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Abolition Is Not Abstract: Zines and the Transmission of Revolutionary Cultural Capital

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

ABOLITION IS NOT ABSTRACT:
ZINES AND THE TRANSMISSION OF REVOLUTIONARY
CULTURAL CAPITAL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

BY
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CHICAGO, IL
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAB	All Cops Are Bastards
COINTELPRO	Counterintelligence Program
CPD	Chicago Police Department
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
PIC	Prison Industrial Complex
AOE	Analysis of events
HT	How to...
HSTY	History
ATTP	Agitprop
IAT	Introductory Abolitionist Texts
E	Essay

ABSTRACT

Abolition as a theory and practice-whether in relation to the institution of the prison, systems of policing, or the carceral state as a whole-has received relatively little attention or serious appreciation within the discipline of Sociology. Calls for the abolition of policing and prisons are often taken for granted as naïve and radical demands, perceived as being disassociated from the material conditions of reality. Nonetheless, abolitionist analyses provide a unique and critical perspective from which to explore alternatives to addressing pervasive police violence and mass incarceration through strategies which do not rely upon, or increase the power of, the criminal justice system. Furthermore, in the wake of the devastating effects of the FBI's domestic counterintelligence program, many radical activists and abolitionists recognized the necessity for either going underground or developing a more de-centralized organizational structure which would be harder to infiltrate and disrupt. This change in structure led to the development of new techniques and strategies in addition to the re-emergence of previously used forms of communication. One of these forms, prominently utilized today, is that of the 'zine'. This thesis aims to address how zines operate as a mechanism of organizing for abolitionist activists and authors. More specifically, I am interested in exploring how activists use zines to spread abolitionist theory, build networks and solidarity with organizations and individuals throughout the country, and ultimately attempt to provide interested parties with the knowledge and resources to advance abolitionist objectives in their communities.

INTRODUCTION

While the murders of Laquan McDonald, Rekia Boyd, Adam Toledo and others killed by the Chicago police department have generated widespread conversation concerning the prevalence and extremity of racialized police violence, these conversations tend to excise the actions of individual police officers from the culture and practice of policing itself as an institution. Even when it was revealed that Chicago police had been illegally detaining and torturing Black men into providing false confessions for crimes which they did not commit, the conversation tended to portray these gross violations of human rights as unconnected to the patterns and practices of the police department as a whole. Furthermore, while the uprisings of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police department, brought renewed attention to the cruel and racialized practices of police in Chicago, these uprisings also promulgated the message that abolition, rather than reform, was the demand being called for.

Calls to ‘defund the police’ or the announcement of ACAB (All Cops Are Bastards) made clear that activists and organizers were no longer interested in creating a ‘safer’, less hostile police force; rather, they were envisioning a world in which police and policing as an institution no longer exist. While the protests of 2020 introduced these abolitionist possibilities to a wide swath of the American population who had previously been unfamiliar with them, the demands for abolition of police and the abolition of the carceral state as a whole have deep roots reaching back to movements for the abolition of chattel-slavery. Despite a robust history of

abolitionist organizing, activism, and literature, the general public in addition to many academic institutions have paid relatively little attention to abolition both as a theory and as a potential organizing framework for constructing the type of society we regularly imagine to be possible. When researching police violence, it is rare to find instances in which academic authors seriously entertain the possibility of abolition as a response to the historic and systemic injustices which have yet to be solved by decades of police-reform efforts. Many view police misconduct and brutality as phenomena which can be addressed through increased funding, training, and accountability measures without considering the extent to which such systemic injustices are linked to the core logics of institutions of policing themselves. I am interested in understanding how a police-free future may enable a redistribution of funding and a reorganization of relations in society which not only effectuate the obsolescence of law enforcement agencies as they exist today, but additionally establish the conditions for a safer, more equitable society in which justice is achieved in more than name alone.

While abolitionist activists and organizations have adopted a variety of theories, strategies, and tactics for addressing police violence, one of the themes prevalent in the social-movement space today compared to that of the Civil Rights era is the prominence of decentralized, autonomous networks of activists. One of the lessons learned from the movements of the 60's involved the understanding that hierarchical organizations structured in a manner similar to government bureaucracies or capitalist corporations would be vulnerable to infiltration and surveillance which would ultimately undermine their objectives and lead to the dissolution of countless organizations. The FBI's counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO, was particularly successful in targeting political groups, generating mistrust and internal divisions,

and ultimately disrupting the activities of many groups from this era. In response to these historical realities, activists of the present have developed new strategies or relied on forgotten techniques to disseminate information and theory as well as making calls to action and providing strategies for achieving various objectives.

One of these methods involves the distribution of ‘zines’-independently published magazines. This paper aims to address how zines operate as a mechanism of organizing. More specifically, I am interested in exploring how activists use zines to spread abolitionist theory, build networks and solidarity with organizations and individuals throughout the country, and ultimately attempt to provide interested parties with the knowledge and resources to advance abolitionist objectives in their communities. I am additionally interested in exploring how different authors frame issues of police violence, abolition, and the varying movement tactics they suggest. I believe that the analysis of zines provides a unique opportunity for the exploration of these answers for two primary reasons: the use of zines as a mode of political communication has received little attention and within the digital age stands as a unique and creative form of political organizing; additionally, zines serve as a platform for activists to express their ideas in clear, uncensored language. While some of the theoretical writings published may not be as controversial, some of the more radical movement suggestions as well as the analyses of police tactics could be problematic if published in a more mainstream format. Therefore, analyzing zines can provide a unique opportunity to access information that activists may not be willing to discuss in interviews or more public social settings.

Abolition

Abolition as a theory and practice-whether in relation to the institution of the prison, systems of policing, or the carceral state as a whole-has received relatively little attention or serious appreciation within the discipline of Sociology. Okechukwu (2021) argues that “modern abolitionist movements and concerns have been largely overlooked by Sociologists” and while some academics have employed the terminology of abolition, they have largely done so “without attention to an established body of literature on abolition as a framework of analysis”

(Okechukwu, 2021:157). This stems in part, no doubt, from the fact that theories of abolition are often misunderstood or misrepresented entirely. For most of history, sociologists, mass media, and much of the general population of American society have denigrated those promulgating abolitionist arguments on the one hand as foolish and naïve idealists and on the other as dangerous radicals threatening the stability of this country. Regardless of which side one may take, it is clear that failure to take abolitionist arguments seriously is the product of both deliberate misrepresentation and a coincidental ignorance resulting from a general lack of information concerning abolitionist practices. As I and the authors I reference in this review would argue, abolition as a theory or praxis is both compelling and holds great “potential for restructuring social relations and bringing into being...new democratic institutions” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018:379). In this literature review I will explore the development of abolitionist thought and practice-from its roots amongst the activities of slave-abolitionists in addition to the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois-before detailing how abolitionist claims and practices have evolved in the contemporary moment to confront the militarization of police forces and the dual phenomena of mass incarceration and racialized police violence.

As Angela Davis reminds us in *ABOLITION. FEMINISM. NOW*. “Abolitionist as adjective and identity in the contemporary moment draws profoundly on the nineteenth century as inspiration” (Davis et al., 2022:52). Contemporary social movements for abolition share a variety of themes with earlier movements for the abolition of slavery. While it is difficult to imagine the institution of slavery as anything other than abhorrent and obsolete, it was once perceived as a durable and integral component of American society, quite similar to how the prison system is perceived today. In *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Davis (2003) argues that “the prison is considered so ‘natural’ that it is extremely hard to imagine life without it” (Davis, 2003:10). The comprehensive critiques offered by modern abolitionist movements mirror those of abolitionist activists of the past. For example, McDowell & Fernandez (2018), quote Manisha Sinha, who argues that abolitionists fighting against the institution of slavery “recognized that the oppression of slaves was linked to other wrongs in the world...they used the vehicle of antislavery to criticize the democratic pretensions of Western societies and expose their seamier side” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018:376). We can thus see a link between abolitionist movements of the past and those of the modern era in regards to how these movements frame the issues of mass incarceration, militarized/racialized policing, etc. in terms of a comprehensive framework which links these phenomena to systems of global capitalism functioning to uphold a stratified system of racial order. For abolitionists of the past as well as the present, the critique is not isolated to the institution of the prison or police, but expanded to critique the entire economic and social system in which these institutions are embedded. Furthermore, both McDowell & Fernandez (2018) and Davis et al. (2022) cite W.E.B. Du Bois’s arguments in *Black Reconstruction* as being foundational to the development of abolitionist thought.

Published in 1935, *Black Reconstruction* provided a critical analysis of the reconstruction era following the end of the civil war. Du Bois argued that “enslaved persons and free Black subjects were instrumental in the abolition of slavery, that slavery was indeed the cause of the Civil War, and that Reconstruction was more than a negation of slavery” (Davis et al., 2022:54-5). In this piece, Du Bois developed the concept of Abolition-Democracy as an imagination of a world in which slavery was not only non-existent, but in which equality had truly been achieved and the racial order of society eliminated. The concept of Abolition-Democracy served to critique the promulgated achievements of the Reconstruction in the sense that it was assumed to have truly brought about equal conditions for all persons in society. Du Bois asserted that “slavery, and the oppressive conditions that produced and maintained the institutions, could not be eliminated by mere legal reform” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018:377). While the abolition of chattel-slavery certainly represented a significant achievement, Du Bois critiques an interpretation of this achievement as being equal to having achieved complete abolition. He posited that “the abolition of slavery was accomplished only in the negative sense. In order to achieve the *comprehensive* abolition of slavery...new institutions should have been created to incorporate Black people into the social order” (Davis, 2005:91). Du Bois’s arguments highlight that while formerly enslaved persons may have been freed in the sense that they could no longer be considered property, they were not necessarily free in either an economic or social sense. Discriminatory and racially biased practices had and continued to shape the landscape of the United States in a manner which produced extensive economic inequality, with the burden falling heaviest upon communities of color. This context produced a phenomenon of concentrated poverty in which formerly enslaved communities continued to face limited and

restricted opportunities as a product of their continued economic and social marginalization within society. True equality would therefore be predicated upon the elimination of these obstacles in addition to the development of institutions which truly operated in the best interest of all citizens. Du Bois's concept also offers a powerful critique to the notion that simple reforms can lead to the type of transformative change which we may desire. Just as Du Bois recognized that the 'reform' of abolishing slavery without addressing the root causes of white-supremacist ideologies and institutions would fail to create an environment of equality, activists of the modern era similarly recognize the limitations to reform. Mariame Kaba argues that "while some offer calls for reform, such calls ignore the reality that an institution grounded in the commodification of human beings, through torture and the deprivation of their liberty, cannot be made good" (Kaba, 2021:24).

Davis et al. (2022) identify several additional points in history which have represented significant moments of development for the movement to achieve abolition. One of these moments was the 1971 prisoner-led uprising at Attica Prison in upstate New York. Over one-thousand prisoners who were disgusted with the inhumane conditions and brutal racialized abuse took control of the prison for a span of four days, taking several dozen guards as hostages in the process. The prisoners made "a passionate call for abolition" and while their calls were unanswered, the uprising had the effect of spreading a "counterhegemonic discourse" through which the notion of prison abolition began to gain more traction (Davis et al., 2022:34). Furthermore, while a variety of activists and organizations have embraced the vision of 'abolition-democracy', perhaps the single-most influential group within this movement space has been *Critical Resistance*. *Critical Resistance* was founded in 1997 by Angela Davis and other

organizers who centered the organization around the mission of eliminating “all forms of policing, confinement, and surveillance from everyday life” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018:377). *Critical Resistance* was developed not only as a mechanism for furthering the development of abolitionist thought and practice, but also in response to the massive increase in unemployment and incarceration which had been devastating the country in the years leading up to the organization’s founding. The organization contributed to the abolitionist movement by disseminating “radical analyses of the ways in which imprisonment and policing, firmly linked to developments in global capitalism, simultaneously incorporate and mask structural racism” (Davis et al., 2022:40). They argued that massive changes in the economy, wrought by the effect of neoliberal policies, produced an enormous class of unemployed and impoverished people. Rather than attempting to address these changes in the economy through the creation of new forms of employment, *Critical Resistance* organizers argued that punishment and incarceration had expanded to address the surplus in labor. Since their founding, *Critical Resistance* has spread throughout the country and has chapters in many different cities. The organization offers trainings, workshops, and provides a multitude of resources both to learn about abolitionist practice as well as how to organize in one’s community to begin building a vision of abolition-democracy locally and collectively.

Coyle & Schept (2018) argue that we are living in the age of the ‘carceral society’ which is defined by “a state organized around police and penal power, as well as the broader circulation of the logic of law, police, courtrooms, and prisons” (Coyle & Schept, 2018:320). This society is identified by the prominence, amongst legal scholars and politicians of both political leanings, of a ‘criminal-justice’ logic which is defined by the products of the various intellectual disciplines

producing knowledge related to ‘crime’. Studies in criminal justice and criminology dominate understandings of ‘crime’, ‘criminals’, and ‘punishment’ and tend to produce a relatively narrow logic limiting the handling of transgressions to responses from the carceral state. In opposition to this logic is the ‘penal abolition logic’ which “rejects the ‘criminal justice’ paradigm in the total sense...[and] insists on the central importance of ‘criminal justice’ to the ongoing work of white supremacy, colonialism, and racial capitalism” (Coyle & Schept, 2018:320). What are the other leading frames with which abolitionist organizing interprets the world? Activist, author, and organizer Mariame Kaba contends that “abolition is a political vision, a structural analysis of oppression and a practical organizing strategy...abolition is a vision of a restructured society in a world where we have everything we need: food, shelter, education, health, art, beauty, clean water, and...things that are foundational to our personal and community safety” (Kaba, 2021:2). This may appear surprising to some as abolition is often interpreted in a negative sense.

This negative connotation derives not just from political opposition or misunderstanding, but from a belief that abolition is an inherently negative process as it is centrally concerned with destruction-the destruction of institutions and systems. As Davis (2005) reminds us, abolition is “not only, or not even primarily...about...a negative process of tearing down, but it is also about building up, about creating new institutions” (Davis, 2005:69). McDowell and Fernandez (2018) make this point as they identify processes of dismantling (of oppressive institutions) and building (of inclusive, supportive institutions) as guiding struggles of the abolitionist movement. Citing Savannah Shange, they additionally note that “abolition is a messy break up with the state...and so radical demands for abolition do not rest simply in ending or reforming oppressive practices, but rather, reshaping the world that produces oppressive acts, requiring the formation of new

social systems and social relationships” (McDowell & Fernandez 2018:157). Mariame Kaba asserts that “we have all so thoroughly internalized the logics of oppression that if oppression were to end tomorrow, we would likely reproduce previous structures” (Kaba, 2021:4). Thus, abolition proposes not only to restructure the landscape of institutions throughout our society but additionally to reimagine the way we understand ourselves and relate to one another.

As mentioned previously, modern abolitionist organizers draw on the insights of Du Bois in arguing for the impossibility of reform to address the systematic and racialized violence produced by the prison industrial complex. One way of understanding the limits to reform is by considering the basic function of police in our society. Rachel Herzing argues that “policing is a set of practices empowered by the state to enforce law and maintain social control and cultural hegemony through the use of force” (Correia & Wall, 2021:X). Furthermore, Correia and Wall (2021) contend that “the purpose-the *nature*-of police is to inflict pain or to threaten pain in the fabrication of order” (Correia & Wall, 2021:3). As Herzing notes in a separate piece from *Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect?*, “keeping the function of policing in focus-armed protection and state interests-increases clarity about what policing is meant to protect and who it serves” (Macaré et al. 2016:115). Classical conceptions of police imagine the police exist to enforce laws and ultimately prevent crime and protect the interests and safety of all citizens. From this perspective, instances of police violence or corruption are interpreted as aberrations and anomalies and are hardly indicative of any sort of systematic problem. Even when those adopting this viewpoint accept that systematic issues within policing are evident, they do not perceive these issues as being linked inherently to the primary function of policing. In other words, many fail to recognize that rather than the murder of unarmed Black men representing a

system which has become dysfunctional and broken, the system is producing the exact effects it was constructed to create. Mariame Kaba extends this line of argument, asserting that “when you see a police officer pressing his knee into a Black man’s neck until he dies, that’s the logical result of policing in America. When a police officer brutalizes a Black person, he is doing what he sees as his job” (Kaba, 2021:14). Thus, abolitionists link the impossibility of reform to the inherent purposes of policing and imprisonment at their foundations. From its inception, the institution of policing has never been concerned with the prevention of crime or the assurance of safety for all. Policing in the United States has always functioned principally to serve the interests of capital-protecting private property, quelling dissent, and infiltrating organizations seeking to disrupt the status quo via the distribution of violence, the burden of which has always fallen heaviest upon communities of color.

Thus far, we can see that abolitionist frameworks connect the institutions of prison and policing to the maintenance of racial-capitalism or capitalism predicated upon the maintenance of a racial hierarchy within society. Abolitionists have linked the expansion of private, for-profit prisons and immigration detention centers, in addition to the pervasive hyperexploitation of prison laborers by massive multinational corporations, to this system of racial capitalism-arguing that impoverished communities of color are the primary targets of such criminalization and that these institutions operate in a manner which not only extends the institution of slavery into the modern era but additionally reproduces the conditions of oppression and marginalization. These arguments clearly draw upon such theoretical influences as Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Intersectional theory, and Critical Race theory. Furthermore, while it is not often acknowledged,

abolitionist theory and praxis takes great influence from and shares much in common with feminist theories and radical feminist movements.

