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The Praxis of Transformative and Healing Justice: Disrupting School to Confinement Pathways

Michael Roy
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The Praxis of Transformative and Healing Justice: Disrupting School to Confinement Pathways

Abstract
This work examines a school to confinement pathway as a collection of policies and practices that represent structural violence. These structural issues are placed into a framework of community wellness, which recognizes the interconnection of sites of wellness between personal, organizational, and community as well as how the lack of wellness at any of these affects the individual's agency to change circumstances at these various sites. Restorative justice, the popular solution to school to confinement pathways is explored and expanded to show its placement within a larger healing justice framework that recognizes the need to heal from a lack of wellness to build agency and uses the vision of transformative justice to re-imagine the structures that ultimately cause a lack of wellness. A case study from a nonprofit in Chicago doing Kingian Nonviolence Training is presented, and the healing justice framework applied in analysis.

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LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

Senior Thesis

The Praxis of Transformative and Healing Justice: Disrupting School to Confinement Pathways

by

Michael Roy

August 30, 2017

The report of the investigation undertaken as a Senior Thesis, to carry two courses of credit in the Self Designed Major

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ABSTRACT

This work examines a school to confinement pathway as a collection of policies and practices that represent structural violence. These structural issues are placed into a framework of community wellness, which recognizes the interconnection of sites of wellness between personal, organizational, and community as well as how the lack of wellness at any of these affects the individual’s agency to change circumstances at these various sites. Restorative justice, the popular solution to school to confinement pathways is explored and expanded to show its placement within a larger healing justice framework that recognizes the need to heal from a lack of wellness to build agency and uses the vision of transformative justice to reimagine the structures that ultimately cause a lack of wellness. A case study from a nonprofit in Chicago doing Kingian Nonviolence Training is presented, and the healing justice framework applied in analysis.

Healing justice, transformative justice, school-to-prison pipeline
to

OBIOMA NNAEMEKA

&

LAURA HOLT

there are no words for the gratitude I have
my time at IUPUI with each of you has changed my life forever
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Dear Black folks,


You unconditionally deserve love and safety. Unconditionally.

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INTRODUCTION

In his essay, “Note to Educators: Hope Required When Growing Roses in Concrete,” long time urban educator Jeffrey Duncan-Arnade (2009) contends that youth in urban schools and environments in the United States are suffering from three types of false hope often promulgated in schools that are fostered by decades of disinvestment in schools and overinvestment in a prison industrial complex (pp. 181-182).

The three types of false hope are hokey hope, mythical hope, and hope deferred (Duncan-Arnade, 2009, p. 182). Hokey hope refers to the American bootstrap mythology which suggests that if youth just work hard enough they will achieve the “American dream” and is hokey because it ignores the inequalities that impact the lives of urban youth before they even get to “under resourced schools that reinforce an uneven playing field” (p. 182). Mythical hope works on the colorblindness perspective and removes the historical suffering of and present day structural violence that causes suffering for people of color (pp. 183-184). Finally, hope deferred is pedagogy that sets sights on a distant future well-being rather than confronting the reality of the sheer volume of the stress of social inequality and poverty on students and the long and strenuous road to get to that distant future (p. 185).

I share these three types of hope because they represent a context of structural violence that urban youth experience: before these youth are even able to attend school they seem to have a predetermined fate that limits them, premature endings to stories that have not really even begun to be written. Michelle Alexander (2012) identifies that young black men in their teens are
often told that they will amount to nothing and that they are nothing but a criminal (p. 165). This context and sentiment surrounding youth who are not granted a fair shot because of the color of their skin or economic status are the inspiration for this thesis, in which I specifically explore the over punishment of youth of color through the manifestation of structural violence as school to confinement pathways and the developing programs and frameworks of resistance.

In Chapter One I discuss the policies and practices the lead to a school to prison pipeline as well as suggest a different metaphor / framework of a birdcage for understanding the structural violence that the pipeline represents. In Chapter Two I provide an overview of a common alternative to punitive discipline: restorative justice, claim it is not enough, and outline transformative justice as a useful framework in abolishing school to confinement pathways and the structural violence they manifest from. In Chapter Three I view these pathways and accompanying structural violence as a community wellness issue and propose a little written about framework of healing justice that encapsulates both restorative and transformative justice. In Chapter Four I present a case study of a Chicago nonprofit doing Kingian Nonviolence trainings and evaluate it based on a healing justice framework for how it tackles both over-punishment and school to confinement pathways as well as transforms systemic inequality. Finally, in Chapter Five I conclude with further case study discussion and put forth the idea of audacious hope for abolition of oppressive structures.
EXAMINING AND INTERROGATING THE “SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE”

“Every man in my family has been locked up. Most days I feel like it doesn’t matter what I do, how hard I try—that’s my fate, too.”
—11th-grade African American student, Berkeley, Calif.
Rethinking Schools

Students of color are being disproportionately suspended from schools compared to their white peers for the same or lesser infractions (Losen, 2013, p. 391). After they are removed from classrooms they become more likely to dropout, commit crime, and become part of the justice system. This process is known by educational reform and legal scholars as the school to prison pipeline. According to these scholars, school disciplinary policies and practices are discriminatory as well as overly punitive and lead vulnerable youth on a path to prison rather than a high school diploma.

In this chapter I will examine the emergence of school policies and practices and their possible connections to incarceration rates. Then I will describe the (emergence of the) pipeline metaphor in school reform and law review literature as a possible explanation and theoretical heuristic to guide school reform. Finally, I will interrogate the pipeline metaphor to encourage expanded views of the social, political, and economic forces at work in the increased incarceration rates of minority youth. In doing so I suggest a new intersectional and multifaceted framework that moves beyond the metaphor of the pipeline and looks toward the systemic root causes of these incarceration rates. Such a framework reveals the realities of the landscape youth must navigate whereby the odds are stacked against them and punishment is not only in punitive discipline but also a lack of access to resources and equity. In other words, just being born a person of color or in an impoverished zip code increases the likelihood of being subject to the punishment of lacking access to a quality
education and upward social mobility.
Zero Tolerance and Resulting Conditions

Zero-tolerance policies are “get tough” policies that mandate specific consequences in response to certain student behavior (Rodriguez, 2017, p. 808). Essentially designed on a “one strike and you’re out” principle, they are meant to deter misbehavior, present quick and effective solutions, and provide consistency on punishment (Rodriguez, 2017, p. 815; and Curtis, 2014, p. 2). The specific term “zero-tolerance” originated during Reagan’s presidency with the war on drugs in the 1980s (Fuentes, 2011, p. 18). This context is important as the war on drugs has been identified by Michelle Alexander (2012) as a targeted campaign against the black community and a new method of social control, which constitutes what she refers to as a New Jim Crow (pp. 1-19). With the 1986 passage of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act the war on drugs was brought to schools with rules that mandated zero-tolerance for any drugs or alcohol on public school grounds (Fuentes, 2011, p. 18). Alexander points out the connection between zero-tolerance and the drug war by referencing an Advancement Project (2005) report that shows one of the earliest examples of zero tolerance language in school discipline manuals as being a “cut and paste job from a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration manual” (Sokolower, 2011, p. 14).

Zero-tolerance policies were bolstered by the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act, which tied Title 1 school funding to the mandate that schools implement policies requiring at least a one year expulsion of any person that brings a firearm to school (Curtis, 2014, p. 2). Over the years, zero tolerance policies were applied to other disciplinary infractions including cigarette smoking and other forms of misconduct related to cheating, swearing, or disrupting class (Monahan et al., 2014, p. 1111).
This and other acts passed in the 1990s made a bridge between zero-tolerance and the justice system. Losen (2013) states that the Safe Schools Act (also called the Guns Free School Act) of 1994 and amendment in 1998 as well as both amendments to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 “promoted and funded partnerships for in-school police forces,” placing aptly titled school resource officers in primary and secondary schools (p. 7). While zero-tolerance was originally aimed at drugs and left over from a social milieu associated with the drug war, this new round of legislation was the Clinton administration’s response to a new context of school violence defined by mass shootings in school such as Westside Middle School in Arkansas and later the massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado (Losen, 2013, p. 20).

Despite the intention of Senators Feinstein and Dorgan in passing the Safe Schools Act to create “places where children escape the violence that engulfs so many of their lives” the resulting practice of zero-tolerance policies are problematic for a number of reasons (which I will explore in the following subsections): punitive discipline has not been found to be effective, there is a racial disproportionality in punishment, schools become criminalized and therefore foster a link between schools and prisons, and there is a failure to contextualize the lives of students the acts seek to protect (Mongan and Walker, 2012, p. 1). Failure to contextualize the lives of students is especially significant as it results in a surface level analysis of misbehavior instead of acknowledging misbehavior as a potential result of the structural violence that plagues the lives of youth, which can consequently turn schools from a beacon of opportunity to yet another institution perpetuating this same structural violence.
Problematizing Punitive Discipline

Thalia Gonzalez (2012) cites consistent documentation that punitive disciplinary practices not only deprive students of educational opportunities but also fail to make schools safer places (p. 282). Rather than punitive practices she instead points to more effective maintenance of safe communities when discipline is approached through “responsive, reiterative, and restorative mechanisms,” which I will discuss in Chapter Two (p. 298). Between punitive measures such as suspension and expulsion, suspensions are more broadly used across the educational system with a rate of thirty-two to one (Losen, 2013, p. 389). According to the United States Department of Education 3.25 million students (7% of all enrolled students) are estimated to have been suspended at least once with an average of 18,000 students being suspended each day school is in session (Losen, 2013, p. 389).

Losen (2013) identifies three reasons for the use of out-of-school suspension for nonviolent school code violations: to improve a student’s behavior in the future by getting the parents’ attention and active involvement; to set an example and deter misbehavior from other students; and to ensure the school environment is conducive to learning and teaching (p. 392). However, as Losen (2013) notes, the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health (2003) asserts that for students experiencing major stressors in their home life, an academic suspension adds another layer that, when mixed with the already existing stressors, can predispose them to even higher risks of behavioral problems (p. 394). Furthermore, with a lack of access to services such as doctors, mental health professionals, school counselors, or a parent at home, youth are more likely to commit crimes (p. 394).
Prevention study supports this, finding that when youth are not in school they are more likely to become involved in physical altercations and carry a weapon (p. 394). It also specifically identifies that the lack of professional assistance at the time of exclusion—when it is really needed—increases the risk of permanent school dropout (p. 394). Evidence of the final stop on the road toward incarceration, from suspension creating increased risk of both behavioral issues and weapons involvement to poor reintegration leading to an increase in the risk of dropping out, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice found that dropouts are three and a half times more susceptible to being arrested and that eighty two percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts (Rodriguez, 2017, p. 811).

By using absence as a form of punishment, schools are removing students causing a “problem” instead of problem solving in rehabilitative or constructive ways. Students already behind in school may have to miss more days, which can lead to a loss of credit, setting them on a rocky path to graduation, and the inability to catch up (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 296). Gonzalez (2012) states that once removed from schools, students experience decreased academic achievement, which can further fuel negative attitudes and lead to increased drop out rates.

The Advancement Project et al. (2011) indicates that once students are removed from school it is often difficult to overcome such barriers to reentry and successful high school completion (Mallett, 2016, p. 19). Even if youth make it out of the system and back into schools the Advancement Project (2005) also recognizes the long-term repercussions of system involvement as their records can haunt them when applying to college, scholarships, government grants, the military, or in finding employment (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 11). In another blow, Heitzeg (2009) points out that because of this, system involved families can even
be prevented from publicly subsidized housing (p. 11).

Rocio Rodriquez (2017) shows the widespread ramifications of suspension and zero-tolerance: kids who are not in classrooms are more likely to drop out of school, which means they are not prepared to get a job and become a fruitful citizen. This then has social consequences such as forgone national income and tax revenue, an increased demand for social services, increased crime, reduced political participation, reduced intergenerational mobility, and poorer levels of health (p. 810). While it is not definitive that youth who are not in classrooms will ultimately experience, or indeed cause, all that Rodriquez mentions, it is more than reasonable to make these broader connections, which serve to show how seriously we should examine the issue of the rising prevalence of school suspensions and zero tolerance. It is important to note, however, that evidence shows that students of color and poor students are disproportionately targeted for suspension.

Racial and Economic Disparities

There is a racial and economic disparity in school punishment that exists in the rate of punishment, the type of punishment, and reasons for punishment. Meier as cited in Noguera (2003) observes that the students who are most likely to be suspended, expelled, or removed from classrooms comprise an overrepresentation of minorities, especially Blacks and Latinos, males, and low achievers (p. 342). Beyond this Skiba asserts that a disproportionate number of students receiving the most severe punishments are students with learning disabilities, students in foster care or engaged with protective custody, students experiencing homelessness, and students on a free or reduced lunch program (as cited in Noguera, 2003, p. 342). This means that there are issues of race, class,
and ability that are both at work and interlocking (a framework I will examine later in this chapter). However, Losen (2013), does point out that race makes a significant contribution in explaining punishment above and beyond socio-economic status (p. 394).

