



2019

#ReclaimingMyTime: Black Women and Femme Movement Actors' Experiences with Intra-Movement Conflicts and the Case for a Transformative Healing Justice Model

Shaneda Destine PhD

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Sdestine@utk.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/swb>



Part of the [Human Rights Law Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Destine, Shaneda. 2019. "#ReclaimingMyTime: Black Women and Femme Movement Actors' Experiences with Intra-Movement Conflicts and the Case for a Transformative Healing Justice Model." *Societies Without Borders* 13 (1).

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/swb/vol13/iss1/5>

**#ReclaimingMyTime: Black Women and Femme Movement Actors' Experiences with
Intra-Movement Conflicts and the Case for a Transformative Healing Justice Model**

Shaneda Destine, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Sociology and Africana Studies
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Sdestine@utk.edu

Keywords: Self-care, Healing Justice, Intersectionality, Racial Trauma

Abstract

This research utilizes focus groups to evaluate the intra-movement conflicts and political praxis of Black women and femme movement actors in the United States as a case for implementing a Transformational Healing Justice Model (THJM). Black women and femmes are used in this study to explain the gender expressions, identities and sexual orientations presented in this study. This model expands the Consciousness Vision and Strategy Model (CVS) by incorporating the implications of the #Sayhername Policy Booklet, the Movement for Black Lives Platform (2016), and the United States Social Forum Healing Justice Report (2014) -- to outline how Black women and femmes in contemporary local political organizations mitigate conflict and sustain mobilization in anti-racist organizations largely affiliated with the Movement for Black Lives. A Transformational Healing Justice Model is proposed based on the successes of local organizations that have implemented such a model and are a part of national networks of grassroots organizations concerned with human rights. Evidence suggests a level of healing justice incorporated in some organizations – with more of a need presented in others – is needed to subside conflict in local organizations toward a long-term struggle against state violence. Implications for social movement praxis are discussed.

Introduction

The main goal of transformative justice is to repair the harm done as much as possible. Ideally, transformative justice seeks the transformation of individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Also, transformative justice at its best places the power to respond to harm back into the hands of the people most affected by harm. The institutions of the state and of white supremacy would no longer control and dictate responses to acts of harm (The Movement for Black Lives 2016).

The United States government has been cited for their human rights abuses of Black men and boys at the hands of police (Sheriff 2015). However, the public discourse surrounding police violence often renders Black women, femmes, queer and differently-abled people “invisible,” which is then internalized in anti-racist organizations’ politics (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017). This research highlights Black women and femmes movement actors’ struggle to sustain local movement initiatives at the end of 2016, by highlighting their holistic approach to combating the effects of police killings, sexual assault, and the devaluing of their trauma due to this “invisibility” (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Henderson, Scott, and Mendenhall 2016; Ritchie 2017). Here, the extent of self-care, healing justice and political education that is implemented as part of their political praxis is evaluated. The Consciousness, Vision and Strategy model (CVS) is theoretically based in a Marxist analysis that focuses on the stages of class-consciousness through political education. The Transformational Healing Justice Model (THJM) extends CVS to include holistic care and praxis to maintain transformative long-lasting movement (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Destine and Katz-Fishman 2018; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2006; Nilsen and Cox 2013; Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016).

The participants represented in these focus groups 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 that are largely affiliated with the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL). For the purpose of this work, Black women movement actors are defined as non-men engaged in protests, organizing, leadership, education and other struggles as a social movement against state violence. There is one gender non-conforming participant, 12 queer, lesbian, bisexual participants and twenty-nine cisgender women in the struggle against police violence and killings from 2012 to 2016. Gender non-conforming femme is defined as a person who does not identify with male or female, but can identify as femme expressing or present feminine in appearance (Campaign 2018; Carruthers 2018; Schilt and Westbrook 2009). State violence is used to signal violence sanctioned by the state through police killings, intimidation, rape and overexertion of power on people with impunity (Davis 2016; Lenin 2018). Self-care is defined as intentional acts used to fortify mental, emotional and physical well-being (Lorde 2012). Healing Justice expands self-care to a collective political praxis that is intentional about healing trauma for social movement participants by addressing racial and economic injustice using indigenous and traditional strategies (Khan-Cullors and bandeled 2018; Page and Raffo 2014). The model for healing justice is provided partially by the Movement for Black Lives that follows the transformative holistic model for movement objectives as outlined in their policy platform and includes demands for community health resources, universal basic income, education and restorative justice. Also, the United States’ Social Forum, (U. S. Social Forum) is a network of political organizations that has been instrumental in building grassroot movements since 2005, and has built their movement

capacity on generations of social movement healing praxis for human rights that endorse the M4BL (Page and Raffo 2014). Specifically, transformative justice is defined as movement practices geared towards restructuring society through revolutionary change that is anti-capitalist and restorative to the community and the environment (Bush 2000; Carruthers 2018; Davis 2016; Harvey 2007; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2016; Lorde 2012; Taylor 2016). “Transformation (in the context of wellness) is what happens when traumatic experiences are integrated, released and then the individual and/or community is able to shift into something more grounded & self determined in wellness and liberation” (Page and Raffo 2014). All of these elements provide a basis for the Transformational Healing Justice Model.