In the 2022 book *ABOLITION. FEMINISM. NOW.* Authors Angela Davis, Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie develop the concept of ‘abolition feminism’. Abolition-feminism involves a relationality between the concepts, one that argues that “abolitionist theories and practices are most compelling when they are also feminist, and conversely, a feminism that is also abolitionist is the most inclusive and persuasive version of feminism for these times” (Davis et al., 2022:2). According to these authors, “gender justice will not be realized without the incorporation of abolition praxis” (Davis et al., 2022: 82). Abolition-feminism draws from an intersectional approach in that it argues we must attend to how multiple, intersecting systems of oppression function to produce the pernicious effects we wish to change. Rather than looking at systems of policing or prisons solely through the lens of class or race, an abolition-feminist perspective contends that we must consider the ways in which gender contributes to the experience of police violence in addition to how gender, race, class, sexuality, and immigration status all intertwine to produce varying and complex outcomes for the individuals caught in the violent grip of the prison industrial complex. Much like intersectional approaches, abolition-feminism is defined by this ‘both/and’ perspective rather than an ‘either/or’ approach. As such, the authors of *ABOLITION. FEMINISM. NOW.* contend that abolition-feminism is a ‘praxis’, which necessitates doing multiple things at once; addressing immediate local needs while working to dismantle larger structures of oppression; developing abolitionist organizing domestically while also looking to international movements and building global solidarity to strengthen the potential for abolition-democracy on a world-wide scale.

Davis et al. (2021) posit that, while sometimes discounted as unscientific within academic circles, we should recognize the significance of uniting practice with vision, asserting that “vision and practice are not contradictory but are rather inseparable, the insistent prefiguration of the world we know we need” (Davis et al., 2021:15). They also emphasize the grounded nature of this approach, contending that the development of these visions must be situated amongst the ideas of marginalized communities and must be arrived at collectively, collaboratively, and constructively. In this sense we may better be able to understand how abolition is not just a theory or a demand but also a practice. In discussing, theorizing, and debating the possibilities and potentials for a new organization of society, individuals are engaging in the necessary and constructive work of prefiguring the world in which we want to live. They are also putting abolition into practice. Furthermore, Davis et al. link this creative work to a feminist praxis, arguing that “the productive tension of holding onto a radical, real, and deep vision while engaging in the messy daily practice *is* the feminist praxis: the work of everyday people to try, to build, to make. And this requires collectivity” (Davis et al., 2022:16). This is but one of the many examples in which we can observe a combination of abolitionist theory with feminist practice into an abolition-feminism praxis serving to strengthen the potential of both to be effective in the transformation of environments.

How do we abolish the police? How do we eliminate death-producing institutions from our communities and replace them with institutions promoting care, health, safety and well-being? How can we realize abolition-democracy as envisioned by W.E.B. Du Bois and so many others? In response to the question of what a world without police and prisons would look like, Mariame Kaba responded that “we’ll figure it out by working to get there” (Kaba, 2021:xx).

Mariame Kaba provides us with a broad and general outline for the steps required to achieve abolition. She asserts that we must begin by “trying to transform society, we must remember that we ourselves will also need to transform. Our imagination of what a different world can be is limited. We are deeply entangled in the very systems we are organizing to change” (Kaba, 2021:4). The second step, according to Kaba, is that we must “imagine and experiment with new collective structures that enable us to take more principled action” (Kaba, 2021:4). Rather than accountability being achieved for the transgressions we have experienced being orchestrated by a third-party, we could embrace approaches to harm reduction and accountability achievement that emphasize community and relational processes. This relates to the common abolitionist call-and-response: ‘who keeps us safe?-we keep us safe.’ Recognizing that, as is, the state and its agents do not produce safety or protect citizens, abolitionists call upon communities to recognize their capacity to promote safety and stability without the need of state intervention. The third step requires that we “simultaneously engage in strategies that reduce contact between people and the criminal legal system” (Kaba, 2021:4). The final step which Kaba proposes involves, quite literally, changing everything. Kaba argues that because “the [prison industrial complex] PIC is linked in its logics and operation with all other systems” it is necessary “that we not only change how we address harm but also that we change everything” (Kaba, 2021:4). In constructing a new world, we are inherently limited by the extent of what we can imagine. By engaging in open and critical conversations, and by asking ourselves to truly imagine what is possible we may open a window to the creation of a new world in which systems understood as permanent and integral are recognized as obsolete and harmful. In the words of Octavia Butler, “we will dream our way out; we must imagine beyond the given” (Davis et al., 2022:16).

Zines

As has been addressed, abolition as a theory and practice-whether in relation to the institution of the prison, systems of policing, or the carceral state as a whole-has received relatively little attention or serious appreciation within the discipline of Sociology. Calls for the abolition of policing and prisons are often taken for granted as naïve and radical demands or perceived as being disassociated from the material conditions of reality. Nonetheless, abolitionist analyses provide a unique and critical perspective from which to explore alternatives to addressing pervasive police violence and mass incarceration through strategies which do not rely upon, or increase the power of, the criminal justice system. Furthermore, in the wake of the devastating effects of the FBI's domestic counterintelligence program, many radical activists and abolitionists recognized the necessity for either going underground or developing a more decentralized organizational structure which would be harder to infiltrate and disrupt. This change in structure led to the development of new techniques and strategies in addition to the re-emergence of previously used forms of communication. One of these forms, prominently utilized today, is that of the 'zine'.

Zines are independently published 'mini-magazines' which can cover a virtually endless array of topics. One could find zines ranging from topics such as cooking, gardening, and photography, to random tidbits of history or independent comics from a variety of genres. There are also zines which address music, art, theatre, gender and sexuality, political analysis, and advice on how to safely use drugs or deal with interrogation by the police. In other words, the diversity in regard to genres and topics covered within the world of zines is endless. One of the unique features of zines is the lack of censorship that goes into the process of their production.

This enables the dissemination of thoughts, ideas, or knowledge which may be differentially shunned or outright banned within more mainstream circles. For example, zines which address tactics of urban guerilla warfare or provide advice on how to engage in strategic property destruction could be prohibited from being published were they to be associated with mainstream publishers. Such publications could additionally attract significant attention in the form of law enforcement surveillance or even incarceration if the author was able to be easily identified with the zine. Zines may also allow for greater freedom of expression in social contexts where particular beliefs could lead to negative social consequences or even place an individual in danger. While zines are typically printed in black-and-white, on standard paper which is folded to form a miniature book-measuring 8.5" x 5.5"-they can also appear with a variety of paper materials and colors in addition to being printed in full-color, with some formats ranging from incredibly small zines the size of a matchbook, to larger zines and those that appear in very wide and untraditional forms. The prominence of black-and-white zines is a feature of the cost-savings associated with printing zines in this format as opposed to printing in full-color; however, some zines are printed exclusively in color which can be attributed to a variety of personal and artistic motivations concerning the author. Zines are not usually very long, they tend to range between ten-to-thirty pages in length; however, some zines can be as short as a single page while others can span in excess of one-hundred pages. While such diversity in terms of themes, formats, and appearances are predominant within the wider world of zines, the zines which I utilized for my analysis fell into a more narrow range.

Methods

I relied on a convenience sample to obtain my data for this analysis. The overwhelming majority of zines I analyzed-with the exception of four-were printed in black-and-white on standard-sized paper. Additionally, I limited my analysis to zines which were broadly related to topics of abolition, policing, anarchism, protesting, capitalism, racism and the prison industrial complex. When I began my investigation, I was only familiar with one independent bookstore and several online-databases where I could potentially locate zines. While I would have the opportunity to develop connections with several zine-authors and publishers near the end of my analysis phase, at the outset, I was not able to locate zines in a very systematic fashion and was thus simply collecting as many titles as I could find. This stands as a limitation to the current study, while I cannot contend that my sample is representative, I believe that it provides an in-depth, qualitative presentation of the themes which are found throughout zines of this nature. Ultimately, I obtained a small collection of zines from Quimby's Bookstore in Wicker Park, while I collected the vast majority of the data which I analyzed from online databases and archives. I additionally acquired several small collections of zines through attending community meetings and anarchist meetups where I had the opportunity to converse with several people who are directly engaged in the practice of zine authorship and distribution.

In total, I analyzed seventy-five different zines. As will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent sections, I categorized the zines according to their purpose in relation to the development of revolutionary cultural capital. While zines are not necessarily written with a specific ‘purpose’ or single theme, I noticed throughout my analysis that zines appeared to fall into one of the following groupings: Introductory Abolitionist Texts (IAT); How To...(HT); Essay (E); Agitprop (ATPP); Art (ART); Abolitionist History (HSTY); and Analysis of Events (AOE). Table 1 shows the amount of zines which fell into each category during my analysis.

IAT	HT	E	ATPP	ART	HSTY	AOE
7 (9%)	9 (12%)	23 (31%)	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	12 (16%)	16 (21%)

Table 1. Categories of zines in the analysis

Of the zines which I analyzed, seven were IAT, five were ART zines, sixteen were AOE zines, three were ATPP, twelve HSTY, nine HT, and twenty-three E. Broadly, IAT zines provide readers with an introductory framing of abolitionist arguments, theories, and concepts. These zines tend to be very approachable and easy to grasp for those who may be new to abolition and those who are well-versed in theory alike. These zines also tend to present ideas in ways that would be less intimidating or unapproachable to those who may not hold particularly radical viewpoints. HT zines provide readers with critical knowledge on how to do a variety of skills, or accomplish an assortment of objectives. For example, there are zines on how to deal with police interrogations or how to organize a protest. The E category is the broadest of those which I identified and includes zines ranging from theoretical analyses and arguments, to in-depth writings on particular topics or themes, to collected stories and ‘rants’ from authors who are incarcerated. ATPP zines, while small in number within my sample, are often humorous and

include many images or cartoons which variously criticize, satirize, and make fun of the police, prisons, politicians, and the U.S. government. While agitprop may carry negative connotations within some contexts, I do not imply any such connotation with my use of the term in this analysis, rather, I simply refer to the use of art and imagery to convey a political message with the hopes of changing perception. ART zines are generally composed of prison artwork or poetry and while it may seem as though these zines share commonalities with ATPP zines, these zines function more purely as an outlet of artistic expression. HSTY zines include re-publications of classic texts which are relevant to abolitionist knowledge in addition to interviews and short studies on people who have been significant to the movement for abolition throughout history. AOE zines provide readers with a reflection upon protests, direct-actions, or historical events in an attempt to analyze what worked, what could have been improved, and how readers should contextualize these events within the broader framework of abolitionist thought. In addition to those who are writing zines in cities and towns throughout the country, a multitude of authors are creating zines from within the confines of jails and prisons-relying on comrades on the outside for assistance with printing and distribution. Table 2 provides a breakdown from my sample of the zines which included material from incarcerated authors and those which were written exclusively by those in the 'free world', including a breakdown of how many from each category were written by incarcerated authors. In total, twenty-three (31%) of the seventy-five zines which I analyzed were written by incarcerated authors.

I began my analysis following an open-coding method, initially by hand, as I acquired the zines. My thesis committee later informed me of a qualitative coding software, NVIVO, which I subsequently utilized to code the remainder of the zines which I collected. The majority of the zines which I collected were accessible online; however, for a few of the zines which only exist in physical form, I continued to code by hand. A copy of my coding guide is available in Appendix A. After I had completed the process of open-coding, I analyzed my codes and noticed that many of them fell into similar groupings. While each code related to a particular aspect of a larger topic, many of the codes fit together to build a cohesive narrative around each of the categories I identified. I also considered the relationship between the codes I constructed and the broader categories of zines which I identified throughout the analysis. I compared codes, notes, and highlighted passages and images from zines to begin to construct an understanding of how zines function as far more than simple tools for political organization.

	IAT	HT	E	ATPP	ART	HSTY	AOE
Incarcerated Authors	0	1	9	1	5	5	2
Non-Incarcerated Authors	7	8	14	2	0	7	14

Table 2. Breakdown of Incarcerated vs. Non-incarcerated Authors by category of zine

THE DEVELOPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY CULTURAL CAPITAL

The French Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, developed his concepts of cultural and social capital as a means of explaining the distribution of power in society in addition to analyzing how an unequal, stratified social order is reproduced and legitimated. While capital is commonly understood in an exclusively economic sense, Bourdieu asserted that non-economic forms of capital-such as social, cultural, symbolic, and political forms-must be recognized as significant to the processes of accumulating and wielding power in society. These non-economic forms become capital when “they function as a ‘social relation of *power*,’ that is, when they become objects of struggle as valued resources” (Swartz 1997). In his analysis of Bourdieu’s theory of capital, David Swartz further explains that “access to sources of income in the labor market depends upon cultural capital in the form of educational credentials and social capital in the form of networks” (Swartz 1997). Thus, from Bourdieu’s perspective, social mobility is dependent not only upon economic variables, but additionally upon cultural and social factors which are significant in either enabling or preventing access to power. For example, while the cultural capital attained from receiving a college education is unquestionably significant, the majority of jobs are obtained through social connections. In other words, the social capital which is obtained through either having many connections or limited, yet strong, connections to several people with extensive quantities of power, is just as significant in terms of one’s social mobility as is their individual cultural and economic capital.

Bourdieu distinguished three types of cultural capital: the embodied state, the objectified form, and the institutionalized form. The embodied form of cultural capital refers to “the

ensemble of cultivated dispositions that are internalized by the individual through socialization and that constitute schemes of appreciation and understanding” (Swartz 1997). Appreciation of particular forms of music, works of art, the understanding of various forms of language and modes of understanding all represent a sort of accumulated cultural capital which exists within people and may be transformed into other forms of power. The objectified form of cultural capital refers to “capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc.” (Bourdieu 1986). While some of these objectified forms may be theoretically ‘available’ to all members of a society-as in the form of a free book or a free piece of music-the embodied cultural capital which is presupposed in allowing one to interpret these objectified forms and provide them with meaning and significance assumes a stratifying power of its own. On the other hand, access to certain forms of objectified cultural capital may enable one to develop more of the embodied cultural capital required for its interpretation. The final form of cultural capital, institutionalized capital, is understood by Bourdieu as being represented by the system of higher-education. While embodied capital can be acquired in a variety of ways, access to time and economic resources are perhaps the two most significant factors in developing this form of capital. In this way, economic capital can be transformed into social capital-allowing one the time and resources to develop the knowledge and skills required to gain acceptance into a university-allowing one to attain a credential which widens the doors of social mobility. When cultural capital is institutionalized in this manner that requires the acquisition of a cultural credential-which to some degree necessitates access to significant financial resources-it functions as a mechanism of stratification, enabling social mobility primarily for those who have acquired this form of institutionalized cultural capital. Bourdieu believed that, in this sense, cultural forms

of capital were increasingly operating as greater mechanisms of division and social stratification than purely economic forms of capital alone.

In a broad sense, cultural capital are the things people know, the ways they understand things, and their ability to interpret and appreciate certain objectified forms of cultural capital. Social capital, therefore, is more concerned with the connections that people have with others. Bourdieu defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to...membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing the collectively owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word” (Bourdieu 1986). He goes on to explain that “the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital...possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (Bourdieu 1986). In other words, social capital can be understood as a sort of collectively shared capital-a share of ownership which one holds within a pool of capital. Additionally, the amount of social capital to which one has access, or the size of one’s share, is dependent upon both the size and ‘quality’ of their networks. By having connections to many people, regardless of their individual power, one will necessarily have access to greater social capital purely as a result of volume. On the other hand, it is possible to have extraordinary social capital simply by having a few connections to incredibly powerful individuals who possess unique amounts of various forms of economic and non-economic capital.

The various forms of capital theorized by Bourdieu are significant for the ways in which they enable a more complex understanding of the development, transmission, and functioning of

power and stratification in society. Bourdieu's concepts help us to understand that economic capital alone is insufficient for access to mechanisms of power in society. The noneconomic forms of capital, which while related to economic forms, are significant for the ways in which they organize people into social categories which maintain various aspects of socioeconomic stratification within society. In other words, these noneconomic forms of capital are significantly responsible for legitimating, and therefore allowing the reproduction of, an unequal and imbalanced social organization of society. While Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital are understood in relation to forms of knowledge and understanding that are beneficial to advancement under a capitalist organization of the economy, I contend that his concepts are nonetheless incredibly useful as a basis for the exploration of the relationship between zines and the development and transmission of what I have defined as 'revolutionary cultural capital.'

While embodied cultural capital which is highly valued within mainstream society may be assistive in one's ability to acquire jobs, make connections, complete an education, or do any of a variety of activities to increase one's socioeconomic standing within society, this knowledge may not be particularly useful in a context where, for example, one's interests lie in the destruction or radical transformation of-rather than inclusion and advancement within-the existing social order. In this sense, a revolutionary cultural capital is not so concerned with acquiring and legitimating forms of knowledge and understanding which would be assistive for advancement within a capitalist society, but rather, those forms of knowledge and understanding which are necessary for a revolutionary transformation of the existing social and economic order of society. Similar to the ideological orientations of the authors whose works will be analyzed in this paper, revolutionary cultural capital operates in a manner which can be understood as

subverting the process of acquiring 'ordinary' cultural capital. While in a traditional, or Bourdeausian context, economic capital can be transformed into cultural capital through a variety of means, access to economic capital will not necessarily enable the acquisition of revolutionary cultural capital. I contend that rather than this relationship being reversed entirely, it is rather changed such that it becomes a non-relationship. Because many of those with the greatest access to revolutionary cultural capital additionally happen to be some of the most marginalized members of society, a lack of economic capital may actually bring one into closer contact with those who can transmit this sort of capital. This is not to say that those who are marginalized have immediate or inherent access to revolutionary cultural capital, rather, it is that due to their social and economic marginalization within society they are likely closer in terms of geographic and social proximity to those with these forms of capital than those who are very far removed from these contexts by virtue of their economic resources. Furthermore, the acquisition of more traditional forms of cultural capital are, in some ways, antithetical to the interests involved in the cultivation of revolutionary cultural capital. Consider the classic quote from Assata Shakur, in which she asserts that

no one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free. Schools in amerika are interested in brainwashing people with amerikanism, giving them a little bit of education, and training them in skills needed to fill the positions the capitalist system requires (Shakur 1987).