The rate of K-12 suspension rates has increased for all groups since the early 1970s, however, it has more than doubled for all nonwhites as a whole (Losen, 2013, p. 389). The black white gap has tripled, rising from a three-percentage point separation in the 1970s to over ten percentage points in 2006 meaning that one in seven black students are suspended at least once compared with one in twenty white students (Losen, 2012, p. 389). A 2014 brief by the Office of Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education states that, on average, 4.6% of white students are suspended compared with 16.4% of black students, a gap of almost twelve percentage points, a suspension rate three times higher for blacks compared to their white peers (Rodriquez, 2017, p. 9). Rodriguez (2017) points out the large disparity between the number of black students in the nation’s educational system to the proportion of punishment they receive: African American students make up only sixteen percent of the student population but account for forty two percent of multiple out of school suspensions (p. 813). In contrast, white students make up fifty one percent of the student population but only account for thirty one percent of multiple out of school suspensions and thirty six percent of expulsions (Rodriquez, 2017, p. 813).

This large disparity between punishment of whites and blacks grows even more concerning as research so far has found no evidence that the black overrepresentation in school suspension is due to higher rates of misbehavior (Kelly as cited in Losen, 2013, p. 391). In fact, Fabelo et al. (2011) point to a
Council of State Governments Report, which found that black students were more likely to be disciplined for less serious discretionary offenses while higher percentages of whites are disciplined on more serious nondiscretionary grounds such as possessing drugs or carrying a weapon (Losen, 2013, p. 391). Heitzeg (2009) cites an overview of a study by Skiba that expands upon the different types of punishments: white students were commonly referred to the office for “smoking, leaving without permission, vandalism, and obscene language” while black students were referred for “disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering” (p. 3). In this instance researchers noted that while it may be difficult to tell which offenses are more serious, the referrals of black students required more subjectivity on the part of the referring person (Heitzeg, 2017, p. 3).

This requires an examination of teacher bias and racism in schools. According to Witt (2007), white teachers (who make up the majority of teachers) tend to feel more threatened by boys of color (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 12). Furthermore, Currie (2005) argues that teachers and school officials have a tendency to define disruptive white youth as in need of medical attention, rather than zero tolerance related consequences (which points to a disparity in identification of disability or social/emotional concerns) (as cited in Heitzeg, 2009, p. 12). For example, Safe and Malever (2001) point out that teachers are more likely to expect and define ADHD as an issue for white boys (as cited in Heitzeg, 2009, p. 12). These issues are concerning and call for a broader inquiry into implicit bias and racism in teachers.

*Criminalization of Schools*

The enactment of zero-tolerance policies has led to the criminalization of schools, which in turn further affects the school learning environment. In the
timeframe between the 1994 Safe Schools Act and the 2002 passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, police in schools became the norm in many school districts with more than one billion dollars spent by federal agencies and the employment of over 17,000 officers annually (Mallett, 2016, p. 20). According to the Justice Policy Institute almost 50% of schools have a “school resource officer” on their campus (Mallett, 2016, p. 20). These officers are typically police officers from the local police department and thus do not answer to nor are employed by the school district (Mallett, 2016, p. 20). This is important because these officers, who are not under the control of the school, are an arm of the justice system and not only have become institutionalized fixtures in schools but are consequently a link to and potential steward of the system they represent.

With the introduction of police in the school environment, schools have begun to reflect a prison atmosphere with metal detectors, security cameras, locker and person searches, drug sniffing dogs and other accouterments of formal legal control (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 9). According to the Advancement Project (2005), this in fact lowers morale, makes learning more difficult, creates negative attitudes towards school, engenders a mistrust between students and teachers and is actually associated with an increase in school disorder (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 13 and Gonzalez, 2012, p. 288). Furthermore, youth are also double charged as they are punished at school and then again in the justice system for the same incident (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 13).

Interestingly, No Child Left Behind exacerbates the criminality of schools with Mallett (2016) noting the recent state waivers to the act failing to provide the necessary funding to address the resource disparity among the nation’s schools, but instead providing funding for school based law enforcement officers
and in fact encouraging the officers’ involvement in “problem or disruptive student discipline” (p. 19). Because of this NCLB actually makes embracing zero-tolerance and school criminalization the easy way out for schools who need funding.

Designed to hold schools accountable for student performance, NCLB ties school funding to student performance on standardized tests. This becomes problematic for schools that are at the intersection of poverty and poor performance and consequently leads to schools teaching to the test, removing low performing students by referring them to alternative schools and GED programs, eliminating them from attendance rolls, or enacting zero tolerance policies to remove them (Mallett, 2016, p. 19). Here schools trying to gain access to more financial resources actually end up ignoring the systemic problems that lead to poor education performance and may instead look to harsh discipline policies, which provide them with an easy way to remove “problem” students and mask educational deficiencies (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 5). A cycle can be observed here where schools in need are monetarily punished for having need, or in other words, the structures (policies and practices) are designed so that these usually high poverty and high minority schools are trapped.

_Contextualizing Lives_

Because zero-tolerance policies are “one strike and you’re out” they don’t leave wiggle room for context to be considered by school administrators. Such a lack of contextualized repercussion is highly problematic because the circumstances in which incidents occur can be vastly different. Therefore, one standardized set of punishments is too narrow to be applied uniformly. Zero-tolerance policies eliminate consideration and critical thought on behalf of school
administrators and police officers regarding why events occur, what motivates students’ involvement, and any potential mitigating history that may have led to the event occurring (Mallett, 2016, pg. 19). It is context, which enlightens the conversation around zero-tolerance and allows us to explore the interlocking racial and social forces at work beyond a surface level analysis of behavior.

Here the conversation should move beyond the disproportionate punishment of black students and shift to seeking to understand why black students are punished disproportionately in schools. Here, punishment needs to be understood more broadly than punitive but rather viewing schools as a part of a punishing system where black students and students from poor backgrounds (which are not mutually exclusive) are set up to fail as they enter into schools that do not provide them access. The connections between race and socioeconomic status result in students attending schools with concentrated poverty and a lack of services as compared to their white counterparts. Noguera (2003), captures this circumstance well: “throughout the United States, schools most frequently punish the student who have the greatest academic, social, economic, and emotional needs” (Johnson et al. as cited in Noguera, p. 342).

Citing Orfield, Fry, and Taylor, Mallett (2016) states that re-segregation is occurring across many districts, which further separates students and neighborhoods by race and class (p. 20) Furthermore he argues that nationwide the average African American student attends a school where nearly two out of every three classmates are low-income, which is double the comparative Caucasian student rate (Orfield, Fry and Taylor in Mallet, 2016, p. 20). African American students are predominately in lower income districts, which the Children’s Defense Fund identifies as having fewer educational opportunities and
students less likely to enroll in a four-year college (Mallett, 2016, p. 20). Because these schools have such low opportunity, when there is a disciplinary incident well intended educators can be forced into pushing students out (school push out) because they may not have access to “guidance counselors, intervention programs, or other resources to address students with special educational and behavioral needs” (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 14).

Fittingly, Noguera (2003) claims that is the “needs of students and the inability of the school to meet the needs that causes them to be disciplined” (p. 342). Noguera (2003) argues that students do not have hope so they act out because they realize they are not headed toward successful lives or that the odds have been stacked against them and that there are certain labels affixed to them (p. 343). Referencing social reproduction theory, he argues that labeling and exclusionary practices can create the conditions for a self-fulfilling prophecy and result in behavioral cycles that are hard to break (p. 344). In other words, Noguera introduces another lens through which behavior should be considered: some youth may be socialized by the conditions of the school itself to become disciplinary problems.
Addressing the School to Prison Pipeline

Academic discourse has emerged to examine disproportionate punishment of black youth and the correlation between school push out and the likelihood of contact with the justice system. The predominant framework for this is the metaphor of the school to prison pipeline. In this section, I will briefly provide a definition of the pipeline as well as an overview of how some scholars look at it. Then, I will present a scholarly critique on the dangers of pipeline thinking. I will argue that this critique is on the right track in trying to broaden the conversation on the pipeline, but that the idea of a pipeline is still useful for introductory understanding. Ultimately, I will present a new intersectional framework that looks to understanding the social, political, and economic forces that create the conditions of the pipeline and how these shape the realities of youth’s lives. This understanding is crucial for changing the systemic root causes behind these realities.

Exploring the Pipeline

The school to prison pipeline (STPP) metaphor describes the combination of education and public safety practices, such as zero-tolerance, that seek to show how students can be pushed out of classrooms and subsequently be more likely to end up in the justice system (Archer, 2010, p. 868). It seeks to paint a picture of a journey through school that many students of color take which is increasingly punitive and isolating (Walk and Losen, 2003, n.pag). There is a large focus on zero-tolerance polices to understand the pipeline. While this is useful as a starting point to understand the background problem of racially targeted over-punishment the pipeline describes, the research is too narrow, not allowing for the linkages of structural issues the policies represent, which I will actually later
argue, problematize the metaphor itself.

Klutner (2012) suggests that the STPP be analyzed through multiple “faces” (meaning many sides): pedagogical, discursive, disciplinary, legal, policy, and relational (p. 279). These various faces allow for interrogation to occur through multiple interrelated lenses: the pedagogical and epistemological interaction of teacher and student, the social narratives that shape how youth understand themselves and therefore can challenge preconceptions; the ethics and effectiveness of school discipline; civil and human rights issues related to blackness and the legal system; the use of policy to drive and access school performance; and a baseline of compassion and empathy that exists between one another and the institutions people create and take part in (Klutner, 2012, p. 279-280).

McGrew (2016) conversely problematizes the existence of a pipeline as he claims that the metaphor does not accurately capture the social phenomena and economic structures involved and prefers the language related to the prison industrial complex, which connects school failure, incarceration, poverty and unemployment, racism, policing practices, and the legal system as being bound up with a political economic structure to the economic benefit of some over others (p. 344 & 346). While McGrew (2016) seemingly agrees with the discursive faces mentioned above as lenses to view the problem the pipeline tries to describe, he takes issue with the pipeline as the essential explanation for the educational and legal failure of young people of color (p. 347). McGrew views the faces as making up a structure of conditions that are interpreted as a pipeline but are in fact much more complex.

He argues that correlation is not causation and that just because African
American students are more likely to be disciplined and have harsher punishment than white peers (which may lead to drop out and an increased risk of incarceration) does not mean that there is a definitive pipeline, and that this line of thinking confuses surface associations with “the complex relational expression of root causes” (p. 349). McGrew is interested in the broad context behind the correlation and wants to move beyond the idea of a pipeline, asserting that as long as criminalization of youth is conceived as a pipeline problem only pipeline solutions will be proposed (p. 357).

McGrew points to Erica Meiner’s argument, that the pipeline is actually more of a nexus or web of intertwined punitive threads, as a more apt metaphor but ultimately rejects her continued use of the STPP metaphor in her writing (p. 360). Rather McGrew argues that while there is value in the literature of the pipeline, there needs to be the recognition that the pipeline does not exist but is actually social phenomenon and calls for an approach that “better captures the relational nature of social phenomena and holds onto complexity in analysis and theory” (p. 365). McGrew recognizes the benefit of the pipeline as a popular conveyance to a general public of a problem, but insists that it is essential for a robust reform movement to abandon the use of the STPP as it distracts as a problem from the actual real social phenomena (p. 367).

The crux of McGrew’s argument: that there are broad social forces at work, which all coalesce in youth of color being left behind is important. McGrew is correct in that the STPP metaphor is too narrowing, allowing people to look at the pipeline, and the policies and practices that create it, as separate from a society and nation that was founded on white supremacy. Any examination of policies and practices can never be divorced from a critical scrutiny of power, politics,
culture, and economics. For this thesis, I am interested in this critical scrutiny and root causes so now I present a different metaphor / framework / heuristic that locates youth within violent structural inequity.

_Beyond the Pipeline: The Birdcage_

Michelle Alexander undertakes this critical scrutiny of power, politics, culture, and economics in her analysis of the prison industrial complex and mass incarceration. When asked about how her metaphor of a birdcage as a way of describing structural racism and applying that to mass incarceration relates to what is happening to African American youth in our schools, Alexander responds:

The idea of the metaphor is there can be many bars, wires that keep a person trapped. All of them don’t have to have been created for the purpose of harming or caging the bird, but they still serve that function. Certainly youth of color, particularly those in ghetto communities, find themselves born into the cage. They are born into a community in which the rules, laws, policies, and structures of their lives virtually guarantee that they will remain trapped for life (Sokolower, 2011, p. 14).

Alexander goes on to say that the cage, while manifested by the ghetto, which is racially segregated, isolated, and cut off from social and economic opportunities, is in fact the unequal educational opportunities certain children are provided at a very early age, which when combined with the constant police surveillance that they will probably encounter means that they are very likely going to be serving time for minor crimes (particularly drug crimes) that occur with almost equal frequency in middle class white communities but go largely ignored (p 14).

Expertly, Alexander then claims that whether kids go to prison or not is less
about the choices they make than what kind of cage they are born into (p. 14). Here, she points out that middle class children are afforded the opportunity to make a lot of mistakes and still go to college, but for kids born into the ghetto—into poverty—in the era of mass incarceration the system is designed in such a way that traps them for life (p. 14).

I point to this more complex social analysis because it is exactly how we need to be thinking of school reform surrounding the issue the pipeline metaphor attempts to describe: the system is designed in such a way that traps students for life through multiple institutions, not just schools. This is the social phenomena that McGrew argues that we need to take under consideration. In deliberating the intersection of race and punishment in education, scholars need to think of a system that is made up of intersecting layers of political, social, economic, and cultural forces. This relates back to the discursive faces of the pipeline, which should be understood not as different faces of a pipeline but as systemic aspects of societal injustice where punishment is leveled institutionally in housing, healthcare, and food, for those born a certain color and class.