The organizations represented in this research are largely affiliated with the Movement for Black lives and/or the People’s Movement of U.S. Social Forum. First, the U.S. Social Forum was founded in 2005 and is comprised of many grassroots and political organizations for workers fighting on different fronts for equity. *Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide* led the first convening of the Social Forum and created models and political education tools like the CVS model for movement participants. This model provides a foundation for a Transformational Healing Justice Model for Black women movement actors in this political moment to center political education for and by the people (Destine and Katz-Fishman 2018; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2006). The Movement for Black Lives (2016) and healing justice praxis by the U.S. Social Forum extends the CVS model to center restorative and healing practices toward a Transformational Healing Justice Model (Page and Raffo 2014). This paper does not argue that the CVS model is less effective, but that the Transformational Healing Model centers healing based on the case presented here.

Second, The Movement for Black Lives established itself as a network of over 50 local organizations fighting on various anti-racists issues across the United States in 2016 to expand the work of Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, the founders of Black Lives Matter (Lartey 2016; Ransby 2018). After the founding of Black Lives Matter in 2013 and a national call to center women, differently abled and queer victims in this movement for Black liberation using #Sayhername campaign in 2015, M4BL presented a comprehensive political platform created by local organizations, including Black Lives Matter chapters, across the United States (Lartey 2016). #Sayhername was established by the African American Policy Forum led by Kimberlee Crenshaw to center the stories of women, queer and differently able bodies in public discourse about state violence, who were victims of disproportionate sentencing, police killings, sexual assault, etc. (Crenshaw et al. 2015). Following this trajectory, the M4BL platform demanded systemic changes in policing, housing, education, reproductive justice and investment in community care initiatives that was steeped in intersectionality, critical race theory and a radical anti-capitalist framework (Black Lives Matter 2017; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). These organizations’ platforms and political praxis provide the foundation for a Transformative Healing Justice Model.

The Case for Transformative Healing Justice Model

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare”- Audre Lorde (2017:130)

Women, differently-abled and queer victims of police violence, sexual assault, police killings and intimidation are often deemed “invisible” victims and the care that they provide for communities and organizations during trauma often go unnoticed (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al.

2015; Ritchie 2017; Roberts 2014; The Guardian 2016). This dynamic is contextualized in previous Black liberation iterations, where women and queer folk were organizers, educators and strategists in organizations that lacked egalitarian processes, and this dynamic has manifested in contemporary movements (Collins 2002; Crenshaw et al. 2015; hooks 1999). Research has complicated this understanding of state violence by focusing on the invisibility of Black queer, differently abled and female victims in the public arena, the multitude of ways that they experience state violence and how that is internalized in intra-movement conflict currently (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Ritchie 2017; Roberts 2014). However, very little research (Carruthers 2018; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018) has focused on Black women and femmes in local anti-racist organizations fighting against state violence, to evaluate how they negotiate space and challenge a movement to center all Black identities and lives. Because neither public discourse nor this movement's practices center the experiences of the most vulnerable -- women and queer bodies (Collins 1989, 2002; Crenshaw 2000; hooks 1999), this research will outline the narratives of this population. Here, the political tools of education and healing that Black women and femmes are utilizing in local political practices are outlined to provide implications for an intrinsic Transformative Healing Justice Model for the maintenance of broader movement objectives of M4BL (Black Lives Matter 2017; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Lorde 2012; Page and Raffo 2014; Ross and Solinger 2017).

Self-Care and Transformative Healing Justice

Scholars and activists have outlined the need for self-care and healing as a way to combat racial trauma in and out of social movement spaces (Brewer et al. 2005; Fanon 2007; Lorde 2012; Page and Raffo 2014). The collective trauma that Black communities experience is explained as

“...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. 2014:3).

Police killings affect families and communities in and outside of the locale. There is informal political work that is provided by mostly women, to heal, educate and restore those communities outside of any legal ramifications (Ransby 2018; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). This form of physical and psychological violence is a product and intent of state violence in which the communities are left to repair informally in the mist of stalled wages, crippling student debt, child care and state-sanctioned violence (Carruthers 2018; Fanon 2007; Freire and Macedo 2000; Henderson, Scott, and Mendenhall 2016; Hill 2017; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018). The U.S. Social Forum outlines the terms of healing justice as a way to combat this as:

“...an evolving political framework shaped by economic and racial justice that re-centers 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. 2014:3-4).