Taken from this perspective, the knowledges and understandings which constitute mainstream embodied cultural capital are inherently counter-revolutionary. Those who acquire cultural capital through traditional processes of mainstream socialization and education are involved in a process whereby they legitimate the system within which they participate. Furthermore, the

system provides rewards—for example, enabling greater social mobility following the acquisition of a college degree—which not only makes the system appear legitimate in the eyes of those who have reaped its rewards, but additionally places these individuals in a position where they are likely to have a social and economic interest in the preservation of the status-quo and existing social hierarchies. In other words, the sorts of cultural and social capitals which are relevant and significant within an anti-capitalist, revolutionary context are not acquired through traditional processes of socialization and education.

While I will explore the ways in which revolutionary cultural capital is cultivated, disseminated and transformed throughout the subsequent sections of this analysis, it is worth addressing several additional qualities of revolutionary cultural capital. As has been mentioned, revolutionary cultural capital is not acquired through traditional forms of socialization or education. Given that these traditional forms, to varying extents, lend themselves to the acquisition of a sort of capital which would be beneficial to advancement within a capitalistic society, it is understandable that such processes would not legitimate or even attempt to educate people on ways of understanding, theories, concepts, and meanings which may be highly critical of and antithetical to the interests of the existing social order as a whole. Because of this, the development of revolutionary cultural capital does not produce the same sort of outcomes as does the development of a more traditional cultural capital. Because individuals who develop revolutionary cultural capital continue, ostensibly, to exist within a society which is dominated by capitalist ideology, the development of this form of capital will not be rewarded in either material, economic, or social forms by the dominant society. In fact, acquisition of these forms of capital may exacerbate potential marginalization or ostracization from mainstream sectors of

society. This sort of cultural knowledge can therefore not be utilized in a manner which will increase one's power within society. It is significant to note that it is within the particular existing social order that revolutionary cultural capital will not lend itself to the acquisition of greater power-it can, however, enable the acquisition of power in a subsequent context where the hierarchy of the existing social order has been changed or eliminated entirely. The acquisition of revolutionary cultural capital may not lead to a greater acquisition of power or control of society under the existing and dominant social hierarchies; however, the collective acquisition of this sort of capital can lend itself to the development of a revolutionary social capital which, I posit, can eventually be transformed into a form of power which may enable a radical and revolutionary transformation of society.

The subsequent sections of this paper will explore several of the dominant themes which appeared throughout my analysis. In each of these sections I will address the significance of these themes in addition to arguing how zines function as a mechanism of political organization which serves to provide access to the sorts of knowledges and understandings necessary for developing revolutionary cultural capital. The first section will address the concept of building solidarity, both amongst groups in the 'free-world' as well as with those incarcerated in jails and prisons throughout the country. The second section addresses tensions between radical and liberal factions of the 'left', focusing on the nature of these tensions in addition to highlighting the role that cultural capital plays in this conflict. The third section will address the concept of subverting authority-exploring how zines challenge the authority of capitalism and the state in addition to analyzing the shared language and history which, I argue, zines have effectively constructed. The fourth section, titled *Improvising on Reality* addresses the tactics, strategies, and

advice provided by activists and authors within the zines which suggest a variety of methods for resistance, protesting, reducing contact with police, and making abolition a reality. Following the conclusion, I have included a copy of my coding guide Appendix A. Appendix B includes a sample of the data-including images of twenty-four zine covers- and offers readers an opportunity to see how many zines appear in addition to the vast diversity in regards to the utilization of images and text. Before continuing, I would like to make a point concerning definitions. Throughout this analysis, I repeatedly use the term ‘radical’ and while this term has taken on a variety of meanings in the highly politicized moment we are living in, I contend that when understood correctly, it is the decidedly appropriate term to use. When utilizing the term radical, I am understanding it in the sense as is often attributed to Angela Davis-that to be radical is to simply grasp at the root causes of the issues we wish to address. In this sense, radical does not carry a negative connotation, nor does it imply a fanatic extremism; rather, radical is used as a descriptive term to identify those who are interested in directing their analyses and actions towards the root causes of police violence and the terror of the criminal justice system.

BUILDING SOLIDARITY

The notion that zines are utilized as a mechanism to organize and build solidarity within local communities may appear as rather curious-perhaps even outdated-given the multiplicity of online technologies available which enable instant communication between people around the globe. Nonetheless, zines serve as a platform for local organizers and activists to provide their own analysis of events, reflect on prior actions, suggest a future direction for the movement, and potentially make calls to action which will bring interested parties into direct contact and confrontation with whichever group is recognized as the target. I posit that in order to build solidarity, it is necessary to develop some of the foundational elements of cultural capital previously addressed. Particularly for those who are new to these concepts, it is necessary to develop a shared language, a shared history, and a shared interpretation of problems and events. In this section, I will address the significance of those elements in the development of revolutionary cultural capital in addition to addressing how the mode of zine-distribution allows for the development of revolutionary cultural and social capital both in the free-world and for those locked inside the jails and prisons throughout the country.

A Common Language

One of the most critical elements of developing a revolutionary cultural capital is having a sort of shared definition of terms and understanding of concepts. While such a development proceeds somewhat smoothly within the context of traditional forms of cultural capital, many abolitionists arrive at this information once they are in adolescence or well into adult-hood.

Therefore, the process of developing revolutionary cultural capital is two-fold: one must simultaneously unlearn the carceral logics which have been internalized as a product of being socialized within western capitalist societies while simultaneously developing an understanding of the language, analyses, and heroes which are significant to abolitionist thought and practice.

For example, in *Not Worker, But Chattel*, Ivan Kilgore asserts that

one of the most overlooked contradictions that...we prison slaves and millions of other 'prison-slaves-in-waiting' have yet to comprehend is the extent to which an internal ideological struggle must be waged among ourselves, within a segregated prison population, as well as in our neighborhoods and communities, if we are ever to realize our potential as a revolutionary class (Kilgore 2019).

Perhaps the most elementary component to waging this 'ideological war' is the development of a common set of definitions. This process serves to provide a common language with which to discuss broader issues and events in addition to aiding in the process of 'unlearning' a variety of carceral logics.

In order for communication to be effective and engaging, it is necessary that those receiving the messages understand coherently what is being presented. If authors are constantly using terms such as the state or accountability in highly divergent ways, then building solidarity and cultivating a revolutionary cultural capital rooted in a shared perspective would be impossible. In the process of my data analysis, one of the major 'categories' of zines which I identified was what I coded as an Introductory Abolitionist Texts (IAT). These zines offer clear definitions of common terms used within abolitionist thought in addition to highlighting a variety of concepts which those

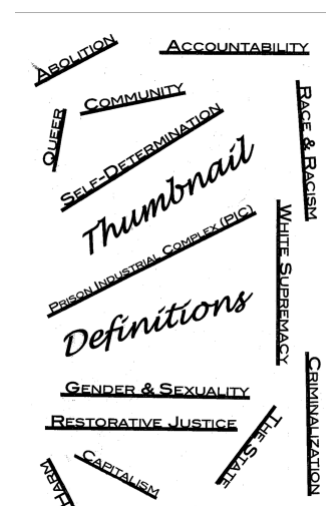


Figure 1. Thumbnail Definitions Zine

interested in abolition are likely to encounter repeatedly. One zine, simply titled *Thumbnail Definitions*, provides concise definitions of terms such as abolition, accountability, harm, the prison industrial complex, and the state, among others (figure 1). They define abolition as “a political vision with the goal of eliminating prisons, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment” (*Thumbnail Definitions* 2018). I found it interesting that elements of this zine appeared, in-pieces, throughout many of the subsequent zines I analyzed. It was not uncommon to see one or several of the definitions copy-and-pasted from this zine into another produced by a different author. While some authors may have interpreted a particular term in a manner which deviated slightly from that presented in this zine, I considered these definitions to be foundational and at the core of revolutionary cultural capital as they appeared to form a sort of consensus concerning the definition of terms. This is understandable, considering that the definitions zine was authored by Critical Resistance, a group which formed in the mid-1990’s to develop a national movement for realizing abolition in the United States. Since that time, local activists and community organizations interested in abolition have adopted these definitions and expanded upon them. For example, in a two-part zine reflecting upon abolitionist actions taken in Chicago, the authors expand upon this established understanding to provide a far more complex and nuanced definition which additionally refers back to the notion of having to unlearn carceral logics. The authors posit that

abolition points to the many forms of action that disrupt and erode carceral society’s instruments of capture and control...as such, Abolition is a constant confrontation of the carceral far beyond those walls-it challenges the many cops amongst us and within us that decompose our relations, and ultimately weaken us and empower them. Abolition is also creation. Creation of many worlds here and now (and still-to-come)...Abolition is therefore also about redirecting and recoding our flows (pleasure-pains and collective capacities) away from the carceral and towards producing and reproducing these other worlds already here and still-to-come (*Insurrectional Abolitionism* 2021).

This definition provides a more comprehensive understanding of abolition which not only describes its political objectives and visions, but also details some of the necessary processes which it requires. For example, this definition points towards the necessary work which individuals must do in terms of “challenging the many cops within and amongst us”-in other words, unlearning the carceral and capitalist logics which we have internalized and which are counter-productive to cultivating a revolutionary cultural capital. It also points to an often underappreciated element of abolitionist thought-its creative aspect. Abolitionists are not naïve so as to think that it would be reasonably possible to eliminate the prison industrial complex in its entirety overnight. As such, one aspect of the creative project of abolitionism is not only changing the ways in which we think and relate to one another, but additionally attempting to implement into our lives and communities the sorts of practices we wish to see replace the criminal justice system at one point in the future. A third definition of abolition, found in the zine titled *Police Abolition 101*, expands upon this creative aspect while linking the underlying motivations behind the development and expansion of the prison industrial complex to a broader project of capitalist-exploitation. The authors argue that “if policing is a process of capitalist order making, abolition is the creative practice of building new communal and non-coercive institutions at all levels of society” (*Police Abolition 101* 2021). This definition emphasizes the creative and constructive aspects to abolition while drawing upon an additional ‘foundational-argument’ within abolitionist thought. In many zines, rather than representing the actions of police as the consequence of individual ‘bad-actors’, policing as a system is often linked with defending the interests of ‘capital’. More specifically, police are often interpreted as agents of social control whose purpose is to ensure that-in Marxist terms-the owners of the means of

production are able to experience a continuous accumulation of profit without interruption. The targets of this social control are thus those who attempt to subvert or overthrow the existing social order in addition to those who have been defined as the primary targets for oppression and exploitation. A fourth definition, found in the zine, *Building A Midwest Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement*, expands upon each of the previous three definitions to more explicitly articulate the project of abolition as one that is in direct opposition to a project of racialized exploitation. They assert that

We want to define Revolutionary Abolitionism as we believe that the character of a revolution in the United States emerges from the historical conditions of resistance to captivity and forms of state dominion specific to the local articulation of anti-Blackness and white supremacy...Abolition means nothing if it is not absolute freedom struggle, a movement for total liberation. An insurgent defiance against every interlocking system of oppression. We are uninterested in settler colonial Amerikan notions of 'freedom' that leave the State and white supremacy intact. We are interested in a freedom that means the destruction of the United States in its entirety (*Building A Midwest Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement* 2021.)

This definition draws upon the historic connections between chattel-slavery and the development of the modern prison industrial complex. While all definitions variously target elements or the totality of the criminal justice system as what exactly needs to be abolished, this definition is even more comprehensive in articulating that in order to achieve true liberation, it is necessary to essentially uproot all American institutions as they are unequivocally rooted in logics of racialized exploitation. These definitions share a common argument that abolition, rather than reform, is the rational approach to addressing police violence, mass incarceration, and all issues associated with the criminal justice system as a result of the ideological orientations in which these institutions were developed and remain grounded. This definition also highlights the significance of developing a shared understanding of terms. As the authors contend, they are

uninterested in particular notions of freedom which do not challenge the underlying oppressive ideologies which define the character and function of American institutions. While total liberation or freedom is the identified objective, they are careful to suggest that this concept must be understood in a specific and oppositional manner to that presented by western society; otherwise, it is likely that unspecified struggles toward ‘freedom’ would result in a reproduction of the oppressive structures which define the landscape of the criminal justice system today. As will be addressed in greater detail in the section addressing ideological tensions between radicals and liberals, the specific definition of terms becomes even more significant when groups are seemingly struggling towards highly divergent outcomes in regard to the criminal justice system; yet, are utilizing similar terms with contradicting understandings of the meaning of these terms. While different authors may variously emphasize any of these elements, I contend that these four definitions provide an example of how the development and reinforcement of shared definitions and perspectives aids in the development of revolutionary cultural capital. These definitions, particularly the fourth, additionally point to another component in the development of revolutionary cultural capital—a shared history.

A Shared History

Amongst the categories which I grouped the zines into, I identified one related to providing information on abolitionist history—which I coded as HSTY. This included analyses of historic events such as the Attica Prison uprising, interviews with abolitionist authors such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Angela Davis, and re-prints of historic texts such as George Jackson’s *Soledad Brother* and writings from Fred Hampton and Huey Newton. This category of zines allows those who may not have access to extensive revolutionary social capital—in other words, a

network of individuals who may be familiar with and well-versed in abolitionist history-to nonetheless become familiarized with how the contemporary movement for abolishing police and prisons emerged in addition to establishing a sort of canonical list of important figures within abolitionist history. Some of these figures and groups include John Brown, Lucy Parsons, Peter Kropotkin, C.L.R. James, George & Jonathan Jackson, The Black Panther Party, The Black Liberation Army, Assata Shakur, and Mumia Abu-Jamal amongst many others. This category of zines allows readers to develop a historical grounding in the practice and theory of abolition. By being connected to those who have struggled for abolition in the past as well as the particularities of their struggle, readers of these zines are given the capacity to comprehend the more complex theoretical arguments defining abolitionist thought linking the prison to a broader project of white-supremacist, capitalist exploitation. Readers are additionally allowed the opportunity to learn of the strategies that have been employed in the past and to learn from historical abolitionist figures in the development of new strategies and theories for use in the modern movement for abolition. Developing a common set of 'heroes' and a shared interpretation of historical events forms the basis for the development of greater solidarity. Activists who have developed this revolutionary cultural capital are able to respond more effectively to attacks from the state both in practice and theory as they are drawing upon collective-knowledge which has been built over the course of hundreds-of-years. In addition to the elements of revolutionary cultural capital which have been addressed thus far, I contend that the mode in which the zine is commonly distributed is significant for its capacity to build revolutionary social and cultural capital.

Developing Revolutionary Social Capital In Action

One of the first places where I encountered a zine was at a local independent book store in Wicker Park which specializes in zines and independent literature. While the variety of genres they offer extends far beyond the focus of this analysis, this was one of the first times I had encountered radical, abolitionist texts in a more ‘mainstream’ environment. The store and other small bookstores of this nature provide a unique entry point for those who may be new to abolitionist concepts. While the location of the store itself-in a mostly gentrified and increasingly white and affluent neighborhood-serves as a unique opportunity to introduce this population to concepts and arguments which they may otherwise be highly unlikely to encounter, it also provides an opportunity to inspire and further radicalize folks who may already reject certain norms of the dominant society. For example, much of the literature sold at this shop challenges normative conceptions of gender, sexuality, family-roles, substance-use, sex-work, and a variety of other themes. Within this context, having access to abolitionist zines may serve to encourage involvement in a movement which shares an ideological foundation reflective of that which many customers of this shop may already hold. Furthermore, because many of the zines for sale in the shop are written by local authors, picking up a zine does far more than introduce one to particular concepts, themes, or images-it actually enables one to connect to a broader community of authors, creators, and activists. While I did not conduct interviews as a component of my data collection, I can rely on my own experience as an example of how zines can serve this function.

One of the first zines that I acquired from this shop, titled *The Ghattobred Anarchist*, was written by an anarchist organizer and author living on the South Side of Chicago-Hybacki

LeMar. As I had begun to analyze my data, I was discussing my project with a coworker who informed me that they knew LeMar and that he would be speaking at an upcoming anarchist meetup in the city. I attended the meeting and was able to connect with LeMar in addition to having the opportunity to meet several other local zine-authors and distributors of zines in Chicago. While my experience may be unique, I contend that it demonstrates the potential significance of locally-distributed literature in regards to enabling an expansion of one's social network-revolutionary social capital- and familiarity with abolitionist concepts-revolutionary cultural capital. My engagement with this zine led to the discovery of additional zines, authors, and organizations publishing literature that were relevant to my research interests. Far from my purchasing of the zine having led only to an increase in revolutionary cultural capital, I argue that it opened the door to a wider network of authors producing this type of literature and activists engaged in the sort of radical and transformative work which many of the zines addressed. For those who may be interested in abolition or engaging with activists doing this type of work in their community, zines provide an incredible entry-point to develop this sort of cultural and social revolutionary capital. Because much of this literature is also available for free from various community groups or on the internet, the barriers to accessing this information have been reduced considerably. Consider, for example, that when discussing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, it was noted that in many instances, greater access to economic capital will translate to a greater accumulation of cultural capital which is useful for advancement within capitalist society. In this instance, it is evident that while access to economic capital may provide some assistance if an individual were shopping at a bookstore, being able to access this literature for free undermines the necessity of possessing economic resources for the development of

revolutionary cultural capital. While this is significant due to the fact that it can increase access to information for low-income individuals, it is most significant for the impact it has on cultivating revolutionary cultural capital for incarcerated individuals in addition to building revolutionary social capital by building solidarity between those on ‘the inside’ and those who are out.