As I move forward through the next chapters I will frequently refer to the metaphor of the birdcage and the power structures it represents. I will also turn away from the use of the metaphor of the school to prison pipeline and instead refer to it as Monique Morris (2016) does: school to confinement pathways (n.pag.). (I may also refer to it as school to prison pathways.) I prefer these phrasings for their replacement of the term pipeline with the concept of pathways. Pathways, as a plural, recognizes the complexities of the various journeys youth may have with schooling, racism, and the criminal “justice” system. It recognizes the differing interactions youth have with the complex and
multiple larger structural issues and forces at work. I do, however, remain committed to the intersectional framework the birdcage metaphor describes.
In a portion of the previous chapter I spent time examining zero tolerance policies: the harsh disciplinary practices, negative effects of zero-tolerance policies, and the role that they play in what is an increasingly punishing system for youth of color. Now, I turn to the primary alternatives used to combat and avoid exacting discipline in schools: Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS) and Restorative Justice (RJ). There is more scholarship pointing to the promise of RJ as an alternative to punitive discipline so I will briefly describe PBIS before presenting a more in-depth overview of RJ. Notably, one group of scholars and activists have distinctly made the claim that Restorative Justice is not enough and instead suggested Transformative Justice as a means to tackle the root causes behind problematic behavior and the structures that make up the previously discussed metaphor of the birdcage. I take up this argument, seek to define transformative justice from a stark lack of scholarship on the topic, explore it in terms of a radical versus assimilationist framework, and ultimately identify distinguishing characteristics that allow for its identification in educational reform and social justice work.
Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems and a Discipline Continuum

Alternatives to out of school suspensions include in-school suspension, counseling, peer-mediation, peer courts, bullying prevention, social and emotional curricula, etc. (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 8). Wadhwa (2015) identifies these interventions as falling on a continuum with some following a “carrot and stick” model rooted in behaviorism that relies on extrinsic motivation to influence students to behave respectfully (p. 8). Knoff describes the other end as the social and emotional curricula that emphasizes the need for students to build their internal capacity to address conflict in productive ways (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 8) The most mentioned models, Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS) and a philosophy called Restorative Justice (RJ), fall on opposite ends of the discipline continuum (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 8)

Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Lead identify the focus of PBIS as “enhanc[ing] the school’s capacity to prevent disruptive behavior, which it does through what Eber et al. categorize as promoting “prosocial behavior” among students without chronic problems as a primary intervention, students at risk for problem behaviors as a secondary intervention, and finally for students with intensive behavioral needs (as cited in Morris, 2016, p. 222). Examples of PBIS at the secondary level include rewarding good behavior (prosocial primary intervention) with tickets that students can use to obtain admission to school dances and punishing bad behavior with detention, time outs, or positive calls home (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 9). According to Bradshaw et al. the model draws on behavioral and social learning that include several school based personnel such as psychologists, guidance counselors, and others equipped to undertake behavioral assessments, and recommend multi-tiered interventions based on
PBIS (Morris, 2016, p. 223). Bradshaw et al. notes that PBIS has shown positive results with a reduction in percentage of children with major and minor office disciplinary events and the overall rate of these events (Morris, 2016, p. 223).

Morris (2016) raises critiques of PBIS by suggesting that the interventions employed place a heavy focus on modifying the behaviors of youth and may miss or underestimate “the oppressive conditions—present in institutions—that place these [students] in harm’s way” (p. 225). Here Morris touches upon how context and root causes of behavior are not addressed by PBIS because the model exists as a surface level intervention that does not inquire about the cause of certain behaviors. Instead she turns to RJ and asserts that PBIS works with what is already going on in the school while RJ aims “to shift the paradigm of accountability,” which in fact “may improve the overall climate for PBIS and other behavior modification programs...” (p. 226). This brings up an important distinction between PBIS and RJ: PBIS is a program whereas RJ is a practice that operates on a broader level to actually become a part of the fabric of day to day lives in schools and define how other programs such as PBIS operate (Elliot in Zellerer; Wadwha, 2015, pg. 10).
**Restorative Justice**

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a form of justice that stresses the repair of harm performed in interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup relationships (Johnson and Johnson, 2012, p. 8). McCluskey et al. (2008) note that these two ideas of repairing both harm and relationships are at the core of RJ literature. Johnson and Johnson (2012) assert that RJ deals with two issues: resolving past conflicts to restore justice among parties and within the community as a whole as well as creating conditions for maintaining ongoing long-term cooperation (p. 8). RJ works through a collaborative process that focuses on repairing harms through reconciliation and dialogue that take into account the needs of the multiple actors involved in an incident as well as the multiple levels of harm that may have occurred (Simson, 2014, p. 553-554).

Schools that utilize RJ focus on reparative acts that lead to the reintegration of the student(s) who caused harm into the community, rather than exiling the student, which increases the potential for separation, resentment, and recidivism (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 300). Simson (2014) notes that the community building and development of problem solving skills, both part of RJ, are particularly beneficial for schools as it allows for the development of a “safe, collaborative, and positive environment in which students are more likely to succeed” (p. 554).

This idea of community building is important as Morrison suggests that with the emphasis of relationships, school communities that utilize restorative practices can develop a community social capital where members take responsibility to repair harm when it occurs, hold each other accountable, and build skills in problem solving (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 300). Gonzalez asserts that in
such an environment shared values of pro-social behavior are learned through modeling, conflict resolution, and mutual support (Stinchomb and Macready, 2006, as cited in Gonzalez, 2012, p. 301). Johnson and Johnson (2012) suggest that this is indicative of a moral community where everyone is included and there is a cooperative context where members share mutual goals such as concern for self and other, trusting others’ needs, and promoting interaction patterns such as accurate communication and perceptions (p. 18, 11).

*Tenets of Restorative Justice*

Simson (2014) suggests that the core values of RJ focus on healing, moral learning, community participation and caring, respectful dialogue, forgiveness, responsibility, apology, and making amends to repair harm done to a relationship and move forward in a positive way (p. 553). In this vein, individuals who commit harm are not conflated with their action (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 10).

A common misperception is that RJ involves a great deal of sitting around and talking, but RJ is an interactive and active process. Zehr asserts that there are three questions central to a restorative process: who has been hurt, what are their needs, and whose obligations are these (Morris, 2016, p. 227). Zehr identifies these questions as associated with what he finds to be the core pillars of RJ: a focus on the harm, understanding the wrongdoing that results in certain obligations, and understanding that RJ requires participation and engagement (Morris, 2016, p. 227).

Johnson and Johnson (2012) claim that there are a number of necessary characteristics for RJ to be created: there must be identifiable victims and offenders, participation of victims and offenders must be voluntary, victims and offenders must have the capacity to engage fully and safely in dialogue and
integrative negotiations, and a facilitator or mediator must be present to provide help and support all parties’ needs (p. 8). They also identify three important aspects of RJ: reconciliation, the emotional reattachment and affiliation between former opponents after the conflict; remorse, the emotional expression of personal regret after an act that the person deems to be shameful, hurtful, or violent; and forgiveness, which occurs when the victim pardons the offender and lets go of any grudges, desires for revenge, or resentment toward the offender (De wall; Roseth et all.; and Enright et al. as cited in Johnson and Johnson, 2012, p. 8-9).

Most importantly, however, is that RJ seems to be a lifestyle or way of being. With terms such as movement, approach, and practice occurring frequently in the literature, it is easy to see how someone could integrate it into their personal philosophy as a way of interaction with others. Boyes and Watson present RJ as a lifestyle with their assertion that the purpose of a circle is to be in a circle when not in a circle – to live out the values and skills learned through RJ in daily life: “A circle is not a technique or a program, but a way to be [...] a commitment to practice living the values of the circle [...] acting in a ‘circle way’ or holding oneself ‘in a good way’ in one’s relationship with one’s self and others” (as cited in Wadwha, 2015, p. 74).

Models of Restorative Justice

The various models of Restorative Justice incorporate different types of practices at various levels of sophistication ranging from simple circle discussions between the victim, offender, a mediator, and any other stakeholders or community members to affective statements that provide for emotion sharing, to whole school implementation and integration across a variety of activities and
disciplinary proceedings (Simson, 2014, p. 554). Models include victim-offender mediation, which involves structured group conferencing aimed at conflict resolution; Family and Group conferencing invites members of the school community in addition to the family members of those involved to participate with the aim of including everyone involved in the incident or conflict; Circle conferencing maintains the parameters of Family and Group but adds anyone who was indirectly harmed by the incident as well (Bazemore, Fork; Jennings et al., as cited in Gonzalez, 2012, p. 301).

Wadhwa (2015) specifically points to talking circles as the foundation for RJ because they “build the kind of bonds and connections” necessary for students and teachers to co-exist peacefully (p. 8). According to Pranis talking circles are for formal and informal conversations as well as building community while healing circles are for addressing conflict (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 8) In healing circles a keeper acts as a facilitator (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 12). Rather than imposing rules the keeper reminds everyone to “keep” to predetermined jointly made agreements such as being truthful and not talking out of turn while also employing Zehr’s three core principles of RJ mentioned above: identify harm, ask about community impact, and determine what can be done to repair the harm (p. 12) Wadhwa (2015) places talking circles and healing circles in what she calls a “restorative feedback loop” where talking circles are proactive whilst healing circles are reactive (p. 48). Following up on agreements is restorative, and both talking and healing are needed to fully implement the principles of RJ (p. 48).

Gonzalez (2012) also puts forth a continuum model, which allows for schools to integrate RJ practices at whatever capacity, be it formal or informal (p. 302). Morrison et al. suggest a continuum as well, which includes proactive and
reactive processes, where proactive steps function to enhance teaching and learning as well as setting boundaries and developing relationships, and reactive steps respond to harm and wrong doing (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 303).

Considerations

Morris (2016) shares an interesting consideration when she points out that the intentional use of restorative approaches to reduce contact with the justice system might also be seen as inherently contradictory since the primary purpose of RJ is to repair relationships, not necessarily to remove or deter children from contact with the juvenile justice system or formal disciplinary boards in schools (a contradiction of the intent of theory vs. practice) (p. 241-242). Here I wonder just how connected RJ is to the actual ideal of racial disproportionality in punishment and the STPP or if it is only talked about as a means to avoid more punitive punishment. Simson (2014) writes that RJ follows an important maxim in CRT – the need to “look to the bottom and listen to those voices who have experienced discrimination” and allowing for the whole story to come out with a focus on root causes behind an incident, potentially including considerations of racial stigma and bias” (p. 559). I wonder if the youth participating in talking or healing circles are vocalizing that teachers may have racial biases.

According to Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, only small studies on youth of color and RJ have been done (Morris, 2016, p. 242). This means that there is an absence of data on outcomes associated with these programs for the very audiences that the programs are proposed to help end the “pushout” of schools for (Morris, 2016, p. 242). (It is important to note that this lack of research limits my work here.) Wadhwa (2015) acknowledges that this gap in the
research of connecting RJ to the pipeline is what led her to do her research work, in which she observed that RJ at its most effective not only keeps students accountable for their behaviors but also creates space for young people to critically analyze the political and economic structures that contribute to their behaviors as well as the very phenomenon she claims the practice is being used to counter – the STPP (p. 25). For her work, however, Wadhwa used a portraiture methodology, meaning she was ingrained in the school as a participant and brought her own values to the work, raising the question of if she just lucked into school where someone was actually talking about the prison industrial complex and having these conversations (p. 26).

Regardless of if these conversations are happening and youth realize that they are a part of the aforementioned birdcage, what are the specific outcomes of having these conversations in relation to actually changing the potential root causes of behavior – the existence of these systems? In other words, RJ addressed conflict in relationships, but what if the conflict results from larger systemic issues? As I wrap this section up I want note that Frampton argues that RJ fails to recognize that some people may not want their relationships restored but instead transformed, which is an important distinction to make given the use of RJ to supposedly address the root causes of conflict that produce “pathways to poor academic performance, educational marginalization, and incarceration” (Morris, 2016, p. 242). We must ask: are we really just restoring the same system that got us to this point?
Envisioning Transformative Justice

In this section I take up the activist scholar’s argument that restorative justice is not enough, explore and envision transformative justice, relate it to a liberationist and assimilationist framework and finally compare the language of restorative justice and transformative justice so that they can both be easily identified and differentiated when evaluating programs. It is important to note that scholarly work around transformative justice (TJ) is extremely limited, especially in relation to the intersection of race and punishment in education. I explore the article “Restorative Justice Is Not Enough,” which specifically deals with the STPP and broader structures described in the birdcage metaphor. The other scholarship, however, is an activist narrative, an organization’s summation of their work, scholarship related to structural violence and scholarship related to queer theory and critical trans politics. While the literature related to TJ is sparse, all identify a deconstructionist and poststructuralist framework as being the core tenant of a transformative ideology.

