#Reclaiming My Time: Structural Violence, Racial Trauma and the Case for a Transformative Healing Justice for Black Women Movement Actors

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INTRODUCTION

This research highlights the structural inequality and trauma of 30 black women movement actors in the District of Columbia (DC) and Maryland at the end of 2016, by highlighting their approach to combatting physical and psycological violence in and outside of their organizations. We evaluate whether self-care, healing justice and education is implemented as part of their politcal praxis towards a transformative long-lasting movement. These 30 women represented in this study self-identity as actors across the spectrum of activities, within the contemporary anti-racist political movements for black liberation and against state violence within the United States context. For the purpose of this work, black women movement actors are defined as persons engaged in protests, organizing, leadership, education and other struggles as a social movement against state violence. Self-care are intentionally acts used to fortify mental, emotional and physical well-being. Healing Justice is a poltical praxis that is intentional about healing trauma for participants. Included are the narratives of one gender non-conforming participant and 29 cis-gender women in the struggle against police violence and killings from 2012 to 2016. State violence is used interchangeably with police brutality and killings as sanctioned by the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structural Violence and Racial Trauma

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According to the World Health Organization´s *World Report on Violence and Health*, violence is tied with Tuberculosis and is second to HIV/AIDS as one of the highest cause of deaths globally (Mercy et al. 2003: 25). Moreover, the, "physical and emotional effects of non-fatal violence" has some harmful effects on global public health with women and children being the most vulnerable populations affected (WHO 2002). For the purposes of this study, the definition has been extended to include black women in the U.S, due to the sexual and physical violence that has been committed by the state (2009; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Brewer et al. 2005; Rousseau 2009; Washington 2006). The World Health organization demarcates "collective violence" as social, political and economic and as "violence committed by larger groups of individuals or by states—and is committed to advance a particular social agenda [this] includes, for example, crimes of hate committed by organized groups, terrorist acts and mob violence" (WHO 2002). Police brutality and killings fit under the definition of collective violence and police have been noted as perpetrators of torture in WHO´s document, which also includes war and displacement (WHO 2002). The World Health Organization (2002) outlines how globalization and "neoliberal" polices can cause widening inequality and conflict. However, their approach is to ameliorate these occurrences using a public health approach that centers on the human condition and healing from these social ills (WHO 2002). Their suggested solutions are for member countries of the United Nations and have not been implemented in the United States (Sheriff 2015).

In addition, Crenshaw et al. (2015) explores the narratives of gender-non conforming, transgender and heterosexual women by highlighting the sexual and physical

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violence that some women have been victim to at the hands of the state. In this report (Crenshaw et al. 2015), vulnerable populations of women are shown to be assaulted, harassed, killed and charged unfairly by the state. Though, many of these in-depth reports have not received justice or proper litigation, this occurrence outlines the threat to public health that persists.

War and displacement are often depicted as social problems among financially and politically unstable countries, but police misconduct in the United States continues with impunity (DOJ 2015; DOJ 2016). Since 2012, there has not been any police officer that has been indicted and found guilty for killing civilians. Though federal reports, videos and first-hand accounts have been offered as evidence of misconduct, there has not been any police officer who has been criminally charged for economic or physical violence. This is outlined in the federal report on Ferguson, Missouri's police force, where police disproportionately attacked black citizens for state revenue over a period of years (DOJ 2015). This federal report shows how black citizens were more often given citations and harassed by police due to racial profiling of the Ferguson police department (DOJ 2015). It proved the Ferguson police department had targeted and charged black people disproportionately. After this report, officials were replaced due to misconduct but the violations of human rights in Ferguson and within the United States remain pertinent (DOJ 2016). Though, the report was released, there have not been any health services offered to the community or any reparations due to the economic injustice that the community had suffered by the state over the years. Also, the very public execution of a

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Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, did not end in a criminal charge of the police officer. The community has not properly recovered from these tragedies.

Collective violence has been recorded by the Federal Government and reviewed by the Department of Justice in several police organizations. It has also seen global attention. The global community continues to cite the United States for its violence towards and lack of democratic treatment for people of color. At the United States´ second review in 2015 by the United Nations Human Rights Council, members criticized the country for its "heinous practices" (Sherriff 2015). Though, the United States was critiqued for their use of the death penalty, Guantanamo Bay's prison detention center and many other violent crimes, racism and police brutality "dominated" the meeting (Sherriff 2015). The U.S. was cited for events in Ferguson and Baltimore that gained worldwide attention. All of the influence of police brutality highlighted included "black men or boys who were killed by police officers or died shortly after being arrested" (Sheriff 2015). This global attention highlights the extent to which the treatment of blacks by the United States is reaching a tipping point. However, the fact that Black women's deaths and suffering are not usually included highlights the continued invisibility of this population and offers challenges to their political and social plight (Sheriff 2015; Crenshaw et al. 2015).

Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore City, Maryland are representations of a historical structural problem rooted in colonization, genocide, slavery, Jim Crow and Mass Incarceration (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Hill-Collins 2008; Rousseau 2009; Fanon 2014; Peery 2002; Washington 2006; Alexander 2010; Wynter 2003). Throughout U.S.

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history, black and brown people have suffered from the violence by the state both de jure and de facto and the Ferguson report only shows the most recent manifestations of this problem. Through an analysis of law, health and race in the U.S., scholars (see 1969; Rousseau 2009; Fanon 2014; Peery 2002; Washington 2006; Alexander 2010; Brewer et al. 2005; Wynter 2003) have provided evidence of the political, social and economic destruction caused by the state and has resulted in the threat to civil liberties, life and the pursuit to happiness as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence, for black and brown working class people.

The Need for Self Care and Healing Justice

As Audre Lorde (1988) famously stated, "caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Meaning, self-care is part of a holistic praxis indelible to activism. Scholars and activists (Fanon 2014; Peery 2002; Brewer et al. 2005; Lorde 1988) have outlined the need for self-care is rooted in marginalized communities' collective trauma or:

> any kind of community of individuals [who] shares an experience of trauma such as those sharing the experience of the institution of slavery, sharing the experience of genocide, or witnessing an event of state or communal violence against another individual or community and so on. (Page et al. 2014)

Fanon (2014) goes into depth as a psychiatrist who lived under colonization and treated the trauma of Algerians during anti-colonial struggles. Fanon (2014) explores how maintaining hegemony through physical and psychological violence systematically diminishes a person´s humanity and results in trauma for the victims of this structural

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oppression. Though his assessment is within a different time period, his perspective can be integral to understanding the effects of state violence on black people's psyche in the current day U.S. What is clear about a Fanonian conceptualization of structural violence it is how it is volatile in the ways in which it institutes inferiority and subjugation of its victims. This is seen with the emphasis on protecting police, while civilians are killed disproportionately at the hands of the same police. Like many Historical Materialists, Fanon outlines how the state must enforce subjugation of victims for the success of the political and economic system to thrive (Berberoglu 1993a; Fanon 2014; Marx 1972). However, we are in a different era where the connection of human labor to profit weakens along with the social contract (Katz-Fishman, Scott and Destine 2016; WHO 2002). Therefore, the approach to justice must be rooted in a transformative change that values humanity over labor and profit.

Scholars (Alexander 2010; hooks 1981; Rousseau 2009; Hill-Collins 2006; Brewer et al. 2005) have particularly delineated the effects of this sexual and physical violence of black women. People have struggled with the judicial system to ameliorate the trauma and violence in underserved communities, but less has been outlined as a threat to public health. The United States Social Forum (2014) suggests a critical analysis of the approach to remedying the violence purported on these populations through a different lens. This organization is a coalition of political organizations and workers that build political power to effect social change and have been a part of the anti-racist struggle for decades. The U.S. Social Forum outlines the terms of **"Healing justice"** or "an evolving political framework shaped by economic and racial justice that re-centers

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the role of healing inside of liberation that seeks to transform, intervene and respond to generational trauma and violence in our movements, communities and lives and to regenerate our traditions of liberatory and resiliency practices that have been lost or stolen" (Page et al. 2014). This intergenerational struggle is one of marginalized folks.

The condition of Black women is situated within a historical context of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy within American society (hooks 1981; Hill-Collins 2006; Crenshaw et al. 2015). hooks (1981) suggests that black women suffer marginality that interacts differently when compared to black men since slavery, where blacks were defined as property that could be beaten and killed and black women were raped to produce an unpaid labor force. Even post-Slavery, various techniques used by the state have resulted in the unwarranted sterilization, rape and killings of black women. For example, there is the well-known case of Fannie Lou Hamer, who was unethically sterilized during a procedure without her knowledge in Mississippi during the Jim Crow era (Washington 2006; Rousseau 2009; Roberts 2014). These are considered forms of state sanctioned violence toward black women's bodies, which continue to be committed by the political-economic system.

INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY

Black feminists have explored the oppressions that black women have historically and contemporarily faced in the U.S. in an effort to advance a succinct theoretical framework that centers on black women´s experiences. This theory developed out of a concern for the disregard of Black women's experiences in black freedom movements and the woman's movement of the 1950s and 1960s (hooks 1981; Hill-Collins 2006:

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Hill-Collins 2008; Combahee River Collective Statement 1977; Davis 2016a; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Kuumba 2013). The theory analyzes the institutional-individual level. Intersectionality explores how black women are oppressed by contributing institutions of sexism, homophobia, racism, classism, etc. (Hill-Collins 2008; Combahee Collective Statement 1977).

Though there are valuable critiques of Intersectionality being a reinvention of identity politics which causes division in the working class, the tenets are important for this study (Davis 2016b). Debates have ensued about Intersectionality since its development. It has been extended in European and Latina gender and sexuality scholarship. The question about its theoretical significance due to a limited focus has arisen (Davis 2016b). However, this theoretical conceptualization came out of the need to understand the multiplicity of oppressions that folks with marginal identities face politically and socially and therefore proves important to this research on Black women movement actors (Crenshaw 2000; Lorde 2007; Lorde 1988; Spillers 2000; Hill-Collins 2000).

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The data was collected between September to December 2016 in Maryland and DC at universities and political organizations amongst 5 focus groups, using a semi-structured interview schedule (Sobo 2009; Daniel 2012). Respondents were recruited for this study through university list-serves, activist networks and the researcher attending

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activist events. The focus groups proved the best method to gather data because it allowed the research to probe, gather in-depth data and evaluate the organizational differences (Sobo 2009; Daniel 2012). The interview schedule was detailed and evaluated the development of consciousness of the participants. Names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

Sample

Among the five focus groups, the majority of respondents (97% or 29) identified as Cis-female (born assigned female) and one (3%) identified as gender non-conforming. Cisgender (Schilt et al. 2009) is a term that means the gender assigned at birth is aligned with the gender one identifies with presently. Gender non-conforming means that one doesn't conform to any one form of gender expression (Schilt et al. 2009). Twenty-five (83%) of the respondents self-identified as African-American, two (7%) identified as Caribbean, two (7%) identified as Latina and one (3%) other. Meaning, this situated their experiences more within the context of the United States. A large portion (47%) of respondents was between the ages of 18-21, four (13%) were between 22-25 years old, four (13%) were between the ages of 25-30 years old and 8 (27%) were between 31-40 years old. As the majority of respondents were below the age of 25 years old, this may have affected the amount of their social movement experience and conscious development. Half of the respondents (50%) had "some College," nine (30%) had a degree beyond a Bachelors, four (13%) held Bachelor's degrees and two (7%) had High school diplomas, GED or less. Since, the majority of respondents received education beyond high school, this could also have effected their level of analysis on state violence. The majority of respondents (60% or 18) had a combined income of $59,000 or less, three (10%) made

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between $60,000 and $99,000, 17% (5) made a combined family income of $100,000 or higher and 13% (four) didn't know. Most respondents reported having $59,000 or less which could have had an effect on their awareness of class differences.

A third (33%) of the respondents identified direct action as their predominant form of activism. A little more than a third (11 or 37%) identified as educators, four were (13%) organizers and three (10%) leaders, one (3%) identified as a participant and one (3%) identified as an Administrator. The low representation of leaders, organizers and administrations may have affected the perspectives on movement dynamics from these respondents.

Respondents´ affiliated organizations ranged from two (7%) being a apart of Thinkmoor DC, five (17%) from Black Lives Matter DC, three (10%) from Leadership of a Beautiful Struggle in Baltimore, one (3%) from One DC, two (7%) were from the Baltimore Algebra Project, two (7%) did social media activism, one (3%) represented multiple organizations including Black Lives Matter DC, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), one (3%) represented Maryland Lead, one (3%) represented On campus, one (3%) represented the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, one (3%) represented the NAACP, one (3%) represented the University of Maryland Black Student Organization, one (3%) represented Out for Justice in Baltimore, one (3%) represented Baltimore United for Change and about a third (7 or 23%) of the respondents who chose "other" were not affiliated with any organization. The variation in organizational affiliation could have an effect on the responses. Also, these questions were asked prior to the focus group and could

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have possible had an effect on respondents' responses. However, all participants were knowledgeable about the topics of the focus group before agreeing to be a part.