Building Solidarity Between Those Inside & Out

While zines can be incredibly useful in regard to allowing individuals interested, yet unfamiliar with, abolition to develop a revolutionary cultural capital and potentially a revolutionary social capital by becoming connected to the authors and organizations mentioned in the literature which they read, perhaps the most powerful context in which zines are able to build solidarity is between those who are incarcerated and those in the ‘free-world.’ While virtually all of the zines I analyzed have been made available to interested individuals who are incarcerated throughout the country, many of the authors produced the content of these zines while in jail or prison. While for those on the outside, accessing zines online or at no-cost from a community organization eliminates the necessity of economic capital for the development of revolutionary cultural capital, the state of oppressive detention faced by incarcerated populations creates entirely different barriers to communication, the development of solidarity, and the potential for cultivating revolutionary social capital. Anthony Rayson, a zine author and the founder of ABC South Chicago Zine Distro, contends that by distributing zines to incarcerated individuals, authors can “help them to develop a sound revolutionary education and give them a movement they can be a part of...to see their name and address on their zine and get letters from other people...solidarity is extremely important and prisoners need and want to learn of the

struggles of different people who are also challenging the system” (Rayson 2017). While it is clear that distributing zines of the foundational, historic, and educational nature previously discussed would be essential for allowing prisoners to develop a revolutionary cultural capital, Rayson’s quote also highlights the significance that zines serve as a medium of communication between those inside and out. Zines allow prisoners to remain aware of ongoing struggles in the free-world against capitalism, police-violence, and mass incarceration amongst other issues. These zines also provide an opportunity for an exchange of information which makes it possible to effectively organize between those inside and out. Because prisoners are able to access this information, they are thus enabled to develop a revolutionary cultural capital by virtue of having developed a set of shared definitions, shared interpretations and diagnoses of social issues and systemic problems, and a clear understanding of the historical development of their movement as well as the necessary elements required for change. As Rayson’s quote additionally highlighted, distributing zines produced by prisoners allows for those on the outside to remain conscious of potential direct-actions and organizational developments occurring on the inside. Many incarcerated authors have written to Rayson to articulate the significance that both receiving and being able to create zines has had for them and other incarcerated abolitionists. One author, Coyote, explains that

zines are our real weapons, this is how we get powerful, dangerous, this is how we cut through the bars, tear down the walls, and defend ourselves from our enemies, with the knowledge we obtain from these zines...It is through these zines that we get our real underground revolutionary education. We see what’s going on with other imprisoned people and we find strength and example from what they’ve got going on. With these zines we can write and record our own history, build a movement, teach, learn, organize, agitate and educate. Zines have become a major part of radical and revolutionary culture for all comrades under lock and key (Rayson 2017).

While zines have served a variety of functional roles for allowing individuals on the outside to develop revolutionary cultural capital, Coyote's quote emphasizes the transformative impact which zines have had in regard to enabling this capacity for incarcerated individuals. With the increase of state surveillance both inside and outside of the prison walls in addition to heavy restrictions on the type of communication which prisoners are allowed to have with those in the free-world, zines have enabled prisoners to develop a shared history-both with other incarcerated folks and those on the outside-while simultaneously enabling prisoners to circumvent state-surveillance and develop

revolutionary social capital. Figures 2 and 3 show the last pages of a zine titled *Kries from Within: Voices of Resistance* which includes a resource list for prisoners to contact if they are interested in receiving additional literature. By simply receiving a single zine, incarcerated individuals are given the capacity to build develop a revolutionary cultural capital while being connected to a broader network of zine authors and support groups throughout the

country. As George Jackson identified in an interview, re-published as the zine *Remembering The Real Dragon*, if the goal is to destroy these oppressive systems, "we must be connected, in contact and communication with those in struggle on the outside. We must be mutually supporting because we're all in this together. It's all one struggle at base" (Wald & Ward 2021). Abolitionists recognize that, despite the differences in political and social power and the capacity

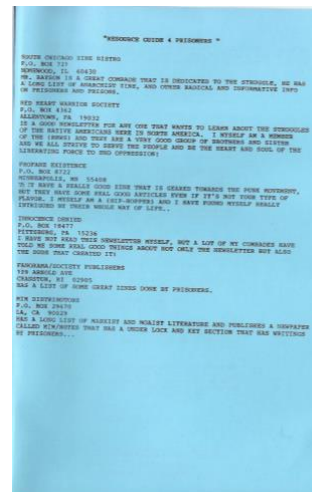


Figure 2. Resource list for prisoners pt. 1

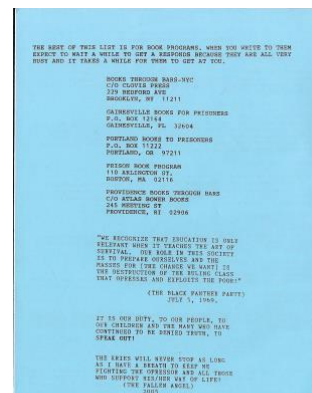


Figure 3. Resource list for prisoners Pt. 2

for action, incarcerated individuals are just as-if not more-significant in the movement for prison industrial complex abolition as those organizing beyond prison walls. I contend that this aspect of zines represents perhaps their most significant power in regard to enabling the development of revolutionary social and cultural capital. As Coyote's quote also identifies, an element of this power comes from the fact that the zine enables those who are incarcerated to remain active in the development of these shared narratives, interpretations, and understandings of history. This exchange does not operate in a unidirectional manner where information simply flows into the walls of the prison, rather, prisoners are given the liberatory capacity to communicate with comrades in other prisons and the free-world, while simultaneously cultivating a revolutionary cultural and social capital. Prisoners can cultivate their own revolutionary cultural capital while developing that of others, and increasing the revolutionary social capital of those connected in the struggle for abolition both within and beyond prison walls. As one author notes, "cocreating literature with imprisoned revolutionaries is also an invaluable way to sharpen one's own group analysis, as the non-imprisoned revolutionary can never fully comprehend the changing politics of power in plantation society without listening in to the pulse of the movement for prisoner liberation"

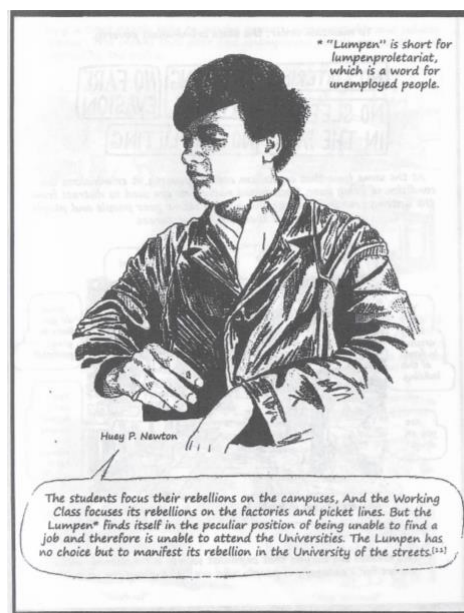


Figure 4. A cartoon from *Racial Capitalism and Police Abolition* showing Huey Newton addressing the lumpenproletariat.

(*Building a Midwest revolutionary abolitionist movement* 2021). One zine, titled *Racial*

Capitalism and Prison Abolition, includes a graphic-image of Huey Newton (Figure 4), one of

the founders of the Black Panther Party, who is quoted as saying “the students focus their rebellion on the campuses. And the working class focuses its rebellions on the factories and picket lines. But the Lumpen finds itself in the peculiar position of being unable to find a job and therefore is unable to attend the universities. The Lumpen has no choice but to manifest its rebellion in the University of the streets” (*Racial Capitalism and Prison Abolition* 2020). While Newton referred to the Lumpen, or the lumpenproletariat, as the class with the most revolutionary potential as a product of their unique marginalization from mainstream society, this theoretic class of individuals additionally includes those who are incarcerated. From this perspective, zines possess the greatest transformative capacity when they are being distributed amongst prisoners and those back in the free world. This exchange of information allows for a radicalization of a group which is in the most direct contact with the oppressive forces of the state. While individuals who are incarcerated may not have access to the sorts of strategies available to those in the free world for developing revolutionary cultural capital and building solidarity with those in other locations, the zine has circumvented this difficulty and opened the walls of the prison to allow a free-flow of art, history, theory, and organizing being developed for the purposes of first transforming the minds of incarcerated individuals and subsequently transforming the societal structures which organize and govern their lives. While prison letters and communications between those in the free world and those incarcerated are not novel phenomena, the utilization of the zine as a specific tool for building revolutionary cultural and social capital is unique when compared to more traditional methods. Rather than being the target of organizing outside of the prison walls, inmates are allowed the capacity to be active in the process of organizing and contributing to the development of the movement for abolishing police

and prisons. The following section, Subverting Authority, will briefly touch upon some of the strategies which are utilized for distributing zines and which attempt to circumvent both state surveillance and the traditional requirement of possessing economic capital in order to transform it into various forms of cultural capital.

SUBVERTING AUTHORITY

While the various methods for obtaining zines in the free world abound and should, at this-point, be rather apparent, I would like to briefly address the strategies used for distributing zines to and amongst those who's freedoms are inherently limited by their state of incarceration.

The methods which are utilized not only enhance the capacity for prisoners to develop a revolutionary cultural capital, but additionally serve as critiques of capitalist modes of producing and consuming information. As Anthony Rayson-zine author and publisher of ABC Zine Distro South Chicago-has written throughout numerous zines, in order for

literature to be accepted by a prison, it must be sent directly from the publisher. Curiously, there is not much of a formal process to becoming a publisher-all that is required is that one create a

name and include a stamp with the name of the publisher on the back of the zine and the envelope it is sent in. While one would imagine that this process would be more challenging, such a low-barrier to becoming a 'publisher' in the eyes of the prison system allows for virtually any small group, or an individual with enough resources, to purchase a stamp and begin making copies of zines. If incarcerated individuals know the proper addresses and

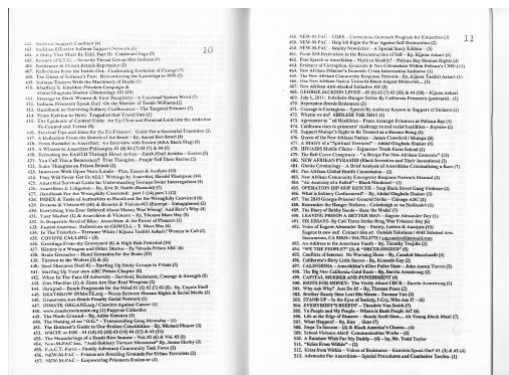


Figure 5. Sample of South Chicago ABC Zine Distro Catalog pt. 1

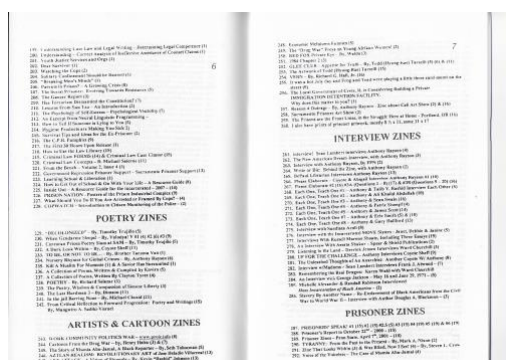


Figure 6. Sample of South Chicago ABC Zine Distro pt. 2

groups to write, they can send letters to request copies of particular zines or zines on a variety of topics. For example, the ABC South Chicago Zine Distro sends an updated catalog to incarcerated folks annually which, as of the most recent edition, includes 1,244 titles. Figures 5 and 6 provide an example of the catalog, which is thirty-six pages long and allows for incarcerated people to request copies free-of-charge.

Unfortunately, despite the rules which allow for publishers to send literature directly to prisoners, those who are incarcerated must still contend with a system of censorship before having the opportunity to receive their zines. Throughout the zines I read which were either written by prisoners or included letters from prisoners, it was not uncommon to hear of instances in which individuals received only part or none of their requested zines as they had been confiscated by prison staff. When this occurs, prisoners and those who have sent the zines are often provided little to no reasoning as to why the zine was denied. Figures 7 and 8 provide examples of some of the rejection letters with brief explanations as to why various zines were denied. Figure 7 shows a letter returned citing that the zine was denied for 'content', with a brief explanation stating

DENIED – FOUR PAGE ARTICLE (EMPOWERING PRISONERS BY ANONYMOUS) WHICH CONTAINS MATERIAL WHICH COULD CAUSE THE BREAKDOWN OF THE SECURITY AND ORDER OF THE INSTITUTION IF DISTRIBUTED ON THE UNIT (Figure 7).

Figure 7. A letter from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice denying access to a zine

Figure 6 shows a copy of a letter returned from USP Marion, a federal prison in Illinois which

stated that the zine which South Chicago ABC Zine Distro had attempted to send would be denied because it “depicts, describes, or encourages activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group demonstration” (Figure 8). While authorities from various correctional facilities regularly refer to a variety of reasons for denying prisoners the opportunity to receive zines, they fail to cite specific quotes or justify their concerns with examples from the zines which they have rejected. While prisoners are often afforded the opportunity to appeal these denials, they are routinely

upheld. In the zine *Brutal Truth Zines: Educating America's Enslaved!* Anthony Rayson describes the process of combatting censorship, arguing that if the case were brought before a court, “the courts will eventually rule in the prisoner’s favor, as it is obviously in violation of their 1st amendment rights”; however, he also notes that prisons and jails regularly ignore these orders (Rayson 2010). Far beyond simply ignoring a court order, Rayson also contends that ‘correctional facilities’ will sometimes “switch gears and menace the prisoner in some other fashion, such as ransacking their cell, conjuring up some ‘violation’ destroying their property, assaulting them, moving them to a more restricted area or transferring them to a different prison, altogether” (Rayson 2010). While the process of prison censorship complicates the objective of ensuring that prisoners receive the zines they have requested and that those on the outside

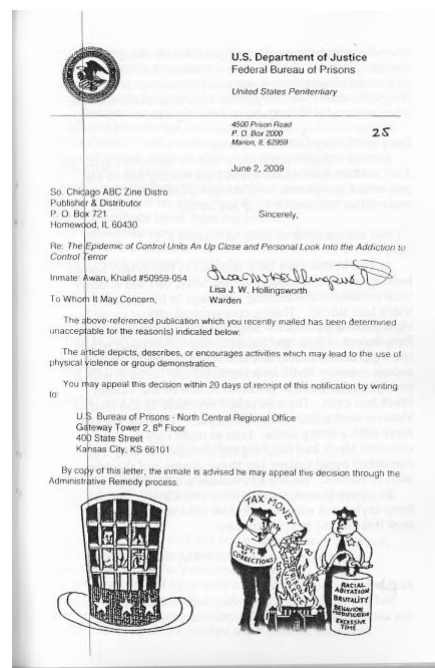


Figure 8. A letter from the Federal Bureau of Prisons denying access to a zine

receive the materials which prisoners have sent them, Rayson and others have noted that the ‘crude’ format and construction of many zines in comparison to a traditional magazine or book can occasionally assist in these publications receiving less scrutiny.

While the fact that most zines are made available to prisoners for free certainly removes any economic barrier to obtaining the resources required to develop revolutionary cultural capital while incarcerated, there is another feature to ‘becoming’ a publisher which has enabled those on the outside to send literature to incarcerated individuals which may otherwise be inaccessible.

For example, while it is rather straight-forward to claim oneself as the publisher for material which an individual or group is creating or involved in

editing, what would an incarcerated person do if they were interested in obtaining a copy of a book-rather than a zine-

which addressed the sort of thematic material found in the zines under consideration? Due to the heavy censorship found in prisons and jails throughout the country, it is unlikely that one would be able to access literature of this nature in facility libraries. Furthermore, when the publisher may be a rather large company as opposed to a small group of anarchists or abolitionists, it can be exceedingly challenging to get

publishers to send copies directly to those on the inside. Nonetheless, many zine distros-in true anarchist fashion-have re-published entire books, often broken into several volumes, in zine-format. For example, in my analysis I came across two of George Jackson’s Books, *Soledad Brother* and *Blood In My Eye*, each of which appeared in two-part volumes. While the zine has served as a mode of communication, organizing, and solidarity-building between abolitionists in

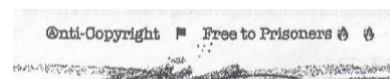


Figure 9. Example of anti-copyright symbol found in zines pt. 1

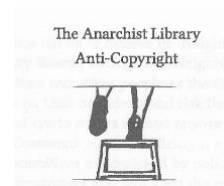


Figure 10. Example of anti-copyright symbol found in zines pt. 2

the free-world and those inside of prison walls, it has additionally enabled the distributors of zines to challenge the commodification of knowledge and information. By distributing literature which is copyrighted or must, under normal circumstances, be purchased in order to access, zine distributors are further undermining traditional barriers to the development of cultural knowledge. Figure 9, 10, and 11 provide examples of the common ‘anti-copyright’ slogans or ‘tags’ which regularly appeared throughout my analysis. Authors often explicitly state somewhere throughout their zines that the material is not intended to be sold and should be distributed for free, particularly to prisoners. Figure 11 shows a disclaimer included on the front cover of a zine titled *Police State Funnies!: Because, America, We are so fucked. It's FUNNY!*”, with the anti-copyright slogan reading, “Nobody gave anyone permission to create this comic book. Nobody will deny anyone permission to reproduce and distribute it freely” (Figure 11). Zine authors, by distributing copyrighted material, are undermining the ability of publishers to profit from the distribution of material which is relevant to the development of revolutionary cultural capital while they are simultaneously ensuring that the material which they produce will be distributed for free to all who are interested. The distribution of zines thus functions not only as a medium of communication between the walls of the prison and beyond but additionally as a means of removing a sort of economic barrier traditionally required for the development of cultural capital.