Also, Black Lives Matter (2017) explains:

“For the last few years, large numbers of our people have been out in the streets, engaging in powerful and necessary direct action, and fighting for the lives of our people. The political period we are now entering promises to require a redoubling of our efforts to organize against increasing oppression. We will need to match this fortifying energy with elevated and innovative ways of caring and showing up for each other.”

This research will build from these models of participation along the CVS model to evaluate the political tools for healing and education utilized by Black women and femmes movement actors to combat intra-movement conflicts within local organizations that are largely affiliated with the M4BL.

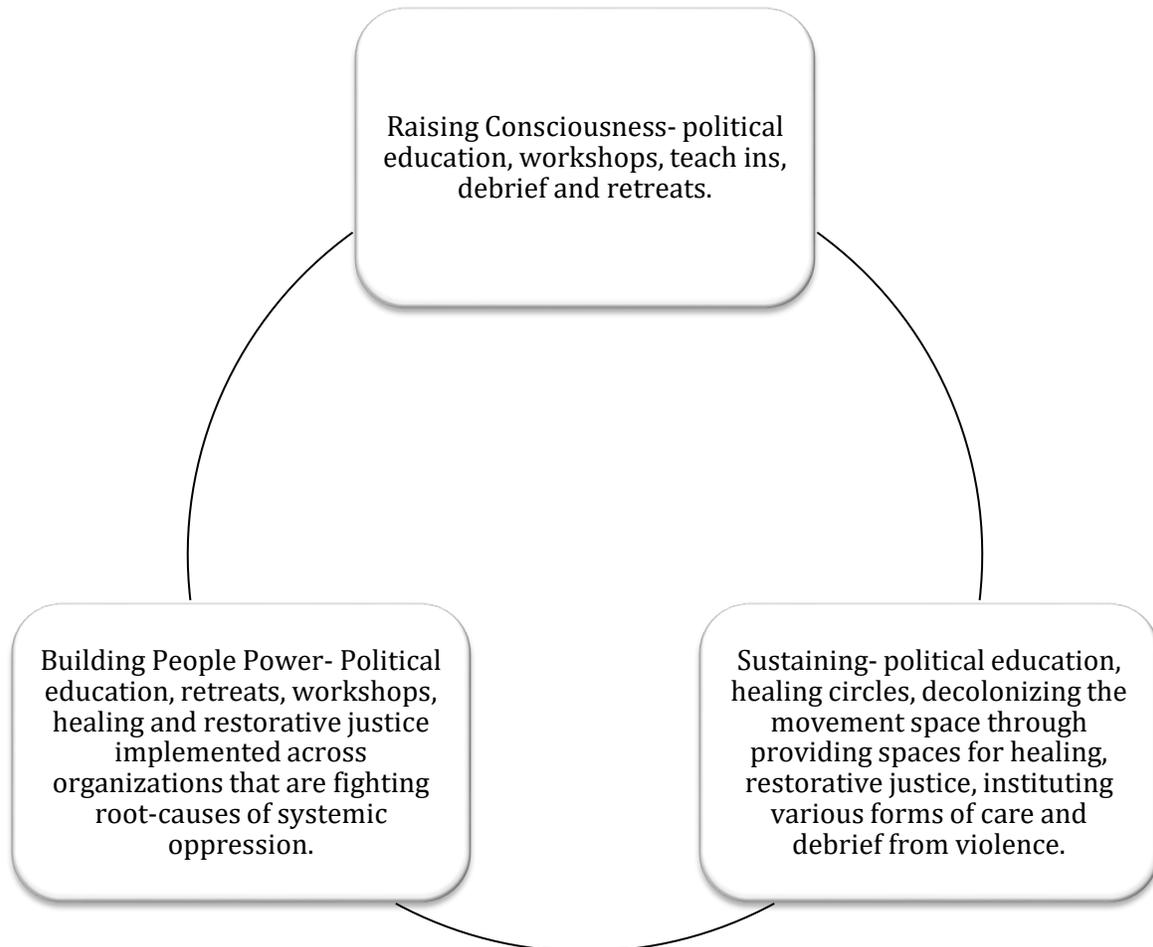
Political Education as a Tool for Transformative Healing Justice

Political education is integral to maintaining movement momentum, strategizing and building a broad-based movement that is anti-capitalist and has transformative goals (Davis 2016; Carruthers 2018; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Taylor 2016; Harvey 2007; Bush 2000; Nilsen and Cox 2013; Movement for Black Lives 2016). As the Movement for Black Lives develops into an international coalition for local anti-racist organizations, their policy platform provides a basis for broad transformative goals for Black communities across the United States and beyond (Carruthers 2018; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Taylor 2016). These demands are radical approaches to community control to assure the overall health of Black communities (Movement for Black Lives 2016). This research will expand on these demands by centering Black women and femmes movement actors’ experiences and political tools in local organizations struggle towards achieving these demands and centering their needs. This will provide a basis for broader social movement goals and outline the importance of centering marginalized voices within social movements and literature for transformative healing justice. Because centering the most marginalized people will provide a basis for a more egalitarian world (Carruthers 2018; Davis 2016; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018).