Respondents were mostly young, heterosexual, cis-gender, religiously affiliated and did not represent leadership of their various organizations. These socio-demographic characteristics could have had an effect on the findings.

FINDINGS

The focus groups (about 8 hours of recording) populated three themes in line with the research objectives, which is seen here as follows: (A) Intra-Conflicts and barriers to Transformative Justice, (B) Importance of Political Education, and (C) Case for Self Care. These themes arise about participants´ in an effort to understand the transformative justice and movement politics amongst movement actors.

Intra-Conflicts and barriers to Transformative Justice

Since this national movement is led by the coalition of black women, questions of internal conflicts such as sexism, racism, homophobia and ableism was posited. Most of the participants saw sexism and homophobia as a barrier to coalition in the movement (Crenshaw et al. 2015; hooks 1981). Gold in Maryland stated:

> I think that some internal problems would certainly be the sexism and misogyny that we see, that would certainly, that's a big one.

Like Gold, Princess in DC noted sexism in social movement spaces:

> So the thing is that, like I said, black women have always had notoriously been the people that take care of the community, so it would make perfect sense that a, women would start this, but, and, but now that it's taking off, I feel like men are

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coopting it and every time, we see, whenever they talk about Black Lives Matter, I always see a man as the other talking head, and I find that so disrespectful.

Participants pointed to these issues of sexism and saw it as a way to undervalue the work of lack women. However, Elmo in Baltimore was able to highlight how external forces could exacerbate the gender relations in the movement, by pointing to the lure of men to be spotlighted. Elmo in Baltimore said:

> It's tempting for the men in our organization to get caught up in what people outside the organization may want for them, to elevate them to be the spokesperson and it's a fight for us as women to get that same level of assess, that same level of opportunity, that same level of funding and attention for our brand, as the black males would get, even in the black movement, right so like I definitely wanted to make sure that's highlighted.

Gold and Princess outlined an issue and Elmo explained some external contributions to it. Elizabeth in Maryland explained the nuances a bit more:

> A lot of what I've been hearing is that sense that it is like founded by, black Queer Women, black heterosexual males have a problem with that and they don't feel included, so it's supposed to be for everyone, but because they are not the center of attention, because it's not coming from them, they have a problem, their saying that, ´oh, it's disregarding us, it's not for us´, so.

The participants brought up these internal issues of sexism and homophobia within this movement and explained why Black men maybe averse to the overt leadership by black Queer women (Crenshaw et al. 2015; hooks 1981). Many understood it within the historical context of past social movements and said that some of the sexism and homophobia is still apparent on the ground. Khadijah in Maryland said:

> Women were essentially telling the rest of the community; ´you'll don't show up for us´. And that's why we saw what we saw with Sandra Bland, I don't think it would of happened if we hadn't have so many women um especially black Queer

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women activists who were speaking up and calling folks out because they really weren't showing up for us especially cis-black men weren't showing up for us.

In response, Octavia in Maryland said:

> Right and they don't show up for us. I feel like it's so apparent in the streets. Nobody really says like the Say Her Name; I don't see any black guys like talking about it on media. I'm just like where were you'll? We were there for you why you not there for us kinda thing!

All of the participants can outline a case where they felt black men were not as sympathetic to the issues of black women and queer folk. However, there were a couple of women who just thought that disproportionate depiction of male victims by media outlets was the problem.

Most participants discussed that the leadership and organization of movements by black women are not new, but it is taking on a more visible role in this contemporary movement. For that reason, the focus is broader and more inclusive because marginalized folks are making sure it's that way. Though situating marginalized voices within a movement for justice and equality is new and integral to this movement because it is women led, it does come with some contention (Crenshaw 2000; Spillers 2000; Hill-Collins 2000).