All stories contained within are based on actual interactions with police. They are not strictly accurate. Statements are paraphrased, altered for the sake of punch lines, and attributed to whoever was in the available photos. This is a work of fiction, based on the author's memory and interpretation of events, not evidence or a precise account. Nobody gave anyone permission to create this comic book. Nobody will deny anyone permission to reproduce and distribute it freely.

Figure 11. Anti-copyright slogan from police-state funnies.

TENSIONS BETWEEN RADICALS AND LIBERALS

Throughout the zines which I analyzed for this project, the theme which appeared to emerge time and again was an inherent-yet often misunderstood-tension between the militant and radical factions of the 'left' and mainstream liberalism. While each represented a distinct aspect of this tension, I ultimately constructed eight-separate codes related to ideological, organizational, material, and strategic oppositions between these groups. It should be noted that this tension is not a recent development, as antagonisms between radicals and moderates or centrists date back to the beginnings of struggle against capitalist domination. Furthermore, these tensions have been memorialized in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s now-famous contention that it is not those who are openly racist and bigoted who obstruct progress as much as it is "the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action" (King Jr. 1964). The 'white moderates' of Dr. King's era have become the modern liberals of the contemporary age, with the critiques offered by zine authors reflecting the same underlying frustrations voiced by Dr. King so many years ago. While often treated within popular media as a monolithic block, with only some variation towards the center or extreme ends, the political left of the United States is far more diverse than is often recognized. However, part of the reason for this hidden diversity is the fact that the factions of the 'left' which are the primary focus of this analysis are virtually excluded from mainstream political activity.

While mainstream politics provides an illusion of ‘choice’ between two political parties with seemingly divergent takes on a variety of policies, many abolitionist and anarchist authors contend that this is a false dichotomy. Their contention is based upon the notion that regardless of how different the republican and democratic parties may appear, they are both fundamentally pro-capitalism, pro-imperialism, defend the interests of the wealthy, and believe in the defense of private property with violence. While those aligning with authoritarian and white-nationalist politics which verge on the brink of fascism can find representation within the political offices of this country, those who consider themselves anti-capitalist will be unable to find legitimate representation from within the political landscape. Thus, when considering ‘the left’ in this context it is important to be specific about which groups are being addressed. While the particularities of various political identities and ideologies are beyond the scope of this analysis, a brief discussion of political-identity is useful for understanding the broader distinctions between radicals and liberals.

While I have variously used abolitionist in reference to an individual or an identity throughout this paper, abolition is more often referred to as a political vision, as a goal, or as a framework. This does not mean that no-one identifies as an abolitionist, to the contrary such identifications were common throughout my analysis; however, most authors identified themselves primarily as anarchists, communists, socialists, or revolutionaries who were either also abolitionists in practice or who simply believed in abolition as a cause. Occasionally, I found that authors did not use any of the language commonly found within abolitionist theory or teachings; however, their critiques and arguments were nonetheless decidedly abolitionist in nature.

Given the descriptions provided thus far, it is also necessary to understand how the authors of zines tend to define ‘liberals’. The zine *Black Liberation and the Abolition of the Prison Industrial Complex*, includes a descriptive quote from Assata Shakur, which encapsulates much of the abolitionist sentiment concerning liberalism. She posits that she has

never really understood exactly what a ‘liberal’ is, though, since I have heard ‘liberals’ express every conceivable opinion on every conceivable subject. As far as I can tell, you have extreme right, who are fascist, racist capitalist dogs like Ronald Reagan... And on the opposite end you have the left, who are supposed to be committed to justice, equality, and human rights. Somewhere in between those two points is the liberal. As far as I’m concerned, ‘liberal’ is the most meaningless word in the dictionary. History has shown me that as long as some white middle-class people can live high on the hog, take vacations in Europe, send their children to private schools, and reap the benefits of their white skin privileges, then they are “liberals.” But when times get hard and money gets tight they pull off that liberal mask and you think you’re talking to Adolph Hitler. They feel sorry for the so-called underprivileged just as long as they can maintain their own privileges (True Leap Press 2016)

Her critique reflects the sort of false dichotomy referenced earlier. While moderates or liberals may tend to agree with notions of equality, human rights, and justice, abolitionists assert that they will tend to vote or act in ways to both prevent the realization of those notions while protecting their own material interests. In other words, these critiques assume that in a context where the realization of those notions necessitated a change in the conditions of one’s material resources or access to power, the desire to fulfill those notions would be quickly abandoned if one were a liberal. The tension between liberals and radicals extends beyond a fundamental disagreement concerning either the glory or horror of capitalism, the primary point of contention between these groups relates to an analysis of the situation and the required steps to address it.

Abolition or reform

Throughout my analysis, the ideological competition between abolition and reform was constantly asserting itself. The distinctions between liberals and radicals become most apparent

when one considers how to address problems of systemic police violence and system-wide oppression. This distinction is rooted fundamentally in how liberals and radicals differentially interpret and contextualize various social issues. For example, many authors noted that a liberal interpretation of racialized police violence tends to analyze the occurrence as individualized, incidental, and that such a case provides evidence of a 'broken' system. Radicals, on the other hand, tend to contextualize these instances of violence within a larger framework of state-sponsored racialized oppression, subjugation, and torture. Thus, when radicals analyze instances of racialized police violence they tend to see a system functioning quite efficiently-as it was designed and intended to. Such an analysis leads understandably to highly divergent arguments regarding how to address these problems. Because liberals tend to see these events as aberrational rather than normative, their suggestions tend to involve proposing a variety of reforms to the existing system. Conversely, because radicals see the projects of incarceration and policing as rooted in racialized violence and oppression, they contend that the system itself must be replaced with one founded upon different organizational ideologies which reflect the type of reality we actually desire to see. In the zine *Police Abolition 101*, the authors argue that "reform" implies that an institution has strayed from its core responsibilities, but the institution of policing is actually built on freedom from accountability. 'Reforms' make the institution stronger and more efficient by covering it in a veil of legitimacy" (*Police abolition 101* 2021). While the fundamental difference in approach between radicals and liberals is one of abolition versus reform, the consequences of these approaches are dramatic.

The most concrete reason for which abolitionists are opposed to 'reforms' relates to the contention that reforms-rather than addressing the root issues of problems towards which they

are directed-tend to increase the funding, resources, and ultimately power of law enforcement agencies. Consider, for example, that in response to numerous highly-publicized videos of police murdering unarmed youth and adults, many police officers throughout the country have been required to wear body cameras while on-duty. While these cameras may enhance the rate at which incidents are captured on camera, such investment of funding and technology does absolutely nothing to address the organizational logics and systemic problems which motivate police to act in violent, racist, and aggressive ways with impunity. As noted in *Police Abolition 101*, while some have hailed body-worn-cameras as a transformative step towards holding officers accountable, the limits to these reforms becoming grimly evident when one considers that for “Philando Castile, Samuel Dubose, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland...and far too many other victims of police violence...video footage, whether from body cameras or other sources, wasn’t enough to get justice” (*Police abolition 101* 2021). Consider as well that in the rare instances in which police have been prosecuted and sentenced for their crimes against the public, their conduct is individualized and represented as unique within the context of the broader system of policing. While an individual officer may no longer be in a position to brutalize their community, nothing has been accomplished at an organizational level which addresses how these attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and practices are allowed to develop, flourish, and be continuously reproduced as if they were a virtue to the organization itself. Furthermore, some reformers have suggested and enacted a variety of mandatory training programs which police must complete. From an abolitionist perspective, such proposals make glaringly clear the lack of understanding reformers hold concerning the culture and nature of police. Such a recommendation implicitly ignores a culture of violence, machismo, anti-blackness, and white-

supremacy which is continuously cultivated and reinforced within police departments throughout the country and assumes that such a culture could be ‘corrected’ by completing several hour-long training sessions. In short, reformers fail to recognizing that it is policing itself-rather than individualized actors-which are inherently oppressive, racist, and cruel. Any policy which leaves untouched this perverse and rotten core will, according to abolitionists, not have a meaningful impact on the prevalence of racialized police violence while effectively legitimizing the institution and expanding the capacity of its oppressive forces.

Even when reforms are well-intentioned and motivated by a genuine concern for oppressed populations, they tend to have the deleterious effect of increasing police and state power over the lives of already marginalized populations. This is particularly true when they turn to the criminal justice system as a means for addressing problems such as violence, sexism, or bigotry in general. For example, the zine *A Growing Asian-American Movement Calls for Prison Abolition*, details how the work of groups in California who were concerned with Anti-Asian violence and discrimination inadvertently served to increase the punitive capacities of the state. The author notes that many of the groups involved in these efforts were interested in developing enhanced sentencing policies for hate-crimes; however, as one activist noted, “the dependence on the hate crime’s framework has reinforced and strengthened the criminal punishment system, leading to higher prosecution and prison sentences” (Smoot & Szeto 2016). Abolitionists argue that by individualizing acts of racism through hate-crime laws, reformers completely ignore the systems and institutions of our society which cultivate, promote, and profit from the sort of hate with which they are concerned. The authors of *Police Abolition 101* elaborate on this point to argue that a

focus on ‘hate crimes’ reinvests in the criminal legal system and the prison industrial complex and gives these systems the power to create meaning through punishment claiming to ‘acknowledge’ the life of the harmed and the ‘hate’ involved in an act of violence. This feeds the common sense presumption that we are both made safe by the surveillance, containment, and confinement of certain other people deemed ‘dangerous’ to us and the idea that we are at our *most human* or most deserving when recognized by and included in that system (*Police Abolition 101* 2021).

This excerpt highlights several key abolitionist concerns regarding the nature and outcome of reforms or relying on the criminal justice system as a solution to the harm experienced in society. The author’s concern points to a conversation which was common throughout the zines I analyzed-many authors noted that when discussing abolition with the public, the most common response was something along the lines of: “if you get rid of police and prisons, what will you do with people who commit murder and sexual assault crimes?”. As many authors noted, abolitionists take the harm that is committed in society very seriously, and they do not want to see this sort of violence perpetuated on a large-scale; however, abolitionists also contend that we must be very honest about how the criminal justice system operates to ‘provide’ that safety and whether or not the system is actually responding to the needs of those who are involved in this complex cycle of harm. Consider, for example, that when our responses to harm are embedded within the criminal justice system, this ignores the ways in which people of different populations experience vastly different interactions with law-enforcement. When the resources made available to survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence involve contacting the police, this ignores the disproportionate violence which people of color-particularly women of color-experience at the hands of the police. Within this context, women of color are often placed in a precarious position where the primary resource which the state has made available to address the

harm they are experiencing is additionally one which is likely to criminalize and subject them to further harm and violence.

As Andrea J. Ritchie notes in the zine *Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color*,

reliance on law-enforcement based responses to violence against women has had a number of unintended consequences, not the least of which is increased vulnerability of survivors to violence-at the hands of both their abusers and law enforcement officers. Often, police brutality against women of color and their families occurs when they seek assistance (Ritchie 2006).

Women of color who are the victims of domestic violence or sexual assault are made to rely upon an organization for help which has historically criminalized them. In the case of sexual assault, abolitionists note that the carceral response to this form of harm tends to exacerbate the very harm it purports to reduce. For example, when an individual is incarcerated for a crime of sexual assault, rather than ending a cycle of sexual violence, individuals are exposed to a far greater risk of becoming victims of this type of harm as sexual assault and rape are pervasive within prisons and jails, often being committed by the correctional officers and facility staff themselves. Furthermore, while decades of law-enforcement and tough-on-crime propaganda have instilled in many a notion that when someone is incapacitated we as a society are made safer, many abolitionist authors argue that we must come to terms with the reality that when the carceral response to harm is incarceration, we as a society are not made any safer. The carceral response to harm leaves unaddressed the contextual and root causes behind why crime in general occurs, and why particular instances of harm may have developed. Law-enforcement are reactionary within this context, they do not act as a preventative force, rather, they respond to

harm after it has already occurred and their capacity to address that harm in a way that acknowledges the humanity, needs, and complexities of those involved is virtually non-existent.

The authors of *Police Abolition 101*, further posit that “under our current criminal punishment system, people who cause harm currently have no incentive to admit to engaging in violent behavior and take accountability for their actions. If they do, they will have admitted guilt, which only further embeds them in the cycle of policing and incarceration” (*Police Abolition 101* 2021). Abolitionist arguments demand that readers consider the objectives which society is interested in meeting. A reliance on the carceral state to social problems ignores the role which the criminal justice system plays in exacerbating rates of poverty, crime, and violence while further ignoring the horrifyingly disparate ways in which law-enforcement actually relates to the communities it purports to serve. The unfortunate reality is that many of those who are most likely to experience various forms of harm are also those who are most heavily criminalized and oppressed by the criminal justice system itself. Abolitionists contend that liberal reformers must develop a better understanding of the systemic nature of phenomena in addition to how the logics of oppression, white supremacy, and capitalist-exploitation are embedded within the foundations of the various institutions we turn to for safety. Rather than continuously legitimizing and perpetuating a false notion that reform is the only option-because there are no alternative methods to addressing harm and creating safe communities outside of the carceral approach-abolitionist zine authors argue that there are a plethora of community-based responses to harm which center the needs of victims and involve offenders in a process of accountability which serves to interrupt the cycles of violence and trauma exacerbated by the criminal justice system. The authors of *Police Abolition 101* argue that

community-based leaders and groups are positioned to implement solutions that are holistic, informed, individualized, and durable in ways reactive, armed outside intervention never can be. Once our primary responses to violence actually serve to reduce it, we will have fewer and fewer instances of harm to address (*Police abolition 101* 2021).

The final point the authors make points to a common abolitionist argument which I observed repeatedly throughout my analysis.

Perhaps best exemplified by the notion that ‘strong communities make police obsolete’, abolitionists contend that if we address the root causes of harm in society, we can establish conditions for responding to harm and relating to one another in a way that effectuates the obsolescence of a carceral state in its entirety. Abolitionists posit that if, for example, we were to take the funding which is currently allocated towards law-enforcement and re-directed these funds toward life-affirming institutions which invest in the true needs of communities experiencing concentrated disadvantage, we would largely eliminate the prevalence of crime and thus eliminate the need for a violent, militarized police-force to respond to harm that does occur. Abolitionists do not purport that we can eliminate all harm that occurs in society, such a goal will never be realized and is foolish to attempt. In reality, abolitionists posit that by addressing the basic needs of society while simultaneously responding to harm which does occur in restorative and comprehensive ways, we will be able to dramatically reduce its rate of occurrence and develop responses to harm which are more effective in ending cycles of violence and trauma.

The significance of regularly critiquing liberalism and reformers in general goes far beyond a simple ideological sparring-match. While the analyses of liberals and radicals may begin from similar points, they quickly diverge to arrive at highly different analyses and proposals for action. Because liberals and radicals may share some commonalities in their

diagnoses of issues, it is critical for zine authors to dissect liberal arguments and expose their deleterious consequences. Particularly when policies appear sound and well-intentioned, zines which criticize liberalism and reform remind readers to pay attention to the complex ways in which we may be variously increasing systems of oppression or reproducing them in our quest to create a more just society. Furthermore, the revolutionary cultural capital which provides radicals with alternative analyses, theories, and understandings may not be highly developed amongst all members in a particular group or organization. Considering that many have been socialized within western, capitalist contexts, it is likely that they may have a rather well-developed cultural capital in the normative sense. The cultural understandings, beliefs, and perceptions concerning the criminal justice system are entirely at odds with those of revolutionary cultural capital. While these critiques may seem redundant or mundane to those who have been steeped in these analyses for quite some time, zines of this critical nature serve to aid those who are new to abolitionist thought in unlearning the carceral logics which have been internalized within many. These zines also provide significant opportunity for radicals to sharpen their critiques and develop their capacity to rebut or debate liberal talking-points.