Picking up with the question about what exactly is being restored and repaired, Meiners (2016) looks toward one sexual abuse center’s question/critique around restoring: “Would these efforts lead us to the same troubled, problematic world plagued with patriarchy, homophobia, fat phobia, insecurity, heterosexism, racism, anxiety, depression, ableism, and all of the other conditions that feed into sexualized violence in the first place?” (pp. 120-121). Here Meiners (2016) points out that this argument frames a guiding principle of transformative justice: the desire to transform the conditions that make harm possible (pp. 120-121). TJ questions whether harm can be healed or justice restored in contexts where structural inequality is the norm (Meinters,
In other words, can healing happen where restoration would reestablish the conditions that lead to restoration being needed in the first place?

Meiners (2016) claims that TJ is a political outlook driven by values related to prison abolition, harm reduction, and holistic healing (p. 121). She highlights the poststructuralist nature of questioning social construction with criminality identifying Christine’s argument that “acts are not created, they become,” therefore asserting that crime is something we create and ascribe labels and values to (Meiners, 2016, p. 122). She uses the example of race and sexuality having been crimes at one point—therefore to be black or gay made one a criminal—but that when one thinks of a criminal, they typically think of harm being done to someone, “yet all harm is not a crime and all crime does not necessarily involve harm to another person, to oneself, or to the state.” (Meiners, 2016, p. 122). It is in this light of questioning the nature of harm, how harm occurs, and how criminalization works that (for Meiners) makes up the ground layer of transformative justice that can then apply to the system of mass incarceration. Here transformative justice is a lens that involves a deep questioning of the institutions and systems around us and asking what purpose the serve and what power structures they are actually reinforcing.

Lacques-Zapien and Mendoza (2014) assert that TJ is a process of unlearning oppressive behavior and de-colonizing and transforming behaviors, minds, bodies, and spirits (283). TJ has to be flexible because people are complex and oppression comes in many forms (Lacques-Zapien and Mendoza, 2014, p. 283). Youth Justice Coalition’s definition of TJ involves asking what the root cause of conflict is and also what community and or societal change is needed to modify relationships, conditions, and power (Lacques-Zapien and Mendoza,
2014, p. 283). TJ is truly analyzing institutions and structures, connecting it to power, hierarchy, and the subsequent violence they may cause, and reimagining them. Evans (2016) identifies this as a conceptual framework useful for linking together a broad set of issues (and potentially the tools used to address these) “that might appear under another analytical lens to be separate to one another” (p. 9-10). The Youth Justice Coalition envisions:

A world where racism, sexism, patriarchy, ableism, classism, colonization, homophobia, ageism, slavery, fascism, and all forms of oppression slowly become de-constructed and dismantled head-on as a daily practice for all members of society. A world where borders are obsolete and prison bars are just a dark piece of our history. A world where people of color are not enslaved by incarceration, but are celebrated for the beauty, power, and ancestry that we proudly carry on our backs and in our hearts. A world where we don't turn to violence and enforcement to solve our communities’ problems—we solve them ourselves, with transformative justice, patience, honesty, and de-colonization. A world where we love ourselves, love our youth, and love our communities.

And Youth Justice Coalition does this work “with justice in [their] minds and love in [their] hearts” (Lacques-Zapien and Mendoza, 2014, p. 293).

In his presentation of TJ, Evans (2016) first focuses on defining structural violence with Farmers’ argument that structural violence is so because of social arrangements embedded in the political and economic organization of the social world and violent because they cause injury to people (p. 3). Farmer also asserts
that social inequalities are at the heart of structural violence, which constricts the agency of its victims (Evans, 2016, p. 3). Evans (2016) turns to Galtung’s explanation of violence as defined by when humans are influenced so that their physical and mental potentials are below their potential realizations (p. 3). (This lays a TJ groundwork that bolsters the birdcage metaphor as a violent system of punishment as it keeps youth from reaching their potentials in a systematic way.) Evans (2016) defines necessary conditions for TJ: inclusion of affected communities in shaping the vision, mission, and goals of policy and practice, a focus on addressing economic conditions, emphasis on long-term societal changes, and attention to the historical and structural roots of contemporary injustices (p. 9).

The idea of repairing or restoring (to) a broken system relates to a framework of assimilationists vs. radical liberationists that is inherently transformative in nature. (Here RJ can be seen as assimilationist while TJ is radical liberationist.) Bernstein Sycamore (2012) explores this in relation to a gay rights movement that she claims is assimilationist in nature to white hetero-patriarchal American imperialist citizenry to the extent that a sect of the queer population, namely white and wealthy gay men, forsake the rest of the LGBT identity and sell themselves to right wing Christians for marriage equality (p. 21). Bernstein Sycamore (2012) writes that these elite white gays seek to fold themselves into full citizenry with rights of marriage—merely trying to prove themselves just like heterosexuals—instead of actually challenging the power structures at work and asking for the rights that marriage makes it easier to have, such as tax breaks, healthcare, etc. (p. 21). In doing so this sect separates themselves from the liberationists radicals of the queer movement that fight
racism, classism, and transphobia and seeks to create new ways of “loving, lusting-for, and caring for one another” (Bernstein Sycamore, 2012, p. 21).

Spade (2015) provides this same transformative, i.e. radical liberationist lens in his efforts to secure trans rights as he warns against the institutionalization of lesbian and gay rights through a “law reform” strategy with his claim that the law has arranged people in the United States through categories of indigeneity, race, gender, ability, and national origin to produce populations with different levels of vulnerability to economic exploitation, violence, and poverty (p. 2). In this light, there can be no assimilation to a state sponsored neoliberal agenda that would only continue the “marginalization of populations vulnerable to homophobia” but rather something new (Spade, 2015, p. 2). Here Spade’s argument is for TJ as he sees transformation and radical liberation as essential in the fight to secure trans rights as these rights cannot be secured via the same system that has denied them.

Activist Delice Mugabo (2015) makes similar claims in her assertion that black women are not believed, nor their stories deemed intelligible when they do not support or work within racist, colonial, and heteropatriarchal frameworks and so they must leave the framework entirely for a reimagined outlook that understands the layers of violence and oppression that Black women experience (p. 53, 61). To be transformative, their activism must see these layers and cast them off or they exist in a system of reproduction, exactly as Spade had warned.

The Language of Transformative Justice

In his work on critical trans politics Spade (2015) draws from critical race theory, women of color feminism, queer theory, and critical disability studies (p. xv). Mugabo (2015) draws from critical race feminism, transformative justice,
community accountability, critical trans politics, and radical harm reduction (p. 53). In both Spade and Mugabos’ arguments, as well as the other claims I have presented, the language, phrases, and ideas that show up repeatedly are or have to do with: structure, abolitionist, critical, harm and harm reduction, women of color, patriarchy, colonialism, structural violence, community, reimagine, ableism, and homophobia. All are related to either highly marginalized populations that share being feminine or reject the social, political, and economic forces that work to marginalize and subjugate certain populations. These are the words and frameworks that make up transformative justice. Comparatively restorative justice literature uses: violence, root causes, restoring, reparative, relationships, reintegration, community, etc. These all have to do with maintaining a status quo or at best recognizing that there is one. Homophobia, ableism, and women of color feminism do not show up. RJ does not seem to be a big picture concept that examines broader social structures but rather one that is incredibly localized to a circle in a classroom or at best a school culture and community as in Wadhwa’s work.

Where RJ repairs, TJ reimagines. Transformative work is critical on a broader level and calls upon the experiences of the most marginalized to envision a new world that is radical and liberationist. It will identify the structures that oppress and ask how to overthrow them, while RJ will work within them. This critical lens of TJ is needed so that the ideas of women of color feminism, such as those of Angela Davis and her work on the Prison Industrial Complex, and those of Audre Lorde, who identified systems of oppression as being on a spectrum, to how we think about pathways from schools to confinement. Here, TJ identifies the institution of school itself as well as the social, political, and economic
structures that shape it, as a problem, and reimagines how schools can be a mechanism for social justice and equity. In other words, TJ asks, “How have schools served to further capitalist white supremacy?” and makes broad connections to systemic issues of injustice.

While PBIS and RJ both work within the system, TJ demands work be done to replace a system that has served as a layer of structural violence, which punishes blackness and traps youth of color. In this vein of viewing schools as an institution where harm can occur I will now turn my focus to a community psychology perspective and frame school to confine pathways and the related structural violence of the birdcage as symptoms of a community wellness issue in which schools are an unwell institution.
Toward the conclusion of the first chapter I put forth Michelle Alexander’s birdcage metaphor, which captures her conceptualization of the prison industrial complex and a pathway from school to confinement as multifaceted structural violence: rules, laws, policies, and structures which make up the communities which youth of color are born into and that increase the likelihood that many will be trapped for life (Sokolower, 2011, p. 14). Garbarino (1995) identifies the manifestations of structures that trap youth such as poverty, unemployment, underfunded schools, lack of access to quality health care, poor housing, etc. as contributing to socially toxic environments that are harmful to both mental and physical health (Ginwright, 2015b, p. 37; Smit et al., 2011 as cited in Ginwright, 2015a, p. 6). Consequently, in this chapter I further contextualize school to confinement pathways as an issue of structural violence and, more broadly, as a community wellness issue.

First, I explore the work of two renown educators, clinicians, and scholars, Isaac Prilleltensky and Ora Prilleltensky, who provide definitions of community well-being, where it is located, and, significantly for my purposes, connect wellness through a systematic and structural lens with their linkages of personal, organizational, and community change. I will look at school to confinement pathways with these linkages. Then, I will introduce the concept of healing justice, a framework that demands oppression be viewed as a social and collective
trauma, and therefore requiring a process “that restores individuals and communities to a state of wellbeing” (Ginwright, 2015, p. 9). In conclusion, I argue that healing justice serves as a framework, that includes both restorative and transformative justice, which we should be utilizing in moving forward with broad social justice work and in disrupting school to confinement pathways.
Well-Being

At the heart of Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys’ (2006) work is that wellness always takes place in a context and that individual well-being cannot be cultivated in isolation from the organizations that affect our lives and the communities in which we live (p. 1). They put forth the idea of always contextualizing a person’s problems within these “personal, interpersonal, organizational, and social” linkages (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 8). Their theory of change / approach to wellness exists at these very intersections as they argue that personal, organizational, and community change, to cultivate well-being in each of these realms, must occur in congruence as the collective synergy makes for a holistic wellness (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 9). In other words, one cannot be personally well if the organizations they interact with or their community is unwell. This is important because it implies that there should be a sense of purpose to cultivate overall wellness from each facet: for example, the implication here is that if I know something is happening in an organization I am a part of or in my community that make either unwell, this lack of wellness also affects my quality of life and therefore should compel me toward becoming an active agent of change. (I will explore this implication of civic action later when I talk about healing justice.)

Another core tenant of their work refers back to the liberationist vs. assimilationist paradigm: it is not enough to merely be free from fear, anxiety, or obsession to experience psychological wellness, but we need to experience satisfying relationships and live in thriving communities (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 9).

Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) put forth the five “S”s of wellbeing:
Sites, the locations of well-being; Signs, the expressions of well-being; Sources, the determinants of well-being; Strategies, actions to enhance well-being; and Synergy, the confluence of the previous four (p. 1). Sites can include a person, organization or community (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 9). Each of these has their own signs of wellbeing. For example, at the personal level, signs include control over one's life and physical health, at the organizational level signs include worker participation in decision making, clear roles, and productivity, and at the community level signs include a clean environment, freedom from discrimination, good schools, and more (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 9-10). Sources at the personal level include experience of self-efficacy and self-esteem, while at the organizational level they include participatory structures and efficient practices, and on the community level include a sense of cohesion, belonging, equality, democratic traditions, etc. (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 10-11). Combining the sources and the strategies brings synergy where personal, organizational, and community each rely on and feed into each other with personal solutions including organizational solutions and these in turn being fostered by a communal norm for the respect and well-being of workers (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 11). Nelson, Lord, and Ochcoka (2001) even show a link between the process of individuals working on communal issues, which leads to an increase in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social support (as cited in Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 11).

At each level of well-being there is a common theme: agency. Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) repeatedly cite self-efficacy at the personal level, the ability to assist in decision making at the organizational level, and participation at
the community level. They even list access to a high quality education, an institution that gives more agency to the purveyor, at the community level (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 16-17). This is relevant to the earlier implication of an obligation to help when one aspect of the linked sites of well-being is in need. In a society that is truly well, Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky believe that we would each have the agency to be able to act, centering agency as a core aspect of their theory of well-being.

At the outset of this chapter I mentioned that a school to confinement pathway should be viewed as a broader community wellness issue. We can use Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky’s (2006) formula of the fifth S: synergy/synthesis that the well-being of site Q is reflected in sign X, which derives from source Y, and is promoted by strategy Z and plug in confinement pathway related phenomena to show how youth of color’s agency is being diminished and how the problem is really one related to community well-being and the lack thereof (p. 19). For example, schools are the site of supposed well-being but signs that they are unwell include disproportionate punishment of students of color, lower standardized test scores, a criminalized school environment, and vertical power hierarchies between teachers and students (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 3; Herr, 2017, p. 451) Sources of this school dysfunction include poor policies such as using punitive discipline (despite it being shown to be ineffective), institutionalized racism and prejudice, a lack of opportunities, and other pieces of structural violence such as poverty (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 3).