However, there were a few participants that didn't believe the internal issues were just simply sexism and homophobia. They pointed out that some issues within building any movement or being a part of any team was due to individual conflicts. Ella B in Baltimore said:

> Inside organizations, I feel like it's the same things that, that cripple organizations always, you know, it's interpersonal relationships, it's people who get power hungry um and they start to move different ways based on what they want for themselves, um that could definitely tear a movement a part, when I say

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interpersonal relationships, um sometimes their inappropriate relationships that bogged down the vision, because now you worried about other stuff that's not, really the focus, or you do have people outside of your organization that would plant seeds, that then grow into problems within the organization, now you definitely see that too, right, and you just got, it's like, ´I don't like that person, because I don't like that person, I ain't bout to do nothing with them or their organization´, even though we working for the same. And I think that stuff, I mean that stuff, that stuff is not new, you look at so many people, so many movements right, um drugs, like it just be, I'm not saying that's present right now, but I'm saying it just patterns. Like same things that ruined us in the past, be the same things that's ruining us now.

For a few of the women, the gender issues were not at the forefront in their organization. Instead, they evaluated internal issues as part of group dynamics and power relations regardless of gender.   Ella B. felt that the human component within movements made it susceptible to being flawed. While in this participant's organization, women are the majority and she felt that it caused imbalances. Seaweed Salad in Baltimore elaborated:

> It's women and men who are a part, but there's always been a woman in a leadership role, lead organizer, director, mostly women on the board, um, so women have kind of taken that strong role in the organization and kind of demanded that we're the leaders of this thing, so for me in this leadership position, it's challenging because I want, I want more strong men, I mean you know I want some strong men around (laughs) you know, I want testosterone because, too much of this other stuff, is challenging.

She believed that her organization is sometimes met with challenges in organizing due to it being comprised by a majority of women. She felt that women could sometimes get argumentative.

Also, a few participants, bought up the issue of ability, by mentioning how social media platforms and other forms of participation expand who gets to participate in actions. This is explained by Octavia in Maryland:

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> I feel like these different aspects when you come together it brings together like different groups of people cause like let's say disabled folks for example they can't some of them physically can't just walk in the street some of them have chronic pain, they can't like really go through that so they have to find different avenues to still participate and I feel like with like accessibility it really helps bring all like black folks together not just certain black folk or like able bodied and can like really push through all that stress and everything like I feel like that it's really important to mention that as well.

This explains how there are various reasons why people cannot physically protest and being inclusive can aid in who gets to mobilize.

Other participants believed that organizational models may cause some issue. Though Ella B. in Baltimore talked about the benefits of a horizontal organizational model, she also explained how this could be a limitation in movement goals:

> Having a like this multitude of voices, this being present and not just one charismatic leadership model, but that in it of itself, also becomes a hindrance at times, because now it's like you playing to everybody, who can potentially be in the room and all their voices being included and sometimes that conversation doesn't progress forward, ugh, often times, I seen it happen too many times to speak of, then also, there are people who represent different segments of the same movement, right, and sometimes it is difficult to conjoin those different things, because it's like, ´well, yeah, I'm here for Black Lives, but I'm here for Trans Black Lives and that looks different and I want us to talking about this particular thing and if we ain't talking about this thing because we talking about Freddie Gray, who happens to be a cis-gender man and I ain't here for it´. Right, so there becomes this, like, segmenting of one central movement and it becomes difficult to figure out how we can align ourselves and work together without anybody being erased and without anybody feeling like they're not important, right, and so that becomes difficult.

Ella B. discusses how centering all marginalized voices may not always be beneficial to meeting movement goals, since it may indirectly cause division and silencing of some of the participants.

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On the other hand, Sundiatta in DC delineated the importance of organizing in people's local communities to be more effective. She discussed the importance of trying to be as inclusive as possible by working in the community you live:

> Also, you got to deal with the, a classism within, within the movement, because if you're not willing to reach down to the people in the quote unquote ´gutter´ than you're lost any damn way and that's where I'm finding a lot as well with these organizations…there was a little town hall meeting going on, with the Howard kids and we talking to the Howard kids and I, I, said to them, I said, ´Think global, act local´, you want to effect change, you got to effect change right here in your community, like you got to reach out to these Black folks in Ward 7 and 8 and you got to put in work.

For Sundiatta, people should not flock to states that have recently experienced a police killing to be effective, instead they should be more targeted in their approach by investing in the communities they are a part of and have long-term access. They should also not be afraid to go into poor communities to reach these people and learn how to interest them in movement objectives (Katz-Fishman & Scott 2012b).

