault and gendered interpersonal dynamics. Unfortunately, while accountability processes might offer suggestions, they are not a solution that adequately addresses these problems.

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