While liberals are often portrayed as veritable enemies of the project of abolition, they also exist as a population which could be targeted for further radicalization. While in some respects liberal perceptions on private property and capitalism may place them in positions which are ideologically nearer to their conservative counterparts, the fact that many liberals at least begin their critiques with an identification of issues similar to that of radicals presents the possibility that this population could be radicalized towards the side of abolition. Many of the IAT zines which I discussed previously also have disclaimers near their final page which

recommends readers to discuss these issues with friends and family, and to consider providing a copy of one of these zines to someone who may be new to the notion of abolition. Along these lines, the critiques of liberalism can help readers to gain a more realistic perception of the political landscape within the United States—namely, the notion of the false dichotomy which I addressed earlier. In addition to furthering the process of radicalization, the critique of liberals aids to fend off potential co-optation of radical or revolutionary movements. Following the uprisings of 2020, ‘progressivism’ has come into fashion, with many liberal politicians co-opting the language of revolutionary movements and watering-down these transformative visions to mold them into regressive and reactionary policies which leave the fundamental roots of oppression unscathed. As these trends continue, zines which critique liberalism and reform may only increase in their utility as languages, terms, and theories which were previously reserved for radical social movements become adopted by mainstream political figures who are wholly uninterested in up-ending the status-quo.

The significance of zines which explore tensions between radicals and liberals and oppositions between abolition and reform should not be discounted. Readers of these zines are provided with crucial information to not only develop their own cultural capital, but to protect it from attacks or co-optations from those with significantly divergent ideological roots. These zines not only sharpen the arguments and knowledge of abolitionist readers, they provide them with a myriad of well-thought-out and evidence-based rebuttals to provide when one may encounter any of a variety of false claims concerning the criminal justice system. These zines equip readers with the knowledge to transform their own mental landscapes; however, these zines also hold incredible transformative potential for re-configuring the mental landscapes of

those existing in community around the zine-readers themselves. Consider, that while a zine-reader deploying one of the critiques towards liberalism which they have learned may not radicalize a liberal friend or family member towards abolition in that same moment, it could plant a seed of doubt and of critical analysis which leads people to reconsider their unacknowledged assumptions. At the very least, these zines equip readers with the knowledge and revolutionary cultural capital to begin to deconstruct the legitimacy of policing and prisons in their communities. The process of delegitimization is neither quick nor immediate; however, consider the sort of mental spark that has been lit when one is able to go from acquiescing to police authority without thought to beginning to question what role police and prisons actually serve in our society. The opening of this door of ambiguity is the start to a process of potential radicalization towards the realization of the systemic nature of issues which are so often portrayed as localized and individualized phenomena. This notion of the process of radicalization brings to mind the classic Gil Scott-Heron song, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*. While perhaps common knowledge to many at this point, for the younger readers who may not be familiar with this song, Gil Scott-Heron explained that what he meant by this lyric was that the revolution would not be televised because the real revolution begins in one's mind. Much like the notion that it is necessary to unlearn carceral logics so that in our quest to create a more liberatory world we do not simply reconstruct systems of oppression, before we can hope to get into the streets and organize with comrades, we must re-formulate the landscape of our minds to develop a revolutionary consciousness and thus a revolutionary cultural capital. I contend that the zines which I have described in this section provide incredible utility for igniting the spark of

that internal revolution, both for those who read them and those who the readers may be able to convince to begin analyzing issues in a more radical way.

IMPROVISING ON REALITY

“Improvising on reality is the key principle underlying the building of a united left and raising the consciousness of the people. It will give us our tactics” – George Jackson

Throughout this analysis, I have continuously reinforced that abolition is a creative project. Far from simply being concerned with the elimination of oppressive institutions, a significant amount of abolitionist thought is directed towards the imaginative task of creating the sorts of communities and social environments which we would like to live in one day. Rachel Herzing, one of the founders of Critical Resistance, describes this as the proactive vision of abolition. Rather than defining movements and constructing communities in opposition or relation to a perceived enemy, abolitionists seek to define their struggle and the creation of new worlds on their own terms. Herzing posits that “it [abolition] really is an affirmative ideology and practice. Affirmatively, this is the world I want to live in, therefore I need to take these steps to create the conditions that make that world possible” (True Leap Press 2016). Two of the categories of zines which I identified-“How to...” (HT) and “Analysis of Events” (AOE)- provided insights and tactics which individuals and groups can use to begin to challenge the carceral state and begin to construct those new worlds in the present.

AOE Zines

AOE zines tend to provide an overview of recent protests, direct-actions, or historical events while usually shedding light on tactics which were successful, those which did not work, and lessons to be learned for future actions. These zines are usually written by those who participated in the protests or direct actions being analyzed; however, they are occasionally

written by those who were merely witness to these events or those who were not present, yet, nonetheless have critical analyses to provide. For those living in communities where very little protest activity or organizing is occurring, zines of this nature can provide an opportunity to study tactics that were used elsewhere and strategize upon how they could be implemented within a differing context. For those who are more directly involved with the actions being discussed, these zines provide an opportunity to understand what went wrong and refine tactics for future demonstrations. For example, in part-one of a two-part zine titled *Insurrectional Abolitionism*, the authors rely on conversations and accounts from activists who were present during a protest at the Columbus statue in Grant Park in Chicago during the summer of 2020. Referred to by some as ‘the Battle of Grant Park’, this protest culminated in a stand-off at the statue which saw the police viciously beating, clubbing, and tear-gassing protestors who were present. A local indigenous activist whose quote was included in the zine noted that “when folks weren’t scared of their [CPD] bullshit they decided to target less defensive people away from the folks defending themselves-the children, medics, photographers, disabled, and the elderly. We said people are more important than property, their response was ‘people’?” (*Insurrectional Abolitionism* 2020). Multiple authors were quoted describing the violence they witnessed while several others analyzed the formations that protestors took-utilizing signs, bikes, and umbrellas to form walls between the attendees and heavily armed police. Amidst the chaos, there were several unsuccessful attempts to topple the Columbus status by attaching a rope around its extended arm. Another attendee who expressed concern about the outcome of events provides readers with several insights worth considering. She told the authors:

I’m feeling weird about that rally on Friday turning from a rally to a march & statue take over. I’m still not clear on how or why that happened. For safety reasons, I feel like

people should be informed and be given the opportunity to consent to participate in putting their bodies at risk like that. There were children, differently abled bodies and undocumented folks in the crowd. People got hurt...I'd love to see that statue come down and I support the groups who want to do that. This is the part that concerns me, I don't feel right about putting people's lives at stake for an agenda that only some knew and agreed to...I've been studying revolution, liberation and creating autonomous communities for some time. Transparency in mission is still key at every step of the way. We can build our own militia. It's not illegal to do so. But using people as pawns is a very...white, patriarchal and colonial practice. So is only a few people making decisions for everyone. The revolution will be a slow, intentional & transparent one. I think we've all got some reading to do (*Insurrectional Abolitionism* 2020).

While she agreed with the significance and framing of the protest-even the desire to tear down the statue-her quote highlights the importance of coordinating plans and communicating potential risks or concerns to those who may be attending or organizing. Figures 12 and 13 show images from the zine which are aerial shots above the statue as the scene became violent with police attacking protestors. While this zine is only one among many which analyze actions which abolitionists have taken, it demonstrates how this category of zines can help provide readers with an understanding of what tactics were successful, which may have endangered protestors unintentionally or unexpectedly, and what could have been done to keep protestors safe. Additionally, for those who may have no or limited experience attending protests, zines of this nature provide a grim warning as to what protestors must be prepared to encounter, regardless of whether they are acting 'peacefully' or not. As

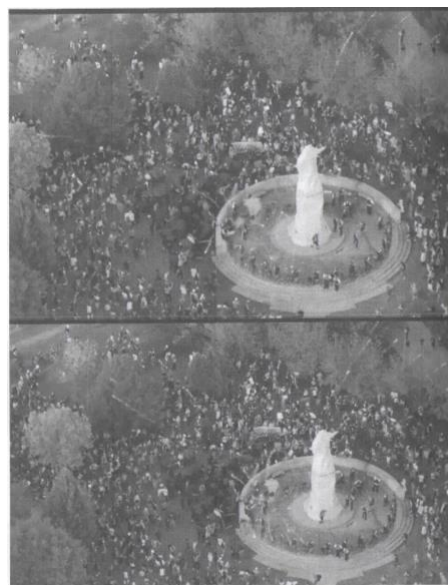


Figure 12. Photos of police attacking protestors at 'Battle of Grant Park' pt. 1

the attendee's extended quote also demonstrates, it is necessary not only to communicate, but to study and reflect, and to act in principled ways that are collective and intentional. While nothing

can compensate for the experiential knowledge which is attained from attending an event like this in-person, AOE zines which analyze protests and direct-actions can allow protestors to develop revolutionary cultural capital which enables them to be more strategic and intentional in their planning. Making mistakes or failing to study the failures and successes of others in this context does not simply mean that a movement objective is not met or that progress towards a goal is delayed-as the excerpts from this zine

demonstrated, these actions can-without warning-become incredibly chaotic and violent as police use a variety of tactics to disrupt, divide, attack, and arrest protestors. Being unprepared could lead to injury-potentially death-or arrest by law-enforcement. Studying actions such as these in addition to learning about police tactics in crowd control, infiltration, and disruption can prepare protestors with the knowledge to more effectively combat the efforts of the police. This



Figure 13. Photos of police attacking protestors at 'Battle of Grant Park' pt. 2

type of practical knowledge is crucial for the development of revolutionary cultural capital and can enhance the safety and effectiveness of future actions for all who study them.

While not always the case, AOE zines occasionally include elements of HT zines, the category of zines which I will address shortly. Rather than simply providing analytic or theoretic advice, HT zines provide readers with a sort of revolutionary capital which can be utilized for definable and concrete actions. For example, several of the analyses of the 'Battle of Grant Park' noted that one of the failures of the action involved protestor's inability to topple the statue.

While some analysts suggested better communication of this intended plan as well as tactical strategies to create greater distance between police and protestors or the use of stronger rope, one author provided a direct-guide, or recipe if you will, for how protestors could take direct-action to essentially ‘melt’ the statue from its base with ease. Figure 14 shows the description of this process included in the zine, which describes the ingredients and ratios of materials required for creating a ‘thermite reaction’ capable of melting the statue from its stand. As I will elaborate on further within the section addressing HT zines more specifically, this is the type of revolutionary cultural capital which traditionally has been highly inaccessible to those outside of intimate movement circles and further represents the most ‘struggled’ over aspects of revolutionary cultural capital itself.

From the perspective of those organizing, this knowledge enables aggressive, threatening, and potentially effective militant attacks against their targets while from the perspective of the state, eliminating access to this information would reduce the strength of the threat posed by revolutionary action. In another AOE zine titled *Death 2 Authority* the authors recall the formation and actions of an underground-prison-organization which developed out of a zine-study group formed by anarchist prisoners. In an analysis of the groups actions, the authors recall that “with just six people, you could jam every lock down every single hallway...we started

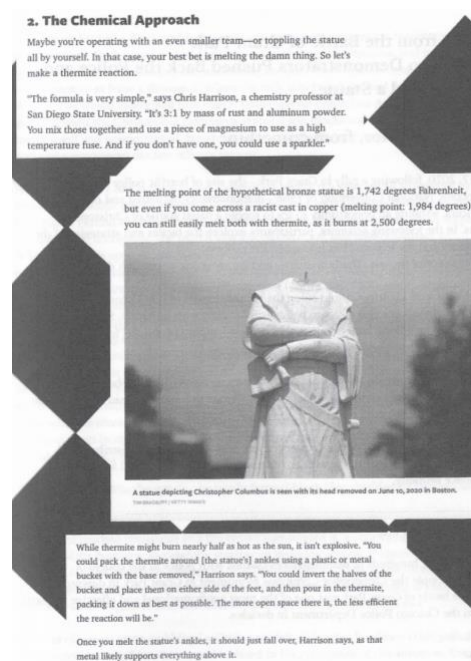


Figure 14. Description of how to create a 'thermite reaction' to melt a statue

using the black gunk from windows and doors and putting it on the staples we jammed into the locks...when staff put their key in, the black gunk would lodge the staple in there and...They had to replace all the locks” (*Death 2 Authority* 2021). The incarcerated ‘guerillas’, as they called themselves, regularly sabotaged locks to interrupt prison operations as a means to agitate for better conditions. While AOE zines of this nature provide an analysis of tactics used and which were successful, these zines also provide indirect advice on how one could apply these tactics themselves. For example, the authors do not simply mention jamming locks-they explicitly discuss the tools and techniques that were utilized to do so. In that sense, these zines are providing practical- in addition to theoretical- knowledge which is crucial for the development of revolutionary cultural capital. An understanding of theoretical as well as practical and material resistance, is necessary for the cultivation of a comprehensive revolutionary cultural capital which poses a more legitimate threat to the existing stratified order of society.

AOE zines at times also function to contextualize certain events or past actions which may have been misinterpreted by mainstream news sources or the public at-large. In this context, they function to analyze certain actions or movements for purposes which are more theoretical than practical. This is not to say that they are not both insightful and productive to the development of revolutionary cultural capital, rather, they use an event to provide a critique of a systematic issue which is often more comprehensive in its scope than what one may find through any mainstream news source. For example, in an analysis which begins with a consideration of protests against police brutality following the murder of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri during the summer of 2014, Frank B. Wilderson III critiques what he considers to be an

understandable, yet myopic focus on police brutality as the core issue under question. He contends that

our problem is one of complete captivity from birth to death, and coercion as the starting point of our interaction with the State and with ordinary white citizens...if we...see the policing...mutilation and the aggressivity towards Blackness not as a form of discrimination, but as being a form of psychic health...for the rest of the world, then we can...reformulate the problem and...take a much more iconoclastic response to it (Wilderson III 2014).

Wilderson III elaborates on this critique to add that anti-blackness forms the basis from which whiteness and white society derives its meaning. Within this context, focusing on police brutality is failing to recognize that the project of policing itself is rooted in an ideology of anti-blackness. While his argument is more theoretical than some which appear in AOE zines, it is also particularly intriguing. He contends that because white society could not comprehend nor contend with a comprehensive critique of policing and the white supremacist institutions of American society, it is necessary to focus on individualized instances of racialized violence or, in other words, to focus on symptoms while disregarding the malignant disease of anti-blackness. Utilizing AOE zines to develop theoretical arguments concerning current events additionally aids in the development of revolutionary cultural capital. Authors of AOE zines are presumably far beyond the initial stages of radicalization and have developed a robust understanding of abolitionist terms, principles, and theory. Such revolutionary cultural capital enables them to add to this knowledge by contributing to the development of a contemporary abolitionist perspective- or history-which will be used to teach the next generation of revolutionaries and will become embedded within the understandings, beliefs, and strategic resources comprising their revolutionary cultural capital.

Rather than relying on a framing of events derived from state sources, AOE zines allow authors to establish an alternative historical account and set forth an alternative theoretical analysis which challenges the assumptions of the state and mass media. Furthermore, AOE zines which are written for this purpose can help those active in movement struggles to maintain a clear interpretation of events while potentially radicalizing those who were infuriated by police violence, yet not fully on-board with the notion of abolition. As countless movement scholars have noted, the framing of issues and events is crucial for the development and success of a movement. If abolitionists are unable to contextualize what the state wishes to represent as individualized, rather than systemic, racialized violence, they will likely find it challenging to recruit comrades or convince others that abolition is necessary. While it may be quite clear to a seasoned abolitionist that a police officer murdering an unarmed Black man is not an aberration, but an expectation, given the ideologies in which the profession is rooted, those who view police violence as individualized instances of ‘poor conduct’ are unlikely to comprehend why abolition would be a logical approach. Thus, the hidden power of AOE zines is their capacity to challenge a framing of issues which fails to ignore the underlying, parasitic influences of capitalism and white-supremacist ideology.

In the true spirit of ‘improvising on reality’ AOE zine authors are documenting their own interpretation of events and creating an abolitionist record of history- rooted in lived experience, interviews, and well-researched theoretical arguments. In the process of crafting theoretical analyses of current events, zine authors are additionally challenging a sort of academic monopoly on knowledge production. While these authors are not attempting to converse or engage with academics, they oftentimes utilize a variety of techniques commonly found within the social

sciences. For example, many of the AOE zines which include highly theoretical arguments include brief ‘reviews’ of topics or authors, what we would consider literature reviews. Additionally, a multitude of zines include, or are composed entirely of, interviews. The interview transcript is generally provided as the content of the zine and while these authors are not contending with a peer review or institutional approval process, the value of the knowledge which they construct should not be discounted. AOE zines can provide incredible ethnographic accounts of those who have participated in protests, battled with police, and endured humiliating and terrifying instances of interrogation, detention, and torture. While studying prison populations is, understandably, challenging given the multitude of concerns related to how information collected on prisoners will be used and whether the research will pose harm to the incarcerated population in some way, researchers should take note of the ocean of ethnographic accounts of incarceration which have and are continuously being produced within the pages of zines distributed throughout the country.

The other category of zines which most fully embraces the concept of improvising on reality is that of the ‘How To...’ variety. This category of zines, as the name may imply, imparts on readers the ‘flavor’ of revolutionary cultural capital which traditionally has been unattainable unless one has sufficient revolutionary social capital from which to draw upon. In other words, unless one was personally in close contact with a group involved in militant revolutionary action, this information would largely remain unknown. Within this context, I contend that this is the most ‘valuable’ resource which is competed for within the context of revolutionary cultural capital. Amongst abolitionists, this resource provides them with an insurgent power enabling more strategic and effective attacks against state forces while potentially increasing the capacity

of individuals to remain safe or ‘underground’. From the perspective of the state, police and government agencies have a vested interest in disrupting the distribution of this knowledge as it represents a legitimate threat to the stability and continued operations of the prison industrial complex in particular and the status-quo of society more broadly. Thus, within the language of competition, you have the state fighting to censor and limit the distribution of this information on the one hand while on the other you have incarcerated abolitionists and those in the free-world creatively developing novel methods for ensuring that this knowledge can reach as many minds as possible.