As depicted in Figure 1, the Transformational Healing Justice Model is a cyclical process that raises consciousness, sustains movement and build people power through political education, healing praxis and connections with grassroots organizations across causes (Carruthers 2018; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). Theoretically, this model is based in Critical Race, Intersectionality, and Marxist theories as well as the Black radical tradition that focuses on the root causes of oppression, differential experiences of Black women, femmes, differently abled and queer people and provides tools for building towards broader movement objectives (Carruthers 2018; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Katz-Fishman, Scott, and Destine 2016; Page and Raffo 2014; Ross and Solinger 2017; Taylor 2016). Scholarship outlines how people come to protest based on anger and discontent, but involvement is only maintained through community, safety, education and resources provided by political organizations (Bush 2000; Carruthers 2018; Collins 2005; Davis 2016).

Moving Toward a Transformative Healing Justice Model

Figure 1: Transformational Healing Justice Model



In the first stage of THJM, participants debrief from violence through discussion and education to establish root causes of their oppression and build their political consciousness through workshops, teach ins, retreats etc. (Pennell and Maher 2015; Katz-Fishman Scott 2006, Destine and Katz-Fishman 2018). In the second stage, participants are provided the space, tools, and know-how to heal and fortify themselves to re-establish community health as a priority in spite of capitalist motives through healing circles, mindful practices, debriefs etc. (Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Crenshaw et al. 2015). In the last stage, participants establish connections with other organizations fighting the root causes of oppression to build capacity for a long-term movement through working groups, workshops, retreats, healing and restorative practices (Page and Raffo 2014; The

Movement for Black Lives 2016; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Pennell and Maher 2015; Katz-Fishman Scott 2006, Destine and Katz-Fishman 2018).

The Transformational Healing Justice Model is rooted in a radical approach to public sociology and years of grassroots movement building, because it follows three major stages – to raise consciousness, sustain social movements and building people power toward a multi-gendered, multi-ethnic, etc. working-class movement (Destine and Katz-Fishman 2018; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2016; Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). This is all done through intense political education for movement participants to gain the education necessary to fight the root causes of their oppression. Transformational Healing Justice Model expands on CVS by incorporating restorative and healing praxes for movement participants to subside intra-movement conflict, institute care in these organizations and provide space for dealing with harm to these communities (Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Page and Raffo 2014; Pennell and Maher 2015; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). This study will outline a need for the THJM.

The Study

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Percentage Distribution

| Socio-Demographic Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Gender | | |
| Cis-Female | 29 | 97% |
| Gender Non-Conforming | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |
| Age (years) | | |
| 18-21 | 14 | 47% |
| 22-25 | 4 | 13% |
| 25-30 | 4 | 13% |
| 31-40 | 8 | 27% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |
| Religion | | |
| Baptist | 10 | 33% |
| Islam | 1 | 3% |
| Unitarian | 1 | 3% |
| Catholic | 2 | 7% |
| Spiritual | 2 | 7% |
| Christian | 4 | 13% |
| Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church | 1 | 3% |
| Other | 2 | 7% |
| Not religious or religiously affiliated | 7 | 23% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |
| Sexual Orientation | | |
| Lesbian | 2 | 7% |
| Bisexual | 5 | 17% |
| Queer | 5 | 17% |
| Straight | 18 | 60% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

Table 1 Cont'd. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Percentage Distribution

| Socio-Demographic Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Activism | | |
| Organizer | 4 | 13% |
| Educator | 11 | 37% |
| Direct-Action (protest) | 10 | 33% |
| Leader | 3 | 10% |
| Participant | 1 | 3% |
| Administration | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |
| Community Organization | | |
| Think Moor DC | 2 | 7% |
| Black Lives Matter DC | 5 | 17% |
| One DC | 1 | 3% |
| Leaders of A Beautiful Struggle Baltimore | 3 | 10% |
| Baltimore Algebra Project | 2 | 7% |
| Social Media | 2 | 7% |
| BLM, NAACP, YWCA | 1 | 3% |
| Maryland Lead | 1 | 3% |
| On Campus | 1 | 3% |
| UMD Office of Diversity & Inclusion | 1 | 3% |
| NAACP | 1 | 3% |
| UMD Black Student Org | 1 | 3% |
| Out for Justice | 1 | 3% |
| Baltimore United for Change | 1 | 3% |
| N/A | 7 | 23% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

As depicted in Table 1, respondents were predominantly between 18 to 25 years old, religiously affiliated, cisgender, heterosexual, college educated and were new to activism amongst various organizations. These socio-demographic characteristics could have had an effect on the findings, particularly dealing with the variability in connections to M4BL platform or goals for sustaining movement.