Importance of Political Education

Though many participants believed in contributing to the social movement activities in any way possible, a few outlined that there has to be political education to maintain the movement. Sundiatta in DC said:

> I said at one of the protest, I said when you see, you see me out on the streets now, I'm not a threat when you see me in the streets, when you stop seeing me in the streets, is when I become the threat, because now I'm out in your communities, now I'm picking up these kids in Ward 7 and 8 and I'm taking them to the museum, I'm educating them, yea, I'm showing them something different, opening their minds, cause there's nothing more powerful than the open mind and if, if ain't willing to do that, you ain't willing to do sh*t, you ain't about nothing, you ain't no revolutionary.

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For Sundiatta, she discussed the importance of all forms of activism, but was very adamant about the movement developing in a way that it could be sustainable. For her this only worked by being rooted in your local community and building through education, especially with the youth (Freire 1992, 2001). Like Sundiatta, Zoey in DC affirmed that the movement could not be develop without education:

> Unless you start educating, because once you start educating people and people actually become, let's say ´woke´ and actually becomes a thing, then you sustain a movement.

A few participants were adamant about using education as a tool to developing movement goals and a shared vision.

Summer in DC believed that education was a challenge because of the accomplishments from the movements in the 1960s, she feared it was a hindrance between past and current generations and missed the chance to educate her generation.

> That's why I feel like we're starting over with educating people and making people socially conscious, because people got comfortable. My parents got comfortable, their parents were not comfortable at all, my parents got very, very comfortable and I think that kind of like, made it so that it, it didn't just stop progression, it made it so that we kind of have to start over a little bit like, like we got so comfortable where we are like.

Summer believed this lack of inter-generational teaching set the movement back.

However, local organizations that are deeply rooted in the community highlighted the educational programs that are implemented and are growing successfully. These programs are offered to the community and aid in youth development. Jay Love in Baltimore said:

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> There is a lot of stuff going on, they're monthly talks for the community on different subjects, the Malcolm X series and um there's the ambassador training, which is black people that want to be involved in LBS and want to be an activist, teaching them about LBS, teaching them the history, teaching them about Baltimore blah blah blah, all that stuff, um and then there's the youth, youth development trainings and workshops and camps that LBS is doing, um so yes for LBS.

Local organizations with a focus on building their community provided a basis for the broader movement's objectives as seen in *Movement for Black Lives Platform* (2016), even though they already existed and had been advocating for their communities prior to the founding of the national Black Lives Matter organization.

The Case for Self-care

Participants were asked to share their self-care practices. For a lot of the women to talk about caring for themselves caused them to pause and think deeply. However, many women highlighted the importance of their individual self-care practices (Lorde 2007; Lorde 1988; Page et al. 2014). Though, many had to ponder about the ways they make time to care for themselves and Elmo in Baltimore explained why:

> We haven't been taught how to be healthy. We haven't been taught how to be physically healthy, how to be financially healthy, how to be spiritual, how to be mentally healthy and um I think that's important, for us to all figure out what that looks like for us.

However, Pearl in DC talked about the chapter of Black Lives Matter in DC that has been at the forefront of including self-care work as a part of their movement work:

> I don't feel good and I need to be around people that are going to help me process what's going on, so it can happen, it can happen in the circles, but I also think it

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could happen by journaling, um I do that often, I think it could happen by um (laughs) running or working out, it could happen through sweets, it's probably not the best method, but sweets are great, something, any space (laughs) where you have really two or more black people that can be a time to heal and process things too, umm and yeah I don't think any of the other organizations understand that, I think that they process things through the whole method of working, so they probably won't see their pain um and use pain as a way to fuel their work, which for some people I think could work, but just overall that end you, end you up on the floor right? like after so long you're just running off of fumes, you're running off of trauma really, and there's no, there's no processing what's going on, so um and I've been around [name] for so long, but that's essentially slavery, um your basing your whole value off of how much you can produce regardless of your pain, so it's modern day slavery um really and you can apply that to your job, you can apply that to these outside organizations, you could apply it to school, cause the whole model is based off of that, especially if you work retail or food services, so.

Pearl talked about a concerted effort to take time to process and debrief which are practices upheld by the organization she is affiliated (Page et al. 2014). She also thought that self-care work should be practiced widely throughout all local organizations. Activists who work without processing their trauma could be detrimental.

Scarlett in DC outlined the importance that healing has for movement development:

> Um sometimes I think that people underestimate how beneficial healing circles, um just general education based on these things are because every single time you see like political involvement, no one sees the background, they always see the movements, they always see people walking down marching down, but I think that each of them have equal importance and I think that black people need to heal more than anything we need to heal.