HT Zines

The HT category of zines encompasses a rather wide breadth of knowledge and skills essential to remaining safe, remaining free, and beginning to establish non-carceral methods for addressing harm and investing in life-affirming institutions within communities. This includes zines such as *Meeting Facilitation: The No-Magic Method*; *How To Organize A Protest March*; *10 Steps For Setting Up A Blockade*; and *Anarchist Survival Guide For Understanding Gestapo Swine Interrogation Mind Games: Staying Free By Shutting The Fuck Up!*. This category additionally includes zines with a variety of suggestions for reducing contact with and reliance upon police in communities, including one where readers are provided with twelve scenarios and possible solutions for the problems presented in these scenarios which do not involve contacting the police. For example, the authors recommend that readers should “keep a contact list of community resources like suicide hotlines. When police are contacted to ‘manage’ such situations, people with mental illness are sixteen times more likely to be killed by cops than those without mental health challenges” (Mayday Collective 2017). Many zines provide

recommendations such as this, encouraging readers to learn of resources and organizations in their communities which exist as non-carceral alternatives to addressing harm or crises. The authors additionally note that “anytime you seek help from the police, you’re inviting them into your community and putting people who may already be vulnerable into dangerous situations” (Mayday Collective 2017). Many of the zines which elaborate on the creative project of implementing the abolitionist vision in the present by reducing community contacts with law-enforcement ask readers to think of the instances in which they may normally consider calling the police. Authors encourage readers to consider how contacting law-enforcement could escalate already tense situations and lead to outcomes which do not address the initial concerns and which merely exacerbate potential economic and social strains in the community.

Authors also encourage readers to begin cultivating a community of care which can gradually replace the need for a law-enforcement presence. In order for communities to feel safe moving away from carceral society, they need awareness of existing community support networks which are available to address harm and provide for community needs. Of course, this necessitates that those support networks are developed and sustained. A zine titled *Insurrectionary Mutual Aid* suggests that those interested in forming mutual-aid networks should become experienced in first-aid and emergency-response so that they can teach this skill to others in the community while additionally establishing themselves as alternatives to traditional sources of crisis-response (The Curious George Brigade). The authors also provide a list of internet resources where readers could obtain a variety of supplies which may be required for forming a network of this nature. There is a rich history of militant community organizing which interested abolitionists of the present era can draw upon for inspiration in the development of

mutual-aid networks and community support structures with the goal of establishing non-carceral alternatives to addressing harm. Looking to the recent past, there are a plethora of examples when groups such as the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords established community survival programs ranging from food and clothing programs, to educational, public-health, political, and self-defense courses. While a significant component of the HT zines I read addressed this aspect of the abolitionist project, the majority were comprised of practical advice fulfilling the latter half of the slogan *survival pending revolution*, which the Black Panther Party used to describe its community programs.

As mentioned in relation to the AOE category of zines which provide crucial and struggled over revolutionary cultural capital, being provided with the information in the HT zines can make the difference between a focused and successful protest or one which is disorganized, chaotic, and ultimately ineffective. Concerning the information related to dealings with law-enforcement or direct actions which could present significant security threats to those involved, this information could quite literally make a difference between freedom and incarceration in the lives of revolutionaries willing to engage in such insurgent mobilizations. This information is additionally critical for the expansion and continuation of movements for abolition. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the somewhat centralized and hierarchical structure of many radical ‘aboveground’ groups of the 1960’s and 1970’s presented an opportunity for infiltration and disruption by law-enforcement. While the cultivation of revolutionary cultural capital through the creation and distribution of zines certainly helps to mitigate the organizational weaknesses of the past, authors and activists must nonetheless be cautious in how

they organize and operate-paying close attention to the tactics used and lessons learned from the past in addition to the valuable pool of knowledge made available by HT zines.

One of the HT zines which I found to be the most resourceful was titled *Security Culture: A Handbook For Activists*. This zine outlines the concept of security culture, describing it as a tactic to “limit or neutralize counter-intelligence operations meant to disrupt our political organizing, be it mainstream or underground” (*Security Culture* 2001). More specifically, security culture is one in which activists “know what behavior compromises security and...are quick to educate those people who...partake in insecure behavior...consciousness becomes a culture when the group as a whole makes security violations socially unacceptable in the group...” (*Security Culture* 2001). This necessitates that individuals who are interested in developing this cultural capital-a sort of security-oriented revolutionary cultural capital-must have an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable practices. There must also be established norms in place for either affirming or challenging secure and insecure practices, respectively. The authors posit that some insecure practices include discussing personal or known involvement of others in underground groups; discussing another’s interest in joining an underground group; asking if one is a member of an underground group; or, discussing past, present, or future intentions of oneself or others to engage in any action which is illegal (*Security Culture* 2001). While the complex particularities of security culture are beyond the context of this analysis, the authors provide readers with a variety of suggestions to rely upon when confronting insecure practices in addition to tips for spotting one of a variety of classic infiltrator ‘types’.

Security culture represents an additionally unique, and difficult to obtain, component of revolutionary cultural capital. I contend that it is difficult to obtain primarily because the

practices of security culture are largely unknown to those operating in ‘aboveground’ groups and may additionally appear unnecessary to those who are not engaged in militant or underground activity. It should come as no surprise to those who have paid attention to highly publicized instances of police violence, however, that this sort of aggression and surveillance is not directed exclusively to those presenting a direct ‘threat’ towards law-enforcement. As the authors of this zine note, “most Western nation-states follow a model of counter-insurgency developed by a British intelligence expert named Kitson” who asserted that revolutionary movements tend to develop in three phases: the preparatory phase, the non-violent phase, and the insurgency phase (*Security Culture* 2001). The authors further note that Kitson advised in his writings that counter-insurgent surveillance and infiltration would be most successful when movements are still early within the preparatory phase. At this point, activists “have not experienced a high degree of repression. They consider talk of security as mere paranoia. As they are not breaking laws they believe it is safe to organize completely openly. The intelligence agency is therefore able to exploit these conditions and develop detailed dossiers on a wide range of people” (*Security Culture* 2001). As movements advance to stages involving larger and more public-demonstrations and certain factions of the movement decide to engage in militant direct action, the information which was collected early on could result in a pre-mature disruption of the movement. Furthermore, as intelligence files from the FBI’s COINTELPRO operation or the CPD’s Red Squad files indicate, law-enforcement agencies have historically collected intelligence information on virtually any group which even vocalizes a critique of or opposition to the status-quo. While accessing the sort of intelligence data being collected presently is functionally impossible, there is no reason to believe that law-enforcement agencies have

subsided in their practices. If anything, the recent uprisings and mobilizations which swept the country throughout 2020 have almost certainly led to an increased level of surveillance. Because of this, the information provided in the zine on security culture and others like it could not be more timely or useful for those engaging in organizing against the prison industrial complex.

While AOE zines can provide insight on how to implement and refine tactics, strategize for future direct-actions, and learn from what did not work. HT zines related to protesting provide readers with complementary knowledge to refer to when things do not go as planned. In other words, while the AOE zines can be incredibly useful for trying to strategize in a way which will reduce potentially unexpected or dangerous outcomes, the HT zines provide readers with the revolutionary cultural capital which enables them to be pro-active and responsive rather than reactionary if things should take a turn for the worse. As one of those quoted in the AOE zine reflecting on the 'Battle of Grant Park' noted, the police rely on fear and intimidation to disrupt protests, kettle organizers away from others to further intimidate and incite chaos, and to push those involved towards defending themselves which may legitimate the use of police-force in the eyes of the law. Protestors who are prepared for these tactics in advance, who have an understanding of the tactics of deceit and manipulation regularly employed by law-enforcement, and who can rely upon the revolutionary cultural capital that they have cultivated, are in a far better position to resist the police and keep one-another safe. Several of these zines also include additional information related to protesting including advising readers to never attend an event alone, never to photograph or distribute images from events which include the faces of those participating in events, and to write contact numbers on one's arm in the case of arrest. For seasoned activists, this is likely redundant information; however, for those who may be new to

direct-action or public-protests, access to this revolutionary cultural capital is assistive in developing a culture of security, of care, of awareness, and of accountability in the sense that group safety can easily be compromised by the actions of a few. As greater numbers of individuals appear to have taken interest in participating in public-protest, it is critical for those attending these events to have an understanding of how their actions may present a risk to themselves and others and the steps that can be taken to mitigate this potential risk. Considering as well that the protests of 2020 saw many individuals engaging in protest who traditionally had avoided this sort of action combined with the rather perverse observation of widespread 'performative-activism'-in which attending a protest was used to generate personal, and social media clout rather than bringing attention to the issues being protested against-those attending events must have access to this cultural capital to ensure that they are not exposing the identities or actions of comrades under state surveillance. While a seemingly harmless selfie or picture from an event may appear inconsequential to some, it can be used as evidence by law-enforcement against those engaged in more serious action.

While this information is invaluable for equipping activists and revolutionaries with the revolutionary cultural capital to organize in secure ways and do all that they can to ensure the safety and protection of themselves and trusted comrades, it is an unfortunate inevitability that the forces of the prison industrial complex will continue to snag individuals within its oppressive grasp. Thus, for those who are unfortunate enough to be arrested or find themselves in an interrogation with law-enforcement, it could be life-saving to have access to a library of knowledge which can help those detained or incarcerated individuals to protect their safety and security. Another subset of HT zines provide readers with access to this information, including

how to avoid having to interact with police, how to act when forced to interact with police in a variety of circumstances, in addition to discussions of tactics which police routinely use to trick, confuse, intimidate, or otherwise mislead those under interrogation into providing sensitive or incriminating information. Most zines of this category offer readers various versions of the same advice: do not, under any circumstances, talk to the police. As various authors note-at best-talking to police will result in no outcome with individuals being allowed to leave-at worst-talking to police could lead to arrest and a charge based upon something someone admitted to, or a fabrication of guilt based upon something someone said which can be manipulated by the officer.

One zine, titled *Know Your Right Because Cops Legally Don't Have To*, reiterates this advice while additionally addressing common myths related to conversing with police. The zine notes that, contrary to popular belief, police are allowed to lie to you and do so on a regular basis. Furthermore, while they may have an understanding of some aspects of the law, they are not required to comprehensively understand the law and, according to *Heien v. North Carolina*, police officers are allowed to detain or arrest someone for completely legal activities, as long as the officer believes they are not legal. For example, the case in question involved an individual who was pulled over for having only a single operational tail-light after which officers found cocaine in the individual's vehicle. While driving

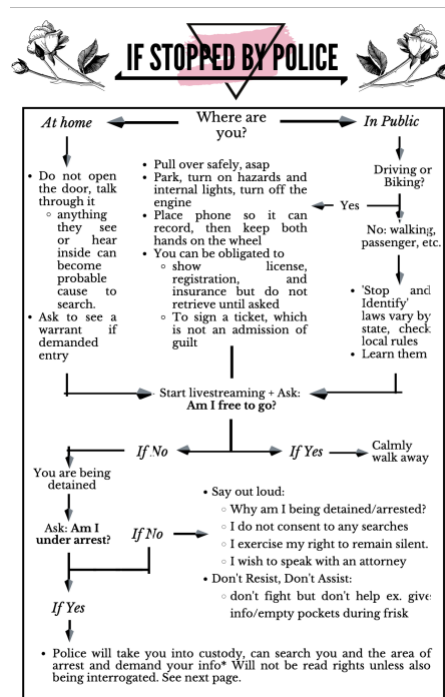


Figure 15: A flowchart describing what to do when stopped by police

with a single functioning tail-light is actually legal in the state of North Carolina, the court ruled that the officers were nonetheless not in violation of the defendant's fourth-amendment rights as the officer's misunderstanding was considered to be reasonable. In other words, as long as police are considered to be 'reasonable' in their misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the law-a curiously paradoxical notion-they are authorized to detain or arrest anyone for anything they 'reasonably' interpret to be illegal. This zine also includes a rather comprehensive flowchart, Figure 15, which provides readers with advice on how to proceed if they are stopped by police in a variety of different contexts. This content, while not copied directly, is re-produced with similar advice throughout a multitude of HT zines addressing protesting and interacting with the police. This, much like the content I am about to address, constitutes a component of revolutionary cultural capital which is incredibly value as it may allow protestors to enhance their personal security without having to attain this knowledge through direct experience. While I noted previously that nothing can compensate for direct experience, there are some instances-such as being arrested or facing an interrogation-in which it is best to be equipped with the cultural capital developed by others who have been through these sorts of experiences, so that one does not have to act blindly and make mistakes which could cost them their freedom.

If one is unfortunate enough to find themselves in a position of interrogation, zines such as the *Anarchist Survival Guide For Understanding Gestapo Swine Interrogation Mind Games: Staying Free By Shutting The Fuck Up!* provide readers with twenty-six different tactics which police may use in interrogations in an attempt to get respondents to communicate, admit to knowledge of information, or admit to guilt of a crime. When individuals may find themselves in this situation, they cannot rely on any existing revolutionary social capital or contact with close

comrades to inform them of how to proceed. For activists or revolutionaries engaged in direct-action, access to this component of revolutionary cultural capital is critical to avoid self-incrimination or to avoid the incrimination of close friends. As the authors of this and other HT zines concerning police interrogations note, the best way to remain free is to avoid any communication whatsoever beyond that which may be required by local law. Some of the tactics which the authors identify include officers asking seemingly trivial questions which appear unrelated to the case; however, the authors are quick to note that any information which is provided to law-enforcement can be used to their advantage to construct a case against an individual, or those with whom the individual may be affiliated. The authors also note that in cases involving theft, vandalism, or property destruction, investigators will often “attempt to coerce a suspect into an offer of restitution which is a clear indicator of guilt...The response being fished for from a guilty person is agreement the aggrieved...should be reimbursed for their loss” (Thompson 2020). In other instances, interrogators may attempt to downplay the significance of a charge in an attempt to convey sympathy to those under questioning or, conversely, may amplify the seriousness of the charge in order to intimidate the suspect into speaking. Interrogators rely on a variety of psychological techniques which tap into basic human drives for acceptance, understanding, and respect. The authors variously note how interrogators will rely on these drives-either attempting to gratify or brutalize them-to manipulate those under interrogation to cooperate or confess to an assortment of crimes. While in one instance an officer may praise the attributes of an individual in an attempt to get them to drop their guard, in another they may comment on how a variety of attributes are indicative of guilt-in an attempt to get respondents to ‘explain’ away their guilt. The tactics addressed in these zines are not

comprehensive, police tactics vary by location and context and it will never be possible to predict every action which law-enforcement will take to extract evidence from those they interrogate; however, the revolutionary cultural capital that is provided through this category of zines is some of the most invaluable material to those who are involved in serious organizing. While one can never adequately prepare for the stress, horror, and trauma which undoubtedly accompanies a police interrogation, having an expectation of how the police will act, the tactics of manipulation and deceit that they will use, and a knowledge of how to resist these tactics can provide a solid foundation for resisting state-sponsored disruption of movements and the incapacitation of organizers caught in the grip of police-power. Assuming that abolitionists have established a thorough understanding of history, theory, and analysis, this genre of zines provides readers with the defensive and practical components of revolutionary cultural capital.

CONCLUSION

Within each of the preceding sections, I addressed a variety of categories of zines which I identified throughout my analysis. Each of these categories, I contend, serves a critical function in the development of revolutionary cultural capital, while the mode of distributing zines in general facilitates a collective expansion of revolutionary social capital. IAT zines provide readers with definitions and a broad overview of the fundamental beliefs grounding abolitionist thought. These zines allow readers to develop a common language, and a common diagnosis of the problem, and-to varying degrees-a common understanding of the steps that are required for change. This category of zines also provides readers with an introduction to many of the authors they may encounter if they choose to read any of the zines which I categorized as abolitionist history.

HSTY zines included re-publications of entire books in addition to interviews and writings from historic figures within the movement for abolition. This category of zines built upon the revolutionary cultural capital of the introductory abolitionist texts by providing readers with an understanding of the historic legacy of the movement for prison abolition, allowing them to understand their role and significance amongst generations of revolutionaries in addition to familiarizing them with abolitionist figures whose words and thoughts continue to inspire and inform new generations of abolitionists in the present. This category of zines also aided in the continual process of unlearning carceral logics, as readers were provided with a historical analysis which contextualized the growth of prisons and militarized police within a project of capitalist, white-supremacist exploitation.

In the section titled *Subverting Authority*, I addressed how the inclusion of mailing lists and addresses of zine distro's within zines allows for prisoners to request copies to be sent to them throughout the country. This process additionally helps to enhance revolutionary social capital as incarcerated zine readers and writers are connected to authors and those running the distros in the free-world. This community of 'zinesters' are collectively able to define issues, share strategies, and continue to advance a revolutionary movement for abolition through the distribution of liberatory literature.

Perhaps of greatest utility for the development of revolutionary cultural capital is the category of zines which provides either an analysis of events or instructions on "how to..." do or accomplish a variety of things. While, at least for those in the free world, with enough resolve and curiosity, it would likely be possible to find literature pertaining to abolitionist authors such as Angela Davis or accounts of historic events such as the Attica Uprising, the sort of information contained in the categories AOE and HT provide information which is generally inaccessible unless one happens to have close comrades with direct-action or protesting experience. While the more theoretical and historical categories of zines provide readers with the resources to cultivate a revolutionary cultural capital and liberate their minds from the confines of oppressive, carceral logics, this latter category of zines provides readers with some of the tools necessary for liberating their environments. Readers can begin to construct alternate realities as demonstrations of the capacity of people to challenge state power and develop structures of community and accountability which respond to harm and address social needs in non-punitive, non-coercive ways which remain undefined by logics of capitalism, patriarchy, or white supremacy.