Respondents were recruited between September 2016 and December 2016 in Maryland and Washington, D.C. at universities and political organizations for this study through university listservs, activist networks and the researcher attending activist events. Five focus groups conducted on a two-hour average proved the best method to gather data because it allowed the researcher to probe, gather in-depth data and evaluate the organizational differences (Daniel 2012; Sobo 2016). The interview schedule was detailed and evaluated to discuss intra-movement conflict, political education, and healing practices of the participants. Respondents chose different names for this study to maintain anonymity.

The focus groups populated three themes in line with the research objectives, which is seen here as follows: (A) *Intra-Movement Conflicts*, (B) *Political Education* (C) *Transformative Healing Justice*. These themes arise about participants in an effort to understand local operations of transformative justice and movement politics amongst movement actors.

Findings

Intra-Movement Conflicts

Since this national movement is led by the coalition of Black women, questions of perceived internal conflicts were posited and themes such as sexism, racism, homophobia and ableism arise. Most of the participants saw sexism and homophobia as a barrier to coalition in the anti-racist movement (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; hooks 1999). This is shown here when Princess, a 32 year-old educator in Washington, D.C. who identifies as a lesbian, noted sexism in social movement spaces by saying:

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... now that it's taking off, I feel like men are 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 Black women. Princess' quote mirrors a strong body of literature on inequality of Black women and femmes organizing in past and current movements, whose contributions were diminished by their male and white middle class women counterparts (Collins 2002; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Henderson, Scott, and Mendenhall 2016; Ransby 2003). This outlines a need for this care work to be institutionalized in movements and given credence as instrumental to political praxis (The Movement for Black Lives 2016). Also, Elmo in Baltimore was able to highlight how external forces could exacerbate the gender relations in Black liberation movements, by pointing to the lure of men to be spotlighted. Elmo, a 37 year-old administrator from Baltimore who identifies as heterosexual, 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 access, 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.

Elmo is the administrator of a grassroots organization in Baltimore and brings her experience from this capacity. While Princess saw inequality from a position of intra-racial conflict, Elmo highlights the ways in which external politics play into this dynamic. The infiltration, discord and silencing of past Black liberation organizations have often been sparked by external surveillance and interference (Collins 2002; Davis 2011; Taylor 2016).

Elizabeth, a 23 year-old from Maryland who identifies as heterosexual, 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, they're 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 (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; hooks 1999). Many understood it within the historical context of previous 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; ya'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 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, a 19 year-old social media activist in Maryland who identifies as gender non-conforming, 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 ya'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, femme, differently abled and queer folk (Collins 2002; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2011; Ransby 2003). However, there were a couple of women who just thought that disproportionate depiction of male victims by media outlets was the problem because it didn't help to raise the consciousness of the community about the myriad of ways police violence is experienced across the community (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Henderson, Scott, and Mendenhall 2016; Ritchie 2017).

Most participants discussed that the leadership and organization of movements by Black women and femmes are not new, but it is taking on a more visible role in this contemporary movement (Carruthers 2018; Khan-Cullors and bandeles 2018; Ransby 2018). For that reason, the focus is broader and more inclusive because marginalized folks are making sure it is 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 (Collins 2005; Crenshaw 2000).

However, there were a few participants who did not 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 were due to individual conflicts. Ella B, a 27 year-old organizer in Baltimore who identifies as heterosexual, 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 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 (Ransby 2003). Ella B. felt that the same egos that exist in humans in every organization make it difficult in grassroots organizations. While women are the majority in this participant's organization, she felt that having too many women participate caused imbalances. Seaweed Salad, a 31 year-old leader who identified as heterosexual, 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. This complicates the literature on gender dynamics in Black social movements because it explores patriarchy more specifically as a system of oppression that can foster divisions regardless of the gender identity of the people that comprise the organization. Seaweed Salad's perception of a successful women-led organization being trivial and argumentative is important to outlining the importance of demystifying patriarchy as well as Ella B's perception that ego, infiltrators and detractors can cause dissension. Both are seen in Black liberation movements throughout time and have stemmed from patriarchy, classism and external political interference (Collins 2002; Fanon 2007; Ransby 2003). These are the particular intra-movement conflicts that show the need for a Transformative Healing Justice Model.