The confluence of this site, signs, and sources is an ‘ecosystem of violence,’ which is harmful psychologically in terms of trauma and as a detriment to the sense of efficacy and agency of youth of color (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 3.) (It is
important to note that these traumas occur not just in the schools but concurrently with the neighborhood and environment around them.) Ginwright (2015a) argues that trauma for youth of color in these environments needs to be diagnosed not with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder but rather Persistent Traumatic Stress Environment because of its focus on the individual and the environment in which the trauma occurs (p. 3). The psychological damage done in these environments includes emotional numbing, difficulties with sleep and concentration, reduced development in addition to social and emotional damage (Rich, 2009 and Garbarino, 1995, as cited in Ginwright, 2015a, p. 4). While the school may have been the site used in my example, schools are inseparable from the communities and forces around them as they are a microcosm of the larger environment (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 5). Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys’ argument helps us link this context as an ‘ecosystem of violence,’ with interactive hardships of poverty, racism, lack of employment / advancement opportunities and neighborhood decay, strain citizens’ physical and mental health and consequently stymie agency (Smith at ap., 2011 as cited in Ginwright, 2015a, p. 6).

In their analysis of community well-being, Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) further show how agency is constrained as they utilize a lens involving the concepts of poverty, power, and participation where they argue that poverty traps communities in such a way where they are politically disenfranchised, economically unable to participate in cultural life, and that they lack the power to make a difference (p. 261). Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) observe that power refers to the capacity and opportunity to fulfill or obstruct “personal, relational, or collective needs” (as cited in Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 262). Here agency is tied to the opportunity to act. Without opportunity agency does
Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) use an excellent example to demystify the American “pull one-self up by their bootstraps” mythology, whereby if someone just works hard enough they will have success, by arguing that there is only so much a brilliant poor kid can achieve without adequate protection against environmental risk factors and that the people who do are few and far between (p. 263; Ungar, 2005, as cited in Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 263). Pitmann (1995) argues that most kids exposed to chronic adversity do not overcome it, but rather succumb to it and that it is not a matter of beating the odds but changing them (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 263). This shows that agency of an individual can only go so far in overcoming other barriers: even if one is personally well but is trying to navigate an organization or community that are unwell they will more likely than not fail, which will put them in a state of ill-being.

Despite the ill effects of poverty and lack of power Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) argue that participation in civic affairs and political life can mitigate the risk factors and build social capital (p. 264). Here, however, a significant question arises: how can one participate if they are economically and politically disenfranchised (in poverty and lacking power) and consequently lack the agency to be involved. With resolve, Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) highlight the power of critical consciousness as a means of interacting with poverty, power, and participation, which serves as a method of reclaiming agency.

According to Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) figures such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. understood power and oppression as being rooted in
injustice and had multiple forms of criticality inform their ideologies, what Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky argue are critical consciousness and critical experiences, which inform critical action (p. 267). Critical consciousness is the criticism of social conditions that lead to poverty and injustice as socially created and consequentially our ability to modify them; critical experiences are phenomena that leave a formative impression such as critical incidents or critical moments in history; a combination of the previous two, critical action is action aimed toward shaping the course of the community to prevent suffering and promote well-being (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2006, p. 267). This criticality, locating oneself within a system of power and consequently regaining agency and then moving toward critical action, is a foundational tenet of an emerging framework entitled healing justice.
Healing Justice

In this section I layout an emerging framework for both healing and transformative action known as healing justice (HJ). HJ is difficult to locate in the academy. Only two scholars have published anything on it with the main one being Shawn Ginwright and the other citing Ginwright’s work, which is itself heavily predicated on the work of both Isaac Prilleltensky and Ora Prilleltensky. The work of Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, previously discussed, also stands alone in the field of community psychology for using critical psychology and critical consciousness in both linking personal wellbeing with the societal context and how agency can be developed, healing can happen, and consequent action can emerge. These ideas are not new, however, and Ginwright (2015b) acknowledges this (p. 41). They come from a scattering of work by Paulo Freire and women of color such as Audre Lorde, who identified that caring for blackness and queerness in an environment that is anti-black and anti-queer is an act of political defiance and resistance.

Here, I take up Ginwright’s conceptualization of healing justice and his examination of how it applies to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. I also inspect the role of agency in HJ and how the demands of Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys’ work—the collective participation for the wellness of every member of the community—fits in. In this regard, I purport that healing justice is just the middle ground needed between restorative justice’s ability to build relationships and transformative justice’s vision of change because of the agency HJ fosters and the critical view it demands. In this vein, the goal for social justice advocates and organizations is not trying to put a stop to school to confinement pathways but the cracks in community wellness that it represents / is a symptom of.
Wallace (2012) identifies HJ as a movement that seeks both collective healing and well-being and the transformation of the institutions that are causing the harm in the first place (Ginwright, 2015b, p. 38). It demands that we conceptualize oppression as a form of social and collective trauma, which allows for the identification and naming of cultural, social, and spiritual consequences of trauma for oppressed communities (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 9). Ginwright (2015a) asserts that by calling this oppression “trauma,” it conveys that oppression and injustice inflict collective harm, so effectively responding to oppression therefore requires a process that restores individuals and communities to a state of wellbeing (p. 9). In the sentiment of Audre Lorde, healing justice advocates see well-being not as an act of self-care but as a political action (Ginwright, 2015b, p. 38).

HJ is based on the understanding that injustice and oppression do not simply block opportunities but also cause psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical harm to individuals and communities (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 6). Ginwright (2015a) asserts that HJ activists view policies that promote violence, stress, and hopelessness in schools as harmful to our collective wellbeing, human dignity, and hope, so focus is placed on the systemic consequences of oppression on hope and how communities can heal and be restored to a state of health and vibrancy (p. 7).

Hope is a large part of Ginwright’s work and fits into Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys’ notions of agency, critical consciousness, and a larger process of social change. For people to have hope they must come to consciousness of their situation of oppression as this consciousness then engenders a vision of change. This process of coming to consciousness and seeing change is an act of
reestablishing agency, which is itself a process of healing. Then, action toward collective well-being can occur, which is an execution of agency and further healing in addition to this betterment of a collective, which also serves as an additional site of healing. This process is a reflection of both Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys’ linkages of personal, organization, and community change/wellbeing through critical consciousness. Additionally, it is a reflection of Ginwright’s (2015a) connection of hope and healing justice: structural oppression harms hope, healing is critical in building hope, and building hope is a political activity (p. 2). Ginwright (2015a) identifies this process of coming to hope (in other words, coming to agency) as inside out change, meaning that it both cares for our mental and physical health while also examining the root causes of barriers to building effective, healthy, and vibrant communities (the process of criticality and consciousness raising.)

In discussion of the BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement Ginwright (2015b) highlights three important features of the HJ framework: restoration, resistance, and reclamation (p. 39). Ginwright (2015b) writes that restoration involves actions and activities that restore collective well-being, meaning, and purpose, which is a political act as it sees this collective nature of well-being and shifts away from the individualist notions of health and attributes restoration as the result of political power, agency, voice, and action (p. 39). He argues that Black Lives Matter practiced restoration when they refused to shift to All Lives Matter and instead kept Black Lives Matter as unapologetically black, restoring blackness into meaningful political action and discourse (Ginwright, 2015b, p. 39-40).

Resistance relates to the disruption and rebuff of hegemonic notions of
justice with regard to race, which Ginwright (2015b) ties to the example of BLM protestors bringing a transit system to a halt through a barricade to call attention to how the comforts of daily routines rarely require people to question issues of justice (p. 40). In this instance, it is important to add that resistance is a struggle of power. To place the action of BLM into the lens Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky put forth of poverty, power, and participation this act of resistance can be seen as taking some of the power back from the apathy of the daily routine whereby people can live their lives without thinking of the collective community and ignoring the harm that comes with it. The inconvenience of disruption forces participation in knowing that a delay was created because of resistance (which layers another critique of how justice is inconvenient for some who are privileged.)

The last piece of the framework is reclamation, the capacity to reclaim, redefine, and reimagine a possible solution (Ginwright, 2015b, 40). While Ginwright (2015b) makes the connection with what he sees as BLM practicing reclamation by throwing off the tropes of the civil rights movement as a movement for “our time, our terms, and our issues,” a different connection may serve reclamation better (Steltzer, 2015; p. 40). The choice to have the movement called Black Lives Matter is a celebration and reaffirmation of blackness and an act of reclamation from a society that is anti-black, which in turn allows for hope and agency to occur because it pushes for a shift in societal meaning to boldly assert that yes indeed black lives are valuable.

It is the dynamic framework of restoration, meaning making, criticality, and active resistance that positions Healing Justice as a substantive middle ground between Restorative Justice and Transformative Justice. TJ seeks to
transform systems and address root causes while RJ repairs relationships but lies on the assimilationists rather than the liberationist imperative. HJ, however, utilizes both the tactics of relationship repair and societal reimagining for a praxis that is able to exist in the present moment to both alleviate the present day lack of well-being in impoverished schools, where push out is prevalent, but at the same time help students and the community envision a new future. It is a way to examine how teachers and activists can foster healing, hope and wellbeing (Ginwright, 2015a, p. 6). Like RJ, HJ is also a philosophy for daily practice.

Because HJ requires criticality of structures and utilizes Prilleltensky and Prilleltenskys' ideas on the interconnection of well-being there is also the important recognition that individuals who participate in acts of oppression are themselves oppressed by these acts of participation. Here, if someone holds onto racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic views they are not critically aware of the alienation and relational isolation these views foster nor the fear and power structures behind them. This is ill-being. Consequently, because these views are harmful to others, there is also an added layer of ill-being as those who suffer from these views are in a state of ill-being, causing community ill-being. In other words, it is psychologically damaging to live in the confines of oppression and also damaging to the human psyche to perpetuate this oppression. Ultimately, HJ recognizes that healing is needed at the personal and the community level and that this process of healing both can be a political act of liberation. Here, I want to reference a quote I list at the beginning from the Icarus Project, a nonprofit at the intersection of social justice and mental health: “We fight to heal. We heal to fight.” (Icarus Project, theicarusproject.net). This could certainly serve as the maxim of healing justice, it is an evolving process whereby
resistance and liberation are bound up with healing as both a process of healing and a step toward healing.

In conclusion, HJ is a unique framework that is useful in considering solutions to both school to confinement pathways and the structural issues they represent because of how it connects wellness and agency at the personal, organizational, and community levels. This analysis demands that schools not be seen as separate from the community and society around them, nor the individual students as not having their lives shaped by these forces, both in and outside, of school. The criticality of HJ invites a rich context. It is from this context that we observe the intersection of race and punishment in education as the intersection of race and a structurally violent educational system that results in the punishment of blackness in day-to-day school push out and lack of access as well as broader social inequity. HJ then invites the critical examination and healing that builds the agency to transform these circumstances.
In this chapter I document a research study of the Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training in Chicago, Illinois. The Addie Wyatt Center (AWC) conducts Kingian Nonviolence Training in schools, at community centers, and for organizations in order to reduce violence and build a “Beloved Community.” My goal for this case study was to analyze an organization doing work related to prevention, alleviation, or transformation of school to confine pathways or the broader structures that make up the birdcage, observe what exactly they are doing, and measure the impact that the work has, while additionally questioning if and how the work might fall within a healing justice framework.

This last question regarding healing justice is one of the first biases I need to acknowledge. A transformative justice (TJ) and healing justice (HJ) framework ultimately drive my literature review, and this is the lens I carry with me in the work that I do: what I observe is constantly compared with how it might fit into TJ or HJ. Furthermore, my academic and professional background present biases worth mentioning: I study and agree with critical theory with an emphasis on women of color feminism. This is important because it drives my sense of justice and my understanding of how race, sexuality, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religious status, family background, and nation of origin (among many others) all combine in intersectional identities that inform the ways we interact with and live in the world. This same lens applies to my studies in counseling where I see the stresses and traumas of clients as potentially being related to the identity they hold and how it may be marginalized by society and therefore
require healing.

One of my majors is in Education, and I believe in the power of education, not as a panacea to fix all social ills, but as useful in instilling agency in the individual (which relays back to feminist consciousness raising and the theory of Paulo Freire). Furthermore, I have studied philanthropy and nonprofits and their organizational assessment and evaluation standards, which are all very business oriented and neoliberal. Additionally, I have worked in nonprofits with operating budgets in the millions. Both my studies and work experience have led me to construct a notion of how successful nonprofits are run and what environments they both have and aim to cultivate. This informs how I will interact with a nonprofit. However, I believe in the work of AWC and want them to succeed.

Finally, I am an able-bodied secular queer white somewhat effeminate man from a middle class background doing with work at a private liberal arts college located in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods north of Chicago. I do not know what it is like to be followed around by security in a department store because of the color of my skin or to be worried that the way my name sounds will put me at a disadvantage in hiring processes (Mcintosh, 1989, p. 252). I am white, and this is with me wherever I go. I will talk about this later on in the methods section, but in this research I was a white guest in predominately black spaces.

My interactions with AWC through interviews, observations, evaluation forms, and both internal and external organizational documents reveal the following findings, which I will discuss in detail below: At AWC Kingian nonviolence is a toolkit for social change and cultivates a sense of empowerment, it fits into the healing justice framework, and AWC faces typical structural issues
of a startup nonprofit but relies on the backgrounds and passion of the founders to both give it validity and get it off the ground.
Methodology

This research study is a case study. My world view is transformative, which Mertens (2010) holds as being intertwined “with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever levels it occurs” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). I chose case study design so that I could tell a complete and complex narrative of an organization working on developing youth to become leaders for social change and exactly how that work is done as I have often been left with questions from studies I have read on such organizations and programs about what exactly the praxis was and why. Using a case study design allows me to both celebrate and critique the organization’s practices as well as explore how the organizational philosophy exists outside of the practice and actually within the organization, therefore examining the viability/sustainability of both the work and the organization.