While zine authors are not relying upon a peer-review process or conducting ‘research’ with the approval of an institutional review board, the knowledge which these authors have produced and are continuing to construct should not be discounted. Despite the use of different terms, we can observe that some zine authors are trying to understand the experiences of protestors and movement activists by relying on methods such as interviews and ethnographies. These authors are actively challenging an academic monopoly on the production of knowledge and while their data is not subject to a peer-review process, the rich qualitative data to be found within zines can perhaps provide access which may otherwise be difficult to achieve. While accessing marginalized groups to conduct interviews or ethnographies is understandably challenging, accessing anarchist or revolutionary abolitionist activists in particular could prove to be a unique challenge. These groups are inherently untrustworthy of unknown contacts and tend to be critical of the past and current policies and practices of academic institutions. Nonetheless, there are several avenues of inquiry which I believe would be worthwhile to pursue, as they would be in the interest of increasing academic knowledge while potentially bringing to light certain dynamics which may not lead to an increase in carceral power.

Future research should consider exploring the process of zine authorship and distribution from the perspective of those who actually do this work, particularly those who are incarcerated or distribute zines to those on the other side of prison and jail walls. In-depth interviews and-if possible-ethnographies could provide further insight into how prisoners overcome and creatively agitate against their oppressive conditions to cultivate revolutionary cultural capital and act as direct participants in a movement for the abolition of policing and prisons. Exploring this process could reveal the various ways in which prison authorities act to censor or otherwise prevent

material from reaching prisoners. Similarly, such investigations could reveal how and why authorities censor material which prisoners intend to send to those in the free world. An exploration of this nature could add further complexity to understanding the process of developing revolutionary cultural capital. While incarcerated authors represent a significant component of those writing about police and prison abolition, those on the outside are responsible for collecting and copying this information so that it can be distributed.

Understanding the dynamics which are involved in identifying and contacting prisoners, selecting which material to include in zines, and expanding the network of authors could shed light on possible power dynamics and unknown decision-making-processes which go into the construction and distribution of this literature. While I did not uncover the vast catalog of zines from South Chicago ABC Zine Distro until the end of my analysis, it could be worthwhile to do a content analysis on zines published by particular distros and comparing the content to that of other distros to develop an understanding of any trends or themes which may be present in the literature. While my impression has been that Zine distros tend to offer literature covering a vast range of topics, it is possible that particular distros cater their selection to more particular subtopics such as zines produced by or for prisoners, or zines concerning gender and sexual identity.

I also believe that it would be worthwhile, in a general sense, for academics to seriously consider the tactics and strategies of militant revolutionary activism to a far greater extent than has been done thus far. Academic investigation of social movements tends to emphasize non-violent direct action as virtually the only viable approach to combatting oppressive structures which may be beyond the limits of the law. Furthermore, discussions of groups which have taken

more militant direct-action or which have variously employed degrees of ‘violence’ in their movement strategies are regularly discounted as ‘radical terrorists’ without a serious consideration of their theories or what they were trying to achieve. In other words, these groups are regularly disregarded simply because they employed violent tactics-this, I contend, is not a sufficient reason to avoid serious analyses of these movements. While I am not suggesting that professors should necessarily advocate the tactics employed by these groups, various organizations such as the Black Liberation Army, The Black Panther Party, The Young Lords Party, and the Weather Underground, amongst others, deserve more serious and legitimate academic consideration than they have historically received. These groups cultivated powerful theoretical arguments critiquing the United States, capitalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and a variety of other issues. While some of the tactics they employed may remain controversial, I contend that we have much to learn from these revolutionaries of the past. Academic institutions should strive to provide a more liberatory education for their students and in doing so, should additionally consider analyzing the theories and activities of these groups with the same level of academic curiosity and sincerity as has often been afforded to those who shared similar viewpoints, yet chose to organize non-violently. Along these lines, the liberatory theories which guided these groups-including theories of abolition-should be explored and analyzed with greater frequency and sincerity.

Finally, I believe that an in-depth analysis on the policies of prison literature censorship could prove to be a worthwhile investigation. Since the era of mass-incarceration began in the mid-1990s, the criminal justice system has grown increasingly punitive not only in regard to the sentences and treatments to which it subjects prisoners, but additionally in regard to the

amenities which it has gradually stripped from those incarcerated throughout the nation. While at one point in time weight-lifting equipment and vast prison libraries with a diversity of reading-options were made available to prisoners, these amenities and opportunities for physical and intellectual self-improvement have increasingly been denied.

For many incarcerated folks, these options represented the two primary means of remaining productive while doing time. One could either exercise the body or exercise the mind; however, prisoners are now largely left to pass the time staring at tv's or resorting to the mind-numbing and oppressive literature to which they do have access. This calls to mind the classic quote from the Brazilian author and revolutionary Paulo Freire: "when education is not liberating, the dream of the oppressed is to become the oppressor". When prisoners are denied the opportunity to develop revolutionary cultural capital, it can become increasingly impossible to imagine a way out of the nightmarish reality facing so many millions of people throughout this country. Rather than dreaming of a world in which police and prisons are obsolete, in which it is possible to redefine how we relate to one another in society, how we address harm, and how we live in accordance with the principles we hold dear, individuals are left to dream within the dreary and dehumanizing confines of the now-restricted (as a result of their 'criminal status') reality with which they must contend. To reverse Freire's quote, when education is liberating, the oppressed may imagine an entirely different reality in which this enduring dichotomy of oppressors vs oppressed is reduced to the ashes of history. I contend that this potential which a liberatory education holds is intimately related to the content found within abolitionist zines. The liberatory education which zines provide enable readers to cultivate a revolutionary cultural capital, to expand their collective revolutionary social capital by connecting with other authors,

activists, and radicals, and to spread the promise of true and total liberation which this type of education presents as an alternative possibility. Abolitionist and anarchist zine-authors are not only dreaming of a different world in the here-and-now, they are improvising on reality to provide their readers with the imagination, knowledge, resources, and revolutionary cultural capital to destroy this world as we know it, and construct one which we no longer have to imagine in a distant future. While the oppressive logics of capitalism and the criminal justice system have made a world without police and prisons appear as inherently irrational, the zine-community is equipping itself with alternative analyses, theories, and understandings which work to undo the abstraction of abolition and transform it into a logical, rational, and empathetic response to the conditions facing our society today.

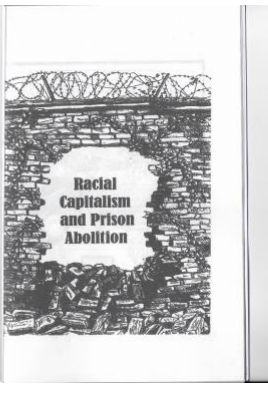
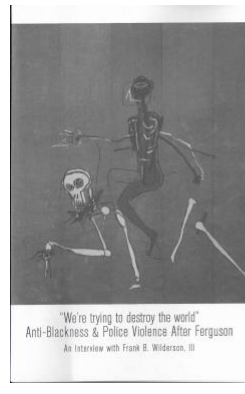
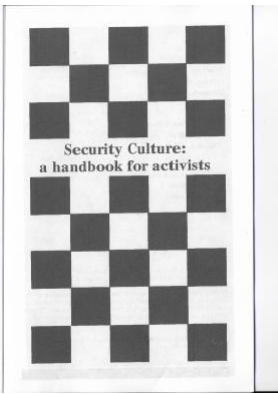
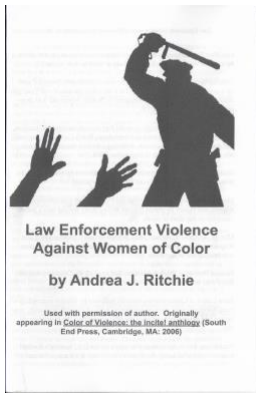
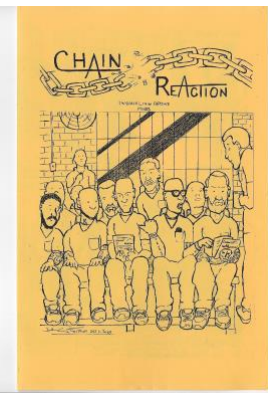
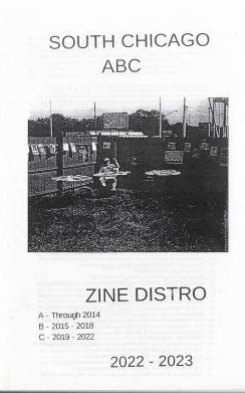
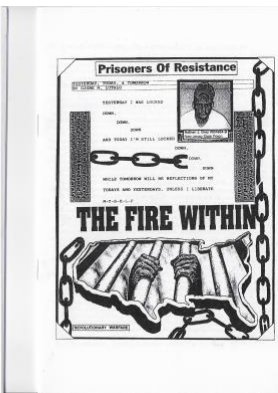
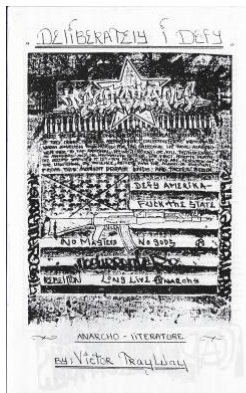
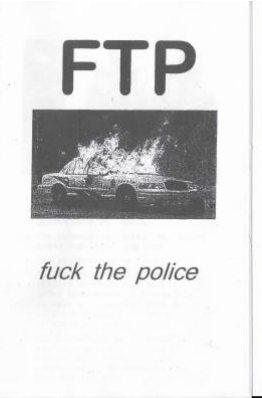
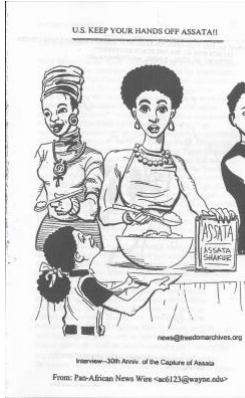
APPENDIX A
CODING GUIDE

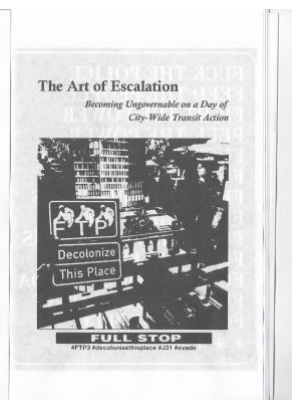
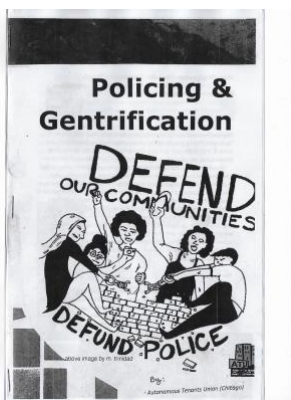
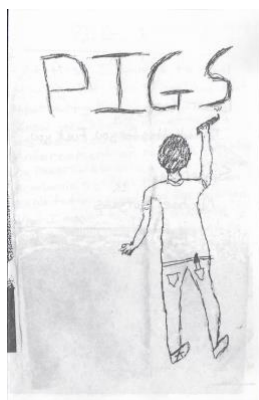
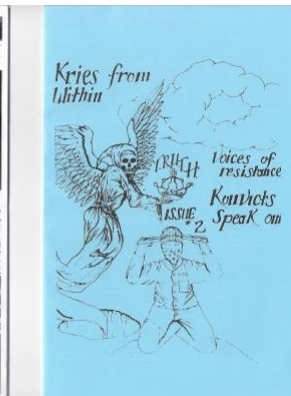
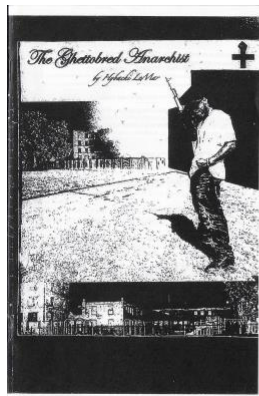
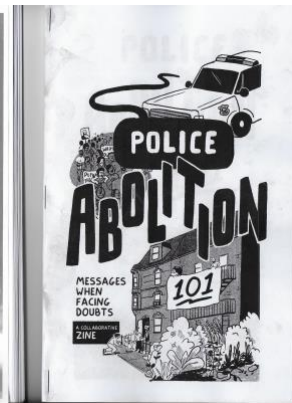
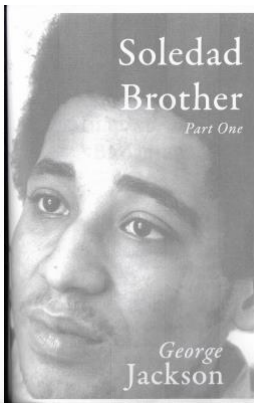
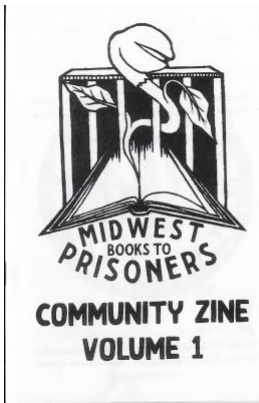
Coding Guide

Codes:

- A: Alienation
- AACB: Accountability
- ABABFWLAF: Anti-blackness as basis for white life and freedom
- AB: Antiracism
- ABH: Abolitionist history
- AH: Addressing Harm
- AIAPS: America is a police state
- ATR: Addressing the roots
- ABOAO: Antagonism between oppressors and oppressed
- APIAP: A pig is a pig
- AOE: Art of escalation
- AU: Attica Uprising
- AUTO: Autonomy
- AVR: Abolition versus reform
- BFTAOAI: Building From the Ashes of Archaic Institutions
- BCBTIAO: Building coalitions between those inside and out
- BP: Black police
- BSBOG: Building solidarity between oppressed groups
- C: Capitalism
- C: Cartoons
- CMMTY: Community
- COB: Criminalization of Blackness
- CDRD: Capitalism drives racial division
- COP: Criminalization of population
- CSASTSP: Carceral State as Solution to Social Problems
- CS: Case Study, or relying on narratives of an individual's experience to highlight a systemic issue
- CTA: Call to action
- D: Dehumanization
- DASK: Developing a shared knowledge
- DISTRO: Distros
- DOT: Diversity of tactics
- DTTP: Don't talk to police
- EA: Explaining abolition
- EAR/C: Evidence against reform/criminal justice system
- EOPS: Expansion of prison system
- EXPLO: Exploitation
- FLITR: Finding love in the revolution
- FOSBSIRTASI: Focusing on symptoms because society isn't ready to address systemic issues
- FTP: Fuck the police
- GTRFC: Gentrification
- GNDRSX: Gender and sexuality
- HT: How To...
 - HT: DA- How to...direct action
 - HT:GA- How to...getting arrested
 - HT:P-How to...protesting advice/strategy
 - HT:PI-How to...police interrogations
 - HT:PIMG-How to...police interrogation mind games
 - HT:RAD- How to...Run a distro
- INSG: Insurgency
- IAWWPAP: Imagining a world without police and prisons
- I/A: Imagery/Aesthetics
- IILAI: Investing in Life-affirming institutions
- IAS: Incarceration as slavery
- IFSP: Incarceration for surplus populations
- IOBLIA: Impossibility of black life in America
- IOP: Industrialization of punishment
- IOR: Improvising on Reality
- ITB: In the belly
- LFA: Learning from ancestors
- LTLTDO: Lacking the language to describe oppression
- LMLATAB: leftist movements lack of attention to antiracism
- LPV: Legitimizing police violence
- MDWST: Midwest
- NODA: Necessity of direct action
- NOP: Nature of police
- NOTC: Necessity of trusted comrades
- PIC: Prison industrial complex
- PITMOAW: Poverty in the midst of abundant wealth
- POR: Process of radicalization
- PPC: Police protect capital
- PUTOMIGN: Police used to oppress minorities in gentrifying neighborhoods
- POE: Project of Extermination
- PP: Private Property
- PTTAP: Police Tactics Terms & Practices
- RADAVA: Resistance and direct action vs activism
- RDC: Reducing Police Contact
- RIPOI: Reforms increase power of institutions
- RS: Remain silent
- RSVLR: Revolutionary struggle vs liberal resistance
- SAFWWDATWO: Stop asking for what we deserve and take what's ours
- SC: Security culture
- SCOI: State control of information
- SCMPO: Strong communities make police obsolete
- S:PO- Strategy, Prison organizing
- SPR: Survival pending revolution
- STE: The state
- SELFD: Self determination
- TBRALFOTL: Tensions between radical and liberal factions of the left
- TEOKTLORAV: The enemy only knows the language of robbery and violence
- TIP: Targeting immigrant populations
- TOI: Trauma of incarceration
- UCL: Unlearning Carceral Logics
- WA: What about...questions. (What about murder, rape, harm, etc.)
- WR: White reactionary
- WSCE: White Supremacist Capitalist Exploitation
- WS: White supremacy
- ZINE: Zines

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE OF DATA





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VITA

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While at Loyola, Mr. Wonder worked as a Graduate fellow for the Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL). Mr. Wonder also won the Gallagher Award for Outstanding Sociology Senior in 2021. Currently, Mr. Wonder is continuing research on social movements related to police and prison abolition. He lives in Chicago, Illinois.