Another major point of contention that a few participants brought up was the issue of accessibility, by mentioning how social media platforms and other forms of participation expand who gets to participate in actions (Brown et al. 2017). This is explained by Octavia, a 19 year-old gender non-conforming social media activist in Maryland:

I feel like these different aspects when you come together it brings together like different groups of people cause like let's say differently abled 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 protesting can be physically inaccessible to certain populations and being inclusive can help mediate that obstacle. The issue of ability rarely comes up in an effort to make mobilization more accessible (Brown et al. 2017; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2011, 2016). However, this point will move the literature towards a Transformational Healing Justice Model that is comprehensive and accessible. This model will reiterate political education provided by past and current Black liberation movements and the ways in which they navigated interference, ego, gender inequity etc. while providing spaces to practice restorative justice amongst movement actors. The various gender identities, expressions and sexual orientation could attribute to their keen awareness of this conflict and be beneficial to share with the larger organization.

Political Education

Though many participants believed in contributing to a culturally competent social movement that deals with the intra-movement conflicts, only a few outlined the ends to achieving that goal. These few were more experienced leaders, educators and organizers who believed political education needed to be provided to sustain the Black liberation movement beyond protesting. Sundiatta, the 34 year-old leader and founder of an organization, who identifies as a lesbian, explains this when saying:

I said at one of the protests, 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.

For Sundiatta, she discussed the importance of all forms of activism, but was very adamant about the Black liberation 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 (Carruthers 2018; Fanon 2007; Freire and Macedo 2000; Nilsen and Cox 2013). Sundiatta believes you must "Think Global, Act Local," and she had been doing this informal work by mentoring and educating young Black children in the poorest wards in the District of Colombia. Like Sundiatta, Zoey, a 25 year-old protestor in Washington, D.C. that identifies as bisexual, affirmed that the Black liberation movement could not be developed 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 develop movement goals and a shared vision. Research has highlighted the importance of education to get beyond protesting into sustaining longer term movements (Carruthers 2018; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2006; Taylor 2016). However, Summer, a 23 year-old organizer in Washington, D.C. who identifies as heterosexual, believed that education was a challenge because of the accomplishments from the Black liberation movements in the 1960s. She feared it was an obstacle between past and current generations and missed the chance to educate her generation. Summer states:

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 intergenerational teaching set anti-racist movements back. Though necessary, the generational gap has provided some lessons and presented some challenges (Fanon 2007; Katz-Fishman et al. 2016; Taylor 2016; Winstead 2017).

Though, many of the younger and newer movement actors did not discuss the importance of political education, the older local organizers who are deeply rooted in the community highlighted the importance and had already implemented educational programs. These programs are offered to the community and aid in youth development. Jay Love, a 24 year-old educator in Baltimore who identifies as heterosexual, explained this further:

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 like the Leadership for a Beautiful Struggle (LBS) provided a basis for the broader movement's objectives as seen in the *Movement for Black Lives Platform* (2016) through political education. Though, LBS existed prior to the founding of the national Black Lives Matter organization, they are a part of the M4BL. This organization and one other had already implemented a formal political education program. This is an integral part of movement development and should be fostered to subside intra-movement conflict, and build off racial capital from past movement successes and establish the root causes of oppression (Carruthers 2018; Katz-Fishman and Scott 2016; Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Taylor 2016). By

implementing the THJM, younger and newer movement actors can benefit from the experience of more experienced movement actors and political education.

Building Transformative Healing Justice

Participants were asked to share their self-care practices, if they had any, in order to establish whether this was a formal or informal practice towards movement goals. For many of the women to talk about caring for themselves was not something they had time in which to reflect. However, many women highlighted the importance of their individual self-care practices (Lorde 2012, 2017; Page and Raffo 2014; Ross and Solinger 2017). Many had to ponder about the ways they make time to care for themselves. Elmo, a 34 year-old administrator in Baltimore who identifies as heterosexual, 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, a 22 year-old educator in Washington, D.C. who identifies as heterosexual, 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 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 after traumatic events, these are also practices supported by her organization (Page and Raffo 2014; Ross and Solinger 2017). She also thought that self-care work should be practiced widely throughout all local organizations and institutionalized (Black Lives Matter 2017; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). Pearl talked about the healing power of protest, gathering and healing circles that many other organizations do not implement. In this same vein, Elmo talked about the need to relearn

healing and restoration. Activists who work without processing their trauma could be harmed in the long run. These are important notes to extend the literature on intra-movement restorative and healing practices that often go unnoticed or undervalued (Black Lives Matter 2017; Henderson, Scott, and Mendenhall 2016; Page and Raffo 2014; Ritchie 2017; The Movement for Black Lives 2016).

Scarlett, a 20 year-old educator in Washington, D.C. who identifies as heterosexual, goes further by outlining how important healing is for movement development, but more importantly as a need for the Black community:

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, Mari, a 21 year-old organizer in Baltimore who identifies as queer, 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 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.