I first came across AWC when they were tabling at the Teacher’s for Social Justice Curriculum Fair in November of 2016 on an early Saturday morning at a high school in Chicago. I was already aware of restorative justice (RJ) as an alternative way to address conflict in schools and the work of Dr. King from previous research, but I was not familiar with Kingian Nonviolence as an actual process that was being taught today. I do not recall that it had ever shown up in my research into the STPP or in Peace Education. Because I was familiar with King’s philosophies, I thought there was a good chance that the work of AWC would fall in line with a HJ framework and relate to TJ, I reached out to the organization the following spring. After conversations with staff, we agreed to a partnership, which made sense for a number of reasons: as a new organization, AWC lacks the resources to perform complete assessments and evaluations so
they may benefit from this work in addition to my benefits, they are a small organization so it was not a large inconvenience for me to be incorporated into organizational activities and truly get to know them, and there is a lack of literature connecting kingian nonviolence training to broader STPP and RJ works.

To complete this case study, I conducted interviews and observations as well as a review of participant evaluations and both external and internal organization documents in order to analyze the organization’s philosophy, praxis (in the form of what a training looks like), and evaluation feedback. I went through an application process with my college’s Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) and do not use individual’s names but instead refer to staff members as “affiliates,” “trainers,” or “board members” and keep AWC program participants confidential as “participants.” When I write about the organizational background I use findings from my data to paint the clearest picture of AWC.

Evaluations

As a new organization AWC has not undergone substantial evaluations yet, however, during trainings they have distributed evaluation forms to be filled out and have kept these on file. I was given forty-three evaluations from two abbreviated adult trainings, one of which occurred in January, 2017 and the other in February 2017 as well as twenty-one evaluations from a youth training that also occurred in January 2017. On the youth training evaluations the names have been redacted by the organization, as I do not have HSRC approval to include youth. (It is also important to note that there is not a significant difference between the adult and youth evaluation form for the purpose of my work.)

In my assessment, the evaluation forms need to be revised to more directly
match the organizational goals and outcomes as well as improve the evaluative coding process. In their current iteration only two of the seven questions for both the adult and the youth forms allow for valid comparison to the goals and expected outcomes AWC maintains. The two questions are as follows (I am labeling them here as A & B for my coding process):

a) Did your perception of nonviolence change as a result of the workshop? If so, how?

b) In what ways might you apply Kingian nonviolence to your life and/or work? Please be as specific as you can be at this time.

A third question will also be useful in evaluation process for the organization:

c) What aspect of the training was most significant to you?

AWC puts forth five expected outcomes of the trainings. Participants will: Define violence and distinguish violence from nonviolence and non-violence from nonviolence; Identify and discuss the types and levels of conflict leading to violence, developing and recognizing examples of each; Describe the philosophical thinking of Dr. King; Identify and explain the Six Principles of Kingian Nonviolence and provide an example for each from personal experience; and Identify and apply the Six Steps of Kingian Nonviolence to a community program. For the coding and evaluative process however I condense them down to four questions that I believe accurately capture what the programs do and at the same time make them more linkable to the questions on the participant evaluations that allow for valid comparison.

1) Do participants understand the difference between the different types of violence and the difference between
non-violence and nonviolence as well as positive and negative peace

2) Can participants identify types of conflict?

3) Do participants know the six principles?

4) Would participants know the six steps / or how to apply them?

To actually code these, I looked for any words from outcome (1) in question (a). I looked for relation to outcomes (2) and (3) in question (c) and for anything related to any of the six steps in outcome (4) to question (b).

I assigned four colors to each outcome and went through the sixty-four evaluations I had and marked each time an appearance of the outcome showed up in a participants’ answer. For example, outcome (1) wants participants to understand the notion that nonviolence is an active movement compared to a passive non-violent one and consequently the similar paradigm with the difference of positive peace and negative peace. Because the question is not specific and only refers to a perception of nonviolence changing, after reading through some of the evaluations I decided that any mention of non-violence vs. nonviolence or positive vs. negative peace would suffice, and I would count this. One challenge to this same question was that respondents would sometimes write “no,” which leaves no indication of if they already knew the types of violence and peace or if they did not grasp the concept (the same holds true if they only wrote “yes” without further explanation.)

Observations

I will present the various programmatic efforts of AWC in greater detail later in the case, but my observations mainly included AWC’s community
trainings and outreach efforts: I observed two trainings at Churches in the Southside, a teacher training at NEIU’s Center for Urban Studies in Hyde Park, and a professional development training for the Chicago Housing Authority at DePaul University’s downtown campus center. I also observed day three of a Train the Trainer program at a library in Englewood as well as AWC’s first ever in-person board meeting, which was held at North Park University.

It is important to note that for many of the observations I was a white guest in primarily black spaces. AWC did, however, establish that I was welcome when I came in for observations and greeted me with hugs and recognition that I was part of the AWC family. AWC would also usually have me take a moment to introduce myself. I would say my name, what school I attend, a bit about the project I am working on, make it clear that I am only observing and writing down what the trainers are saying, and express gratitude to everyone for sharing the space with me and to AWC for allowing me to work with them. After I introduced myself a member of AWC would reiterate that I am only observing AWC staff and not participants.

As I mentioned earlier, one of my research inquiries was exactly how an organization was doing their work so when I conducted observations I paid special attention to the organizational praxis or actual implementation of the philosophy. When I went through and coded my observation notes I did two things: I kept in mind the four condensed outcomes listed above in evaluations and how these showed up in the activities/curriculum, and I tried to note the recurring curriculum so I could sketch out a sample training to report on in the case.
Interviews

I did a few interviews with key stakeholders in AWC as well as follow up questions. For the interviews, I had a list of fourteen questions (see appendix A) that both the HSRC and AWC approved ahead of time. While my goal was to make it through all of the questions, if the discussion seemed fruitful or naturally went down another path I would follow it, employing grounded theory, and asking follow up questions that were still relevant.

To code the interviews, I used a variation of Tesch’s 8 step method as mentioned in Creswell (Creswell, 2014, p. 198). I read through the interview transcripts once to see what data was there and then highlighted topics that seemed significant. I then went through the highlights and compiled what had repetition, which became the emergent themes.

Internal Documents

When I did a review of external and internal documents I looked for the tenants of a nonprofit organization: vision, mission, goals and other items such as assessment and evaluation, philosophy, program praxis, and a logic model.
Organizational Philosophy and Operation

The Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training was founded in the late spring of 2016 with an ambitious agenda for change. In this section, I will paint an overview of the organization including its history, mission and model, and their programmatic efforts.

History and Background

AWC was founded by four women who had worked together to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Chicago Freedom Movement with the publication of a book, which they all had involvement in, entitled: The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North. The four co-founders are all certified Kingian nonviolence trainers through the University of Rhode Island Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies. The center’s namesake is Addie Wyatt, who had significant involvement throughout her life in civil rights and women’s rights struggles and was also a labor and religious leader.

The Center and its work were inspired by the drastic reduction in violence in North Lawndale College Prep High School in Chicago’s Westside after a teacher there began a Kingian nonviolence training program, which, after two years, had reduced school violence by 90%. The first student cohort to go through training called themselves Peace Warriors – a name that still lasts 8 years later. The Peace Warriors maintain signs around the school and a community calendar indicating how many days the school has gone without violence. They have incentives for mile markers of days without violence. They also watch out for suspected violence to prevent it with peace circles or mediation sessions (it is important to note that peace circles are often used in RJ.) Peace Warriors push
de-escalation over retaliation when an incidence of violence occurs. Older students train incoming freshmen in nonviolence, which has helped to build a culture of peace. Peace warriors also watch out for violence online through cyber bullying. Additionally they try to cultivate a culture of care through condolence runs: when students are grieving from loss as a result of violence in the community Peace Warriors speak with the affected student outside of class for a supportive conversation and a small gift of treats.

AWC was founded with the idea of taking this program, with demonstrated credibility, and expanding it to schools across the Chicago area while additionally training community members to build a community culture of nonviolence. AWC recognized, however, that the model would need to be adapted for the needs and opportunities at the different schools they hoped to implement it in. Beyond this specific program adaptation AWC relies on adapting the curriculum and activities for Kingian Nonviolence from a core curriculum written by Dr. Benard LaFayette and Jehnsen.

The Need

AWC exists because youth who live in high poverty and crime areas in Chicago are exposed to violence on a daily basis and states that most young people in their training programs have experienced the death of a close friend or family member from gun violence, some more than once. They argue that many young people are routinely suffering from traumatic stress. Several common themes with regard to the need emerged from the interviews: young people live in a culture of violence (an ethos of the street) and oppression; violence is layered and structural; there is trauma that results from poverty and the structures that define it (being hungry, a lack of adequate healthcare, police brutality, etc.),
which is exhibited by youth fatalism and requires healing. Finally, these common themes all come down to one thing, which one AWC affiliate identified: “Our country is founded on a false promise.” This person when on to qualify this false promise of America by which the United States is founded on white supremacy and still to this day has political, economic, and social structures that are oppressive to black people.

Operation

The mission of AWC is to provide “Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation Training for in-school and out-of-school youth as well as youth and their allies, especially those in under-resources areas, as a means of helping young people transform school and communities to a culture of peace.” Interviews allowed for elaboration of the mission with nonviolence training as being empowering for participants and giving them a tool belt of skills used for transformation (of personal and interpersonal violence) as well as harmful systems and institutions. Nonviolence serves a dual role: it serves as violence prevention and empowerment as well as the toolkit for dealing with community issues. It is important to note that the act of having a toolkit serves as empowering which then enables the use of the tool kit so there is a dichotomy that is in constant symbiosis.

The mission of AWC is “for a Beloved Community based on Kingian principles of empathy, eyes toward justice, and nonviolent actions.” The idea of the beloved community is that “fear of ‘the other’ and acts of discrimination” combine to divide people along lines of race, religion, class, sexuality, and geography. By using the kingian principles AWC envisions a community free of that divide.
AWC’s mission and vision happen through actionable programming that includes: Peace in the Schools and nonviolence trainings for youth and community organizers. (Organizers here is used very loosely as the nonviolence training program compels people to action and thus becoming organizers.) With a focus on economically challenged areas, AWC does most of its nonviolence training workshops in Chicago’s south and west sides. AWC reports that one of the neighborhoods it works in, Englewood, ranks fifth out of seventy-seven Chicago neighborhoods for violent crime, with nearly half of the households living below poverty, and with a third of residents sixteen and older unemployed. Beyond the southside and westside AWC has tried to bring students together from the city and the suburbs and has worked with Evanston Township High School and Glenbrook South High School, both in areas with significantly less poverty. Additionally, AWC does trainings all over the Chicagoland Area with churches, universities, and other organizations such as the Chicago Housing Authority (an observation site.)

AWC offers four distinct programmatic efforts to carry out their mission: (1) Peace In the Schools, (2) Enrichment, (3) Community Trainings, and (4) Train-the-Trainer sessions. Peace In The Schools (PITS) is AWC’s original flagship program from which the other efforts evolved as various needs came up. PITS is the initiative to replicate the North Lawndale program. It was piloted at three schools in 2016 and a second cohort of schools will be welcomed with the 2017-2018 school year. In PITS students take the full twelve-hour core training that provides certification and allows them to form peace warrior style student groups or clubs and implement further programming in their schools. Completion of the twelve-hour training also qualifies participants to take part in
the train-the-trainer sessions.

Beginning this fall, AWC is launching an enrichment series that is separate from PITS. (Schools do not have to have PITS in order to have an enrichment series.) The enrichment series will feature about twelve modules all focusing on the history of Black and Latinx Chicago with lessons and field trips to such places as the sites involved in the Chicago Freedom Movement. AWC focuses on the history as they believe that it not only promotes understanding about how events, laws and practices, and attitudes evolve and shows how we have been historically connected and disconnected, but that knowing history can instill a pride in our ancestors and their accomplishments and strengthen one’s sense of self as part of the whole.

Outside of schools, AWC provides their twelve-hour core training or variations of it in the community. They do these for afterschool and Saturday programs, at churches, for youth returning from involvement with the justice system, for youth organizations and youth workers, as well as for teachers. The majority of the observations I did were of these abbreviated twelve-hour core trainings.

Finally, recognizing the need for wide scale training that goes beyond their organizational capacity, AWC runs a three-day, eighteen-hour follow up advanced train-the-trainer course. Here, people who have already been certified by the two-day core receive more in depth training on how to deliver the two-day core and at the end are granted certification as kingian nonviolence trainers. These trainers then can take part in AWC trainings and lead the trainings themselves. Ultimately, this works toward accomplishing one of the goals of AWC: creating a broad-based network of trainers that can carry out the work.
Praxis

The majority of what AWC does comes out of the curriculum developed by LaFayette and Jehensen for the twelve-hour core workshop. LaFayette, a global authority on the strategy of nonviolence social change, was a close friend and confidant of Dr. King and worked with Coretta Scott King to develop this curriculum to meet Dr. King’s final wish: that the work of nonviolence be institutionalized and internationalized. In this section I will briefly go over what the AWC presents as the important tenants of the two-day core training. Then I will present an outline of what many of the observations, which were abbreviated versions of the two-day core training looked like and elaborate on their parts. While many, if not all, of the activities come from the LaFayette and Jehensen curriculum, I will report the activities as a synthesis of how I witnessed them so that I can represent a most accurate day to day praxis of AWC.