Also, Marigold in Baltimore talked about the importance of taking personal time:

> Healing is like a multi-generational thing, just like, what is her name (people say: seaweed salad) seaweed salad was talking about maybe your grandchildren will see the effects of your work, like that's what I'm doing with healing right now for myself and like traveling, I think like there's this big stigma a like around leaving

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the work to do stuff for yourself and that you need to be a martyr for the movement, like die for the movement by any means, um but it's just as revolutionary, if not more revolutionary to live really well for yourself and, also in taking time to travel, um and just like be by myself and be okay with being in my solitude, um I also know that culture is produced from leisure um and like when you look at like our black history like, all of the great artists, all of the great musicians and rappers and cultural curators, throughout history have had time, um to themselves, um to themselves and just time to exist and to be, which I think we don't as black people give ourselves permission to do enough.

Marigold also saw the importance of taking time to herself, but it was not a formal practice for her organization. She explained self-care as a process of "multigenerational" healing; one that would help to heal traumas passed down from her ancestors and would make her a better person for her children. She made a point to connect her self-care to being able to process, debrief and contribute to the movement in ways that many of her cultural heroes have (Lorde 2007; Lorde 1988). She mentioned that self-care work is often looked down upon, but very necessary.

Another prevalent theme was that participants believed that the constant barrage of police killings on their social media could have a traumatizing effect, so they said they sometimes logged off of social media as a form of self-care. Khadijah in DC said:

Like when you talk about self-care I have to log off and I got 7 nieces and nephews and I go and I put on a Spider man mask and I'll run around the yard with the kids like for real they have all these games made up in their minds and we get to alternate being the bad guy and its awesome and I don't have to think about anything or I'll watch Steve and the Universe or listen listen… Garnett is everything. Or I just have to just like have to log off and spend sometimes with like the children in my life honestly and I'll go home for that and be like alright now I'm stress, this dissertation is driving me crazy, school is driving me crazy, my students are crazy like and all that social media stuff, I'm going home for the weekend, I'll see you'll on Monday. so I have to check out.

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Khadijah's approach to self-care was suited for her individual needs and many of the participants had practices that varied but suited their needs for caring for themselves. As noted, most participants were not connected to an organization that had a formal practice of self-care implemented as part of their political work, but many highlighted the importance of their individual self-care practices that ranged from exercising, journaling, eating and being in community with other people who love them.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

Participants often brought a margin-to-center approach to intra-movement politics. Participants agreed that some people in the movement still see sexuality and gender discussions as divisive and want to avoid it by focusing on race as a struggle in which everyone identifies (Crenshaw et al. 2015). Participants believed that the approach to justice and equality is multi-faceted, much like the many fronts in which they're struggling. However, a few were confined to a virtual struggle through social media because of ability and/or accessibility (Washington 2006; Fleming & Morris 2015). A few were adamant about the need to re-educate for movement development (Freire 2001; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016a). These participants were not in the same form of movement participation, but the focus groups allowed for discussion across socio-demographics and organizational affiliations.

Self-care did not arise as a theme for all organizations represented, but participants believed in its significance to social movement building (Page et al. 2014). Though, most of the women had informal ways of taking time to care for themselves, exercising, and believed in its benefit in dealing with trauma. The focus group may have initiated the

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conversation for women who haven't implemented self-care as part of a formal political practice. Organizations could implement these practices as part of their socialization and a form of "healing justice" (Page et al. 2014).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS

Per the narratives provided here, the development of this movement in its early stages, re-education and a transformative healing justice can aid in building a shared vision amongst local organizations toward transformative solutions. Re-education could help subside intra-movement conflicts, create a unified vision and aid in strategy (Nilsen et al. 2013; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016a). Lessons from past movements, class-consciousness raising about systemic solutions and the root of sexism, racism, homophobia etc. could be beneficial to local organizations (Freire 2001; Nilsen et al. 2013; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016a). As participants suggests, movement actors could benefit knowing the ways the state have thwarted movement efforts, but also on the shared experiences of current state violence and oppression of movement actors and the ways to mitigate it (Freire 2001; Nilsen et al. 2013; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016a). Lastly, organizations should share their best practices of self-care to be implemented as part of the political practice. In this way, movement actors can be fortified and re-committed to a long-term struggle. This research proved a need for global coalition building, a unified shared vision to be implemented and the need for a transformative healing justice.

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