Like Scarlett, Mari 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 her local organization in ways that many of her cultural heroes have (Lorde 2012, 2017). She mentioned that self-care work is often looked down upon, but very necessary. This is outlined in the political platforms of the Movement for Black Lives and the U.S. Social Forum in an effort to demystify care work and implement as part of the political praxis (Black Lives Matter 2017; Crenshaw 2000; Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016).

Another prevalent theme was participants identifying the need for self-care being directly connected to the constant barrage of police killings on their social media and the resulting traumatization. Some said they sometimes logged off of social media as a form of self-care. Khadijah, a 30 year-old organizer who identifies as queer, 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... 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.

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 healing justice 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. These informal and formal practices are important to situate in a model for Transformational Healing Justice, because it is not widely practiced in these local organizations, but have proved beneficial to restoring and healing those who do practice (Page and Raffo 2014; The Movement for Black Lives 2016). Therefore, this should be integral to Black liberation politics based on the generational violence and collective trauma produced by society and reproduced in movement conflicts.

Towards a Transformative Healing Justice Model

Though "invisible" in international public discourse of state violence and by the United Nations Human Rights Campaign, Black women show leadership in using a margin-to-center approach to combat state violence. While in the M4BL, Black women and femmes are viewed as divisive when they center their experiences (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015). A few of the older responders were adamant about the need to re-educate for movement development and to subside these intra-movement conflicts (Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016; Freire and Macedo 2000; Nilsen and Cox 2013). These participants were not in the same form of movement participation, but the focus groups allowed for discussion across socio-demographics and organizational affiliations. This proved a need for an inclusive and intersectional approach to social movement building for all participants that centered healing and political education.

Self-care or healing justice did not arise as a theme for all organizations represented, but participants believed in its significance to social movement building (Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Page and Raffo 2014; Ransby 2018; Ross and Solinger 2017). Most of the participants had informal ways of taking time to care for themselves and believed in its benefit in dealing with trauma. The focus group may have initiated the conversation for women who have not implemented self-care as part of a formal political practice. It proved a need for organizations to implement these practices as part of their socialization and a form of "healing justice" (Khan-Cullors and bandele 2018; Page and Raffo 2014; Ross and Solinger 2017).

Per the narratives provided here, the development of this movement is in its early stages. A Transformational Healing Justice Model can aid in building political education tools for intra-movement conflicts to be subsided, create a unified vision, aid in strategy and ultimately

strengthen a broad based grassroots movement (Battle 2016; Crenshaw 2000; Davis 2016; Nilsen and Cox 2013). Lessons from past movements, class-consciousness raising about systemic solutions and the root of sexism, racism, homophobia etc. could be beneficial to local organizations (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016; Freire and Macedo 2000; Nilsen and Cox 2013). As participants suggests, movement actors could benefit knowing the ways in which the state has thwarted movement efforts, but also on the shared experiences of current state violence and oppression of movement actors and the ways to mitigate it (Battle 2016; Crenshaw et al. 2015; Davis 2016; Freire and Macedo 2000; Nilsen and Cox 2013). Lastly, organizations should share their best practices of self-care to be institutionalized as part of the political practice. In this way, movement actors can be fortified and re-committed to a long-term struggle. This research demonstrated a need for building people power across issues, unifying a shared vision to be implemented and the need for a Transformative Healing Justice Model that centers healing and restoration to movement actors to sustain their political work. Limitations are found with a small sample consisting of mostly younger protestors with shorter movement histories in Maryland and Washington, D.C. that is not representative of all of the M4BL. However, this study's purpose is to connect the work of local organizations to the broader platform of M4BL and to establish a model for holistic social movement organizing across issues and borders based on a specific case that have implications for sustaining the fight for human rights.