AWC implements the Kingian Nonviolence programming through: Paired Introductions, an exercise designed to get participants to experience empathy and develop active listening; Types and Levels of Conflict, designed to convey the difference between a continuum of violence and a continuum of conflict, the necessity of conflict in a democracy, how conflict can provide the power to change conditions, and how to understand, prevent, intervene in, and manage conflict; Six Principle of Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation, an outgrowth of thinkers such as Gandhi and historic peace churches, the six principles were initially described in Dr. King’s book, Stride Toward Freedom, and explains nonviolence as a program of active resistance to unjust action; Six Steps of Nonviolent Organizing, Dr. King’s six-step coterminous strategies for developing nonviolent campaigns to address social injustices.
A Sample Training

The trainings I observed were conducted at a public library and churches in Englewood (a Southside Chicago neighborhood), an urban studies institute in Hyde Park, and finally a campus center downtown. Notably, the adornments in the physical spaces of the library, one of the churches, and the urban studies institute were a physical embodiment of the work I had been doing and studying. In the library meeting room there was an advertisement for how to protect the black men in your life and a number to call if one was pulled over or arrested. There were signs that were reaffirming of black lives and of queer people. At the urban studies institute wall size portraits of people such as Dr. King and other famous African American figures lined the walls. In the church these same style portraits hung, as well as a portrait of Jesus as a person of color. For most of the trainings AWC also brought a sign that included: Black Lives Matter, We Believe in Science, Love is Love, Women’s Rights Are Human Rights, and more – a manifesto of sorts outlining the beliefs of the beloved community and society they wished to build.

For the church trainings, which were with youth, I was struck by the power of AWC standing up, telling young people, who in perspective really are not much younger than myself, not only that their lives matter, but telling them that the process of civil rights is their birth right. AWC tells them that their civil rights education had been shortchanged by their schools, which told them about Dr. King and his “I have a dream speech,” but did not tell them about the process Dr. King envisioned to actually create change. This idea of a process is incredibly important to AWC as it is what they are ultimately trying to equip participants with the ability to engage in.
While trainings could last for a several hours, sometimes they were as short as an hour and a half. Regardless of the time limit, however, every training would include doing activities defining violence, exploring non-violence vs. nonviolence, discussing conflict, going over the six principles, and then reviewing the six steps. If there was time at longer trainings an activity called the expert panel would often be used.

The first activity, called “violence is...” sought to explore the different forms of violence and foster group participation. The facilitator divides the participants into smaller groups, hands them a sheet of paper and a marker, and asks them to write “violence is...” at the top and then draw a line down the middle, write physical and nonphysical on the sides, and then list all of the different types of each form of violence they could think of. At the bottom of the page they write “violence is:” followed by their group’s four word definition of violence. This activity brought out all types of responses with the continuum of violence including racism, domestic abuse, emotional abuse, poverty, bullying, school funding, and many more that really showed a depth of knowledge and context from the participants. After the group shares their definitions of violence AWC reveals that the definition used in Kingian Nonviolence is “violence is physical or emotional harm.”

After talking about violence, the program moves the discussion into the difference between non-violence and nonviolence. One of the trainers writes the two on a large notepad or a dry erase board and asks what the difference between the two is. It is emphasized that non-violence with the hyphen is passive, simply not being violent where nonviolence, without the hyphen, is active. Next, the difference between positive and negative peace is discussed where negative peace
is a surface level peace or the absence of physical violence but still the presence of structural violence. Negative peace is like non-violence with the hyphen because it is not doing enough. AWC stresses positive peace, which is the active pursuit of justice and the absence of structural violence. This relates to nonviolence as a struggle for overall justice and equity.

Next, AWC moves into a discussion on conflict and frames it as a continuum with four different types and three different levels. Sometimes they will have these printed on a sheet and pass these around as a take home hand out and have participants read these to the whole group. The four types of conflict are: Pathway, which is where people can have the same overall goals but different methods for reaching them; Mutually exclusive, where goals may be different but people chose to function together; Distributive, where there are not enough resources for everyone; and Values, where there are different values and different visions. The three different levels are: normal level, where conflict occurs as a result of the normal pressures in daily life, such as bills and budgets as well as different role expectations and social status; pervasive level, an atmosphere charged with tension and emotion in which conflict may erupt at any moment caused by multiple pressures that push conflict past the normal level or the accumulation of minor disagreement that have never been resolved; and overt level where conflict comes to a head and is frequently acted out, which may be the result of a potentially minor incident but is actually the cumulative effect of numerous past incidents that were not resolved in a mutually satisfactory way. If there is time the trainer will have the mini groups reassemble and create a skit to perform based on a type and level of conflict where the small groups will perform these for the larger group and then the large group will guess which type and level
it is and discuss these.

From here, AWC discusses the six principles of nonviolence and tries to break them down, discusses them, and take questions. The six principles are as follows. (1) *Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.* AWC puts forth that nonviolence is a positive force to confront the forces of injustice by utilizing the righteous indignation and spiritual, emotional, and intellectual capabilities of people as the vital force for change and reconciliation. (2) *The Beloved Community is the framework for the future.* Nonviolence is an overall effort to achieve a reconciled world by raising the level of relationships among people to a level where justice prevails and people attain their full human potential. (3) *Attack forces of evil not persons doing evil.* Nonviolence helps one analyze the fundamental conditions, policies, and practice of the conflict rather than reacting to one’s opponents or their personalities. (4) *Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve a goal.* Self-chosen suffering is redemptive and helps the movement grow in a spiritual as well as a humanitarian dimension and the moral authority of voluntary suffering for a goal communicates the concern to one’s own friends and community as well as the opponent. (5) *Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence.* The attitude of nonviolence permeates all aspect of a campaign to provide a mirror type reflection of the reality of the condition of one’s opponent and the community at large. Activities in the campaign must be designed to maintain a high level of spirit and morale (here AWC emphasizes the notion of if I do harm to you I do harm to myself.) (6) *The universe is one the side of justice.* Here, truth is recognized as universal and each human society and being is oriented to the just sense of the order of the universe. The fundamental values in all of the world’s
great religions include the concept that the moral arc of the universe is long but bends toward justice. For the nonviolence practitioner, nonviolence introduces a new moral context in which nonviolence is both a means and an end. It is important to note that number four is usually explored for a longer portion of the workshop as it provokes more questions, and it seems that suffering in this sense is waking up and maybe knowing (as one of the trainers said) “Hey, I will go to jail today as a part of this protest.”

After AWC goes over the six principles they then explain the six steps of nonviolent action: (1) Information gathering: determining the facts, options for change, and the timing of pressure for raising the issues, all of which are a collective process; (2) Education: the process of developing articulate leaders, who are knowledgeable about the issue; (3) Personal commitment: observing one’s internal and external involvement in the nonviolence campaign and preparing oneself for both short-term and long-term action; (4) Negotiation: bringing together one’s views with those of their opponents to arrive at a just conclusion or clarify the unresolved issues; (5) Direct action: occurs when negotiations have broken down or failed to produce a just response to the contested issues and conditions; (6) Reconciliation: the mandatory closing step of a campaign, when the opponents and proponents celebrate the victory and provide joint leadership to implement the change. For shorter trainings AWC may rush through the steps, focusing instead on the first half of the curriculum, the criticality of learning about violence and nonviolence and learning that it has to do with structural issues.

If there is enough time in the training after the six principles, AWC will do an activity called the expert panel. AWC has fun with this activity as the
principles are difficult and usually leave participants with a lot of questions so trainers tell the participants that they will be taking a short break and afterwards a panel of experts will be coming in to answer all of their questions. (When this would happen I usually heard audience members say “thank god, I have so many questions.”) After the break the trainers then tell the audience that they are the experts as no one knows their lives better than they do and then pull a few participants up in front of the group and have some be the panel and some ask questions on a few of the principles and then flip this around and ask questions on the remaining principles. The expert panel allows people to explore their thoughts on the principles in a more in-depth way and engages them as already being actors in the movement by placing them as “expert” participants.
Assessment and Analysis

AWC is at the point in their short nonprofit journey where it is crucial that they take a hard look at who they are as an organization, where they want to be in the next five to ten years, and how to most effectively, efficiently, and sustainably do this work. In this section, I will provide an overview and results for the evaluations, offer commentary on their praxis, and discuss the challenges that they face including funding, infrastructure, growth as well as sustainability.

Evaluations

After reviewing both adult and youth participant evaluations of the program I found that: 42% of adult participants and 38% of youth participants understood the difference between non-violence and nonviolence and the different forms of violence; 9% of adult participants and 0% of youth participants could identify types of conflict; 30% of adult participants and 4% of youth participants recognized/knew the six principles; and 93% of adult participants and 100% of youth participants recognized at least one of the six steps.

While I mentioned the challenges with the evaluation tool in the methodology section that made accessing evaluations a bit more difficult, there still proved to be two salient results: the first is that while 0% of youth participants could identify different types of conflict, one thing that more than a third of them identified as being the most impactful was talking about violence in the neighborhood, hearing the stories of others’ experiences, and being able to relate to them. When asked “What part of training meant the most to you?” youth wrote: “The most part training that meant the most to me was getting to meet other people with the same issues in their community as well as mines” and “When we talked about the different experiences we all had in our schools.” This
is powerful because it suggests that what youth participants found most impactful is the notion that they are not alone in the context of their experiences. While this measurement is from a small sample size (twenty-one), and therefore might impede broader inferences, I think it is something to point out that not only requires further investigation but could also lead to curriculum development surrounding the power of narrative sharing as a healing mechanism.

The second significant emergence was that 93% of adult participants (n=43) and 100% of youth participants mentioned at least one of the six steps as something that they could do to apply Kingian nonviolence to their own lives or at work/school. While there is not specificity with if they understand all six steps it is significant that almost 100% of respondents are able to clearly identify at least one step that they can apply / take action on in their lives. Youth wrote: “I can educate my peers on how if we took the nonviolence approach it can help us,” “I can apply it to my life by de-escalating a situation at home with my family or helping to mediate a conflict between friends at school,” and “changing my hostile view on my school and change what I want to see.” Adults focused on applying what they had learned through training with their youth work: “I'll apply it directly into my curriculum of my lessons for my youth council” and in “any and all conflict resolution.” Some adult respondents even identified that the training is helpful in interacting and empathizing with others by “understanding that others are not all wrong [as] people have different perspectives based on experience.” These responses are important as it shows engagement in the work of building the “beloved community” and serves as an action plan for participants for after the leave the workshop.
Praxis

AWC’s curriculum is based on theory created by practitioner scholars. It has great potential because of both its positioning as a process and its dual focus. AWC emphasizes the process of civil rights and Kingian nonviolence as a tool-belt for that process. AWC’s praxis is multifaceted. In a very immediate sense it teaches people to recognize when conflict is brewing and work for both de-escalation and amelioration through strategies such as peace circles (this connection to RJ will be examined in the next section) as well as building a culture of nonviolence. However, with the vision of the beloved community in mind, by labeling racism and poverty as violent, the praxis also allows for discussion on the root causes leading to conflict and violence.

For example, when going over the types of violence, AWC discusses how some types stem from the lack of economic justice. In this way, the praxis is the first step on a journey of social change. It is the critical consciousness raising that identifies violence and conflict as a continuum and explores the difference between negative and positive peace, thusly making a nonviolent effort one that actively works to abolish oppressive structures. However, it is not just a first step but also a tool belt and a guiding pathway because it goes beyond this consciousness to naming broad steps for action. AWC’s praxis is a consciousness raising effort toward a process that both encourages and enables participants to work for peace at both the surface and systemic level. Furthermore, it allows AWC to carry out the work of a beloved community while only doing the training as they lay the seed of social change in their participants and encourage them to be civic actors. Therefore, AWC is both in the work and doing the work. In other words, they both teach the process and practice the process through the act of
teaching it.

Challenges

AWC’s train the trainer program is an excellent source of sustainability as far as institutionalizing Kingian nonviolence and alleviating pressure on the organization’s paid staff members to carry out the work themselves (given the expanse of people they want to provide the workshops to, it would not be feasible with the current organizational capacity without the additional trainers).

However, there are issues related to sustainability from an infrastructure and funding standpoint. It is important to note, though, that these issues are not uncommon of start-up nonprofits, nevertheless I think it is important that AWC slow down on their programming to dedicate more time to solidifying these two aspects.

From what I have observed, AWC has a minimal amount of internal organizational documents such as a flushed out organizational chart, a logic model, or updated outcomes and program descriptions. I attribute this to the organization’s lack of sufficient staffing. There are four co-founders that occupy the role of executive director, senior advisor, curriculum specialist, and trainer. The senior advisor does not live in Chicago and is therefore not heavily involved with on the ground trainings. The co-founder in the training role was, however, more absent than the senior advisor. That said, the people I saw the most were the executive director and the curriculum specialist. The majority of the work, however, seems to be done by the executive director (ED). The ED does get paid as a full time staff member whereas the others are paid as consultants, however, the ED is significantly underpaid given the amount of work she does, her experience, and her educational level. The curriculum specialist and advisor are
also underpaid given their educational levels. In the interviews one thing that came out was that this underpayment represents how the AWC holds some nonstandard values: the staff are so committed they often do not get paid and do their work as a labor of love. This is not sustainable, however, and if AWC wants to be a player in creating social change in Chicago things need to change.