References

- Battle, Nishaun T. 2016. "From Slavery to Jane Crow to Say Her Name: An Intersectional Examination of Black Women and Punishment." *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 15(1):109–36.
- Black Lives Matter. 2017. "Healing Justice Toolkit." *Black Lives Matter*. Retrieved December 5, 2018 (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/resource/healing-justice-toolkit/>).
- Brewer, Rose, Walda Katz-Fishman, M. Bahati Kuumba, and N. Rousseau. 2005. "Women Confronting Terror: Land, Labor, Power, & Our Bodies." *Project South: We All Count, We Will Not Be Erased*. Retrieved September 27, 2018 (<https://projectsouth.org/product/roots-of-terror/>).
- Brown, Melissa, Rashawn Ray, Ed Summers, and Neil Fraistat. 2017. "#SayHerName: A Case Study of Intersectional Social Media Activism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies; London* 40(11):1831–46.
- Bush, Roderick D. 2000. *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*. Revised edition. New York: NYU Press.
- Campaign, Human Rights. 2018. "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions." *Human Rights Campaign*. Retrieved October 30, 2018 (<http://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions/>).
- Carruthers, Charlene. 2018. *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1989. "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought." *Signs* 14(4):745–73.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2002. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2005. *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. 1 edition. New York: Routledge.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2000. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." 31.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Andrea J. Ritchie, Rachel Anspach, Rachel Gilmer, and Luke Harris. 2015. *Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women*. African American Policy Forum, Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies, Columbia Law School.
- Daniel, Johnnie. 2012. *Sampling Essentials: Practical Guidelines for Making Sampling Choices - SAGE Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Davis, Angela. 2016. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Davis, Angela Y. 2011. *Women, Race, & Class*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Destine, Shaneda and Walda Katz-Fishman. 2018. "A Critical Pedagogy with College and High School Students in St. Louis Post-Mike Brown." *Humanity & Society* 42(2):245–54.
- Fanon, Frantz. 2007. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove/Atlantic, Inc.
- Freire, Paulo and Donaldo Macedo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th Anniversary Edition*. 30th Anniversary edition. New York: Continuum.
- Harvey, David. 2007. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Henderson, Loren, Barbara M. Scott, and Ruby Mendenhall. 2016. "Hidden America: The Ripple Effects Black Women and Families Face When Living With and Responding To Structural Inequality and Violence." *Issues in Race & Society: An Interdisciplinary Global Journal* 4(1):9–35.
- Hill, Sean. 2017. "Precarity in the Era of #BlackLivesMatter." *Women's Studies Quarterly; New York* 45(3/4):94–109.
- hooks, bell. 1999. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. 59867th edition. Boston, Mass: South End Press.
- Katz-Fishman, Walda and Jerome Scott. 2006. "A Movement Rising: Consciousness, Vision, and Strategy from the Bottom Up." Pp. 69–81 in *Public Sociology Reader*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Katz-Fishman, Walda and Jerome Scott. 2016. "The Collapse of Global Capitalism and the Movement Toward Socialism in the Twenty-First Century: New Beginnings." *Beyond the Global Capitalist Crisis*. Retrieved September 26, 2018 (<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/>).
- Katz-Fishman, Walda, Jerome Scott, and Shaneda Destine. 2016. "The Dispossessed and Disposable: Today's Rising Movement Engages Frantz Fanon." *Issues in Race & Society: An Interdisciplinary Global Journal* 4(1):62–81.
- Khan-Cullors, Patrisse and asha bandele. 2018. *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lartey, Jamiles. 2016. "Coalition of Activists Affiliated with Black Lives Matter Outline Policy Agenda." *The Guardian*, August 1.
- Lorde, Audre. 2012. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley, California: Potter/Ten Speed/Harmony/Rodale.
- Lorde, Audre. 2017. *A Burst of Light: And Other Essays*. Mineola, New York: Courier Dover Publications.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald and Lawrence Cox. 2013. "What Would a Marxist Theory of Social Movements Look Like?" Pp. 63–82 in *Marxism and Social Movements*. BRILL.
- Page, Cara and Susan Raffo. 2014. "Healing Justice at the US Social Forum (1) | Psychological Trauma | Alternative Medicine." *Scribd*. Retrieved September 26, 2018 (<https://www.scribd.com/document/147620375/Healing-Justice-at-the-US-Social-Forum-1>).
- Pennell, James R. and Tim Maher. 2015. "Whom Will Sociology Serve? Transforming the Discipline by Engaging Communities." *Humanity & Society* 39(1):47–63.
- Ransby, Barbara. 2003. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ of North Carolina Press.
- Ransby, Barbara. 2018. *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century*. Oakland, California: Univ of California Press.
- Ritchie, Andrea J. 2017. *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 2014. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Ross, Loretta and Rickie Solinger. 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. Oakland, California: Univ of California Press.
- Schilt, Kristen and Laurel Westbrook. 2009. "Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: 'Gender Normals,' Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality - Kristen

- Schilt, Laurel Westbrook, 2009.” Retrieved September 27, 2018
(<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243209340034?journalCode=gasa>).
- Sheriff, Natasja. 2015. “US Cited for Police Violence, Racism in Scathing UN Review on Human Rights.” Retrieved September 27, 2018
(<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/11/us-faces-scathing-un-review-on-human-rights-record.html>).
- Sobo, Elisa Janine. 2016. *Culture and Meaning in Health Services Research : An Applied Approach*. London, UK: London Routledge.
- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Haymarket Books.
- The Guardian. 2016. “The Counted: People Killed by Police in the United States – Interactive | US News | The Guardian.” Retrieved September 27, 2018
(<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database>).
- The Movement for Black Lives. 2016. *A Vision For Black Lives: Policy Demands For Black Power, Freedom, & Justice*.
- Winstead, Kevin C. 2017. “Black Catholicism and Black Lives Matter: The Process towards Joining a Movement.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*; *London* 40(11):1855–63.