I believe cutting back on their ambitious training schedule is needed in order to devote more staff attention to establishing the organization’s internal documents, funding, board, marketing, and infrastructure. Their programming is well in place and does not seem to need any major tweaks. AWC needs to establish an organizational chart that clearly lists the jobs of all paid employees and how much time will be dedicated to each task / focus area in an intentional way that recognizes the potential burnout of being overworked and underpaid despite whatever passions the person has for the job. The same needs to happen for the train the trainer program: best practices and expectations for volunteers need to be made clear so that people are engaging in AWC in a way that is mutually beneficial and not chaotic. Policies and practices need to be in place as a matter of capacity building: it is not sustainable or effective to move forward with programmatic efforts if a solid backbone is not there. A symptom of this was the nature of trainings sometimes changing last minute and also sometimes not starting on time.

The other major challenge is funding. AWC made it clear that funding has been a struggle because there is a lot of competition for funding in the Chicagoland area and foundations do not want to fund startup nonprofits. While I have not seen their grant proposals, rejections, success letters, etc. or know any of these relationships intimately, from what I have observed and learned after
talking to their fundraising consultant is that the trick for AWC will be rising to the infrastructure challenges I listed above and showing foundations that they are already doing strong work and have the organizational capacity to maintain it. They need to be strong on all fronts, not just on the programming. Furthermore, it takes time to build a development department and to build a fundraising network so AWC needs to be incredibly strategic, engage in strategic planning work, and utilize their board as a source of funding, either with members personally contributing or pulling in money through fundraising in addition to other board involvement. Lastly, AWC needs to really consider solidifying their move over to charging for some of their trainings when they can and pull this as a source of revenue (especially when they are doing trainings/workshops for organizations).
**Kingian Nonviolence and the Healing Justice Framework**

I came into this research project having studied Dr. King and his theories on, and strategies of, nonviolent resistance including agape, negative and positive peace, and direct action. At the time I studied these, however, I had yet to hear of transformative or healing justice. Now, I think the HJ framework is a useful one to look at Kingian Nonviolence through, something that my work with AWC really affirmed.

The framework of healing justice I have put forth recognizes linkages between personal and community wellness, whereby if a community is unwell due to structural violence the individual may suffer both physically and psychologically and thus require both healing through consciousness raising and reclaiming agency to engage in re-envisioning these structures and pushing for transformation. This framework can be applied to the model of AWC. AWC works in Englewood, a community that ranks fifth of forty-seven for the most violent neighborhoods in Chicago and suffers from high poverty and unemployment. In the interviews, one emerging theme was that there is trauma in poverty from the structures: people have trauma from the way they have been treated by police and interactions with the criminal justice system, from being hungry, from not having adequate health care, etc. Furthermore, interviewees indicated that trauma shows up as fatalism in youth, or in other words, before youth even have a chance they are already a light snuffed out by a seemingly predetermined fate.

AWC trainings recognized this. The trainings made space to clearly identify that society has stacked the odds against them. As they went through the activity on what violence is racism repeatedly came up and the connection was made that racism is both physically violent in a structural way and also
emotionally violent. AWC here establishes the linkages between personal and community well-being. The praxis of AWC is consciousness and agency building as it gives youth a toolkit to not only recognize and deescalate conflict in their own lives, but where conflict and violence come from (structures that create the problems in their neighborhoods) and then how to change these. When youth complete the workshops, they are asked three words about how the training made them feel, and according to the interviews I conducted and reading through the youth evaluations “empowered” is one of the most frequently used. Others include: “hopeful,” “free,” “powerful,” “relieved,” and “uplifted.” (“Hopeful” seems to appear the most.) There is an emphasis in the nonviolent practice on violence of the spirit and clear recognition that healing, while Dr. King may not have called it healing, is essential in the process of nonviolence. I believe reading the words quoted above demonstrates this. Youth living in a context that leads to fatalism are left empowered and hopeful by kingian nonviolence.

In my interviews with AWC affiliates no one had ever heard of HJ, but they had heard of RJ and TJ. RJ also came up in the teacher training, and AWC’s overall stance is that RJ is another helpful tool that is useful alongside Kingian nonviolence. (Earlier I mentioned how PITS uses peace circles to prevent violence.) Interestingly one interviewee put forth their understanding of Kingian nonviolence as a part of RJ, existing at the preventative end of the spectrum as Kingian is about preventing fights, while RJ is about restoring relationships and the community after incidents occur. This person also identified TJ as another word for RJ when RJ covers the whole spectrum and does more than just restoring. This person’s perspective was useful to me because of the idea of the spectrum. I was then able to see a whole picture where HJ is the overall
framework and includes a spectrum of TJ. At one end of the spectrum is Kingian, which is preventative, and RJ, which is reparative at the other end. However, because Kingian is about transforming not just relationships but entire systems, it is also feasible to remove RJ as an item on the spectrum and place it alongside the other tools in the Kingian tool belt. After learning about the tool belt perspective of Kingian, this is ultimately the view I take. Kingian nonviolence is an active process that includes tools such as restorative justice in order to build a beloved community through a dichotomous process of both healing from oppression and transforming oppressive structures at the same time.
AWC and School to Confinement Pathways

Because of AWC’s focus on the broader level structural violence that makes up the birdcage, there was no conversation about school to confinement pathways. Rather, AWC teaches a nonviolent approach to incidences of violence in order to maintain peace in the schools (hence the program title, PITS) and empower youth with knowledge of a change process. In this way, AWC gives students tools to circumvent the pathways and be empowered by both consciousness about social transformation as well as the ability to raise this consciousness in others. I believe, however, that AWC should bring up the idea of school to confinement pathways and different examples of direct action related to school campaigns, such as school funding and access to opportunity, that youth could use the principles of Kingian nonviolence to engage with. Focusing on such a directly relevant topic would make AWC’s programs more action oriented.

The juxtaposition of surviving school to confinement pathways versus transforming them is an important one to discuss. Teaching youth tools such as nonviolence and RJ as a means of both improving relationships and alleviating violence in schools so that they can graduate is essential. Social change is a long process, and youth need help navigating a punishing school system. I believe that the HJ practice of AWC gives youth the outlet to express frustration and cultivates resiliency, which is important in terms of personal well-being. However, in this vein of surviving the pathways, AWC could be seen as assimilationist in the sense that they are helping students in the here and now to survive the systems. To be radical liberationist, however, and to truly complete the HJ framework, the emphasis should not be on surviving, but how to transform the current system.
While AWC has a transformative vision in tackling structural violence and building a beloved community, they only serve as a first step in the social change journey because there is a lack of concrete and actionable plans to truly transform the current structures. In a way, however, I think this is where AWC pictures themselves. They are the consciousness raising and educational aspect of kingian nonviolence. They teach a process and a criticality that youth can then apply to their lives and hopefully be leaders of future campaigns. AWC helps them identify violence and outline the framework of a beloved community to work toward. In this way, AWC points youth in a certain direction and enables them to be leaders in transformation work. In other words, AWC provides an abbreviated roadmap and some tools for the journey. I do wish, however, that they will adapt more concrete discussions of social change processes as directly applicable to the lives of youth and school to confinement pathways.
Conclusion

AWC has the potential for being able to involve participants in healing and civic engagement through Kingian nonviolence and the process of civil rights. While they do face challenges to their capacity building that will need to be overcome, I am struck by the viability of what is ultimately their theory of change. If they train people to be trainers, these people then act as seeds and train others, allowing AWC to build community social capital around the concepts of Kingian nonviolence. This is especially evident in the wrap around services they provide of training teachers, students, and youth organizers. My hope is they will soon involve parents and other community stakeholders to increase this social capital around nonviolence as a process of healing and community transformation.
A few weeks ago, I received a morning call from the ED of AWC. She had been having a hard week because a few days before one of the student participants, who is also a student trainer, had been shot. Tears welled up in my eyes, and I felt my stomach drop. I had met this student at the teacher training where they facilitated a discussion. This student is remarkable. The swagger they gave off captivated my attention, commanded the room, and drew us all into the activity. As I looked on, I remember being struck by the thought that, despite our age difference, I wanted to do whatever I could to help them in their path. I asked were they okay? What had happened? They were home recovering. The week before their house had been shot up and then this time someone walked up to the house and shot this student and three of their family members while they all sat on the porch.

After asking if there was anything I could do to help, the ED told me that AWC staff had already been thinking of a way to get this student out of the neighborhood and to the safety of college or to one of the staff member’s houses temporarily. This student, however, will not go. They refuse to leave their neighborhood and remain committed to improving it through the principles of Kingian nonviolence.

I share this small vignette for three reasons. The first is that it speaks to the context of daily life for some of the students involved in AWC (and those living in neighborhoods that are really trapped by the cage). It seems to me that the popular narrative construction around “home” is that, for most people, it is a
safe place. In this instance, however, where the student was shot on their porch, is home a safe place? If the neighborhood is violent, education system underfunded, and the home not safe where do youth go to thrive?

Secondly, this shows the difficulty and trauma involved when living in the confines of the birdcage and working within it. AWC goes into neighborhoods wracked by violence and its staff is invested in the youth that live there. This life and this work are hard. As I argued in Chapter 3, poverty takes a toll on bodies and minds, physical and psychological health. This work also takes a toll. As educators and youth workers we invest our time, energy, and hope in youth. To see one almost taken away or to lose one is devastating.

Finally, I share this vignette because it shows the strength and spirit of that student. This young person is an example of the linkages between personal wellness and community wellness. For them, they are well when they are an actor for change in their community. This is part of Healing Justice. They are on a process of community liberation and find their self inextricably bound up in that community. This young person is an example of the profound hope we can find in youth and their resilience. This hope can give us energy to move forward and act.

In this work we must practice what long time urban educator Duncan-Andrade (2009) calls “critical hope,” which he argues demands a steadfast dedication and struggle against what Cornwell West (2004) calls the “deadly tides of wealth inequality, group xenophobia, and personal despair” (p. 186). Duncan Andrade (2009) argues that critical hope is audacious in two ways: (1) It stands in solidarity with urban communities and collectively shares the burden of undue physical and emotional trauma as an act of collective healing; (2) Audacious hope defies the ideology and narrative of privilege and defense of
systems of privilege that reap violence on marginalized others in order to maintain these systems and hierarchies (p. 190).

Duncan-Andrade (2009) writes:

Audacious hope stares down the painful path; and despite the overwhelming odds against us making it down that path to change, we make the journey again and again. There is no other choice. Acceptance of this fact allows us to find the courage and the commitment to cajole our student to join us on that journey. This makes us better people as it makes us better teachers, and it models for our students that the painful path is the hopeful path” (p. 191).

Here Duncan-Andrade argues for the framework of HJ. For transformation of systems of oppression to happen it will involve pain and consequently healing. Duncan-Andrade’s words reflect the humanity of HJ. Transformation is occurring but it is transformation that acknowledges the hardness and suffering oppression brings. Furthermore, Duncan-Andrade recognizes that healing and resisting are a continuous process.

It is with this notion of collective action for transformation and collective healing that I wish to revisit the metaphor of the birdcage with and conclude this thesis on. Alexander contends that the birdcage is a series of structures, policies, and practices that trap the bird at the bottom in a cycle of poverty and replication of the structures (Sokolower, 2011, p. 14). I want to expand this metaphor, however, to recognize the linkages of community wellness and argue that as long as the birdcage exits we are all trapped in it as a collective society, from those at the top who may have varying levels of ignorance or even complacency in systems.
of oppression to those at the bottom. None of us can be free while some are unwell. In other words, living in a society that allows for the existence of a birdcage, for the marginalization of others, is damaging to us all in ways both large and small.

Dr. King argued that injustice somewhere is a threat to justice everywhere (King, 1963, n.pag). While transformation may involve us “staring down the painful path” as Duncan-Andrade (2009) contends, we need collective action to abolish structures that are punishing to human spirit and agency (p. 191). I audaciously hope for this abolition. Abolition of the cage. Abolition of all things that constrain us, our agency, and our capacity to heal and be well.
References


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Appendix A:

**Interview Questions**

1. What are the community issues your organization is trying to address?

2. What do you think the origins of these problems are?

3. What is your organization’s theory of change?
   a. In other words, what is your organization’s vision of change?

4. How is this theory put into practice?

5. What challenges do you see in meeting the goals or mission of the organization?

6. Who benefits from your work and how?

7. How do you engage people who need the work the most?
   a. How is this need defined?

8. What is the sustainability of the organization and your work?
   a. How do you make this type of work sustainable?

9. There are a lot of nonprofits in Chicago. Is it difficult to compete for funding?

10. What sets your model apart from others?

11. Have you ever heard of transformative justice?
   a. If so how do you think it is or isn’t part of the work the organization does?

12. What about healing justice?
   a. If so how do you think it is or isn’t part of the work the organization does?

13. What do you perceive the organization’s goals to be?
   a. Have any been accomplished or seen significant steps toward them?
   b. How does the organization measure its progress and success?

14. What positive impacts do you see on participants in your program?

15. Are there any barriers that you see to the organization’s work being effective and impactful for all of